

505 R.C.T. WW II

Regimental Combat Team



973 Gladys St
Derby Lake
Stanton, Michigan 48888-9122

DATED MATERIAL

The Panther

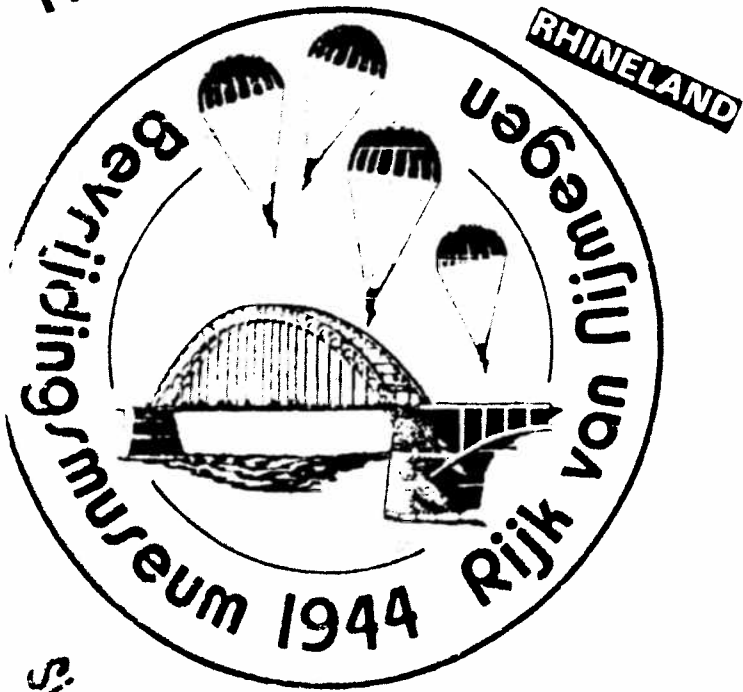
#3

Dec. 2007

ITALY

CENTRAL EUROPE

ARDENNES



Sicily

Holland



NORMANDY



505 PIR



82nd A/B Div.

505th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Robert M. Murphy

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

"I have returned" seems to be the famous words and I am back again as the 505 RCT Association President. My first order of business is to thank Don McKeage for his outstanding service and leadership as our President. Don has spent years as Publisher/Editor of our 505 RCT Newsletter which is a tedious job to put together all on quarterly news items. He and his lovely Jennie have spent years contributing their time and money on behalf of our 505 RCT and 82nd Airborne Division Associations.. We thank you Don and Jennie for your untiring service and friendship.

Our Ft. Bragg Reunion from October 24th to 28th was one of the best we ever attended with the 82nd/505 active duty members giving us great treatment and service from airport pickups to driving us all over Ft. Bragg. CSM Ted Gaweda, as always our number 1 man at Ft. Bragg, had every detail set up in advance. If there was any problem (rarely), Ted would fix it ASAP. He did a lot of planning over many months with coordination and scheduling by Ted, Star Jorgensen, Jim et al. Almost daily contact by Email or telephone with our Directors to put that great together in order to run a successful reunion and, this year, 2007, was just wonderful. And you will see the reason below.

Star Jorgensen, our extremely efficient 505 Family and Friends Association President worked almost on a daily basis to make the 2007 Reunion a success coordinating with Ted and other Board members. She and Ted finally got our rooms at Moon/Hardy Hall set up and guaranteed. There are many wounded warriors residing at both Airborne Inns so it was a close call, but they locked in our rooms. And to say the least, we had a wonderful Hospitality suite right inside Moon hall. I want to than Star for her outstanding non-stop service, ironing out any problems, and meticulous leadership. Star will continue on for the year 2008 as 505 F&F's President so keep your telephone and email lines open.

The Hospitality Room was amply supplied by Jim Blankenship and we never ran out of excellent little snacks, continental breakfast/ coffee and a full bar with lots of excellent drinks. CSM Ted even brought the left-over bottles from our reunion two years ago, not a drop missing. Thanks to Jim Blankenship for his daily PX shopping and bringing all those goodies to make a great and much appreciated Hospitality Room.

We attended two Fort Bragg airport occasions when our 505 troopers returned on private aircraft from Iraq. Many of their family and local friends were waiting in a hanger while they marched in formation and a short service was conducted. Then the families, wives and children charged into the ranks. It was a most gratifying scene. All of us can remember our return to loved ones and family in 1945.

The Memorial Luncheon and final Banquet had about 200 folks attending including many wounded warriors from Iraq and Afghanistan. It was great to talk to these troopers and get the news and combat situation from a trooper who has served on the battlefield. Our 82nd Commander was our guest speaker.

To all the members of the Board of the 505 RCT and Family and Friends Associations, I thank you for your service and we will continue your assignment through 2008. Our next reunion is at Colorado Springs, where we had such a delightful time a few years ago. Our "Man on the Scene" Duke Boswell, will attend to the hotel and Air Force Academy details. Duke did a splendid job before and with our team we should have a good 2008 reunion during September so we don't get caught up in cold weather. It may possibly (??) be held during the week of September 10th, go home the 14th. Just diary your calendar right now for that week. Duke, et al, will settle the specific dates later.

Speaking of fees I want to thank Ellen Peters for her expertise as our 505 F&F's Treasurer who handles all our funds and records. All outgoing checks are signed by Ellen and Star. It is a long record keeping meticulous job. Lynn Rohde did it for many years and it was a lot of work. Thanks again Lynn and to Ellen Peters we thank you for your long and hard work. Ellen also goes to Normandy/Belgium and 505 events.

Emile Lacroix, our number 1 man on the scene in the Ardennes, Belgium, will again sponsor and run the favorite "March in the footsteps of the 82nd Airborne Division." in the Battle of the Bulge. The 2008 "March" will be held on the weekend of February 23d. About 30 years ago Emile began on his long journey as the 82nd Airborne historical researcher on the 82nd battlegrounds. For the past 25 years he has put together a team that follows the combat areas of every 82nd unit. There is no one in Belgium that works as hard as Emile and he has also designed 30 metal plaques (he is an engineer/designer) posted around the Ardennes. He receives veterans and family visiting and attends all the other D-Day Normandy and Belgium cemetery memorials. He is the most dedicated person in Belgium and has never sought notoriety, but has been officially awarded Honorary Memberships in our 505 RCT and 82nd Airborne Division Association.

Any veteran who has ever attended Emile's annual "March" in the Ardennes knows of Emile and his loyalty to our WW II combat men. He is also the man who designed all the hand drawn maps in my book, "No Better Place to Die", as well as obtaining from Army archives the D-Day Normandy photos. Emile is our man in Belgium and nobody can compare to him. I'll see you next Feb 23rd in the Ardennes Emile, God willing. If it snows in Belgium then maybe I'll bring some back to Florida.

After our Ft. Bragg Reunion last October 24-27th, I continued on to my Florida home where I will be for the winter and until about May 10th. Except I will be away from 30 November till 21 December while I go to Rome and take a Princess Line cruise back to Ft. Lauderdale. There are many city stops and I will visit two USA cemeteries in Italy and South France. Last year on another trip between Salerno and Rome, I did visit Anzio. A beautiful cemetery where we have our 82nd comrades resting in peace.

I'll be going to Ste Mere Eglise this June, as usual. The SME Museum has been improved a great deal with its new curator Director and President Count d'Aignieux. Our honorary member Henri-Jean Renaud spends a lot of time working and improving the entire museum. There are many new attractions and it is a pleasure to visit each year. Hopefully, next June our 82nd Airborne Troopers can visit and jump into

the LaFiere DZ and have a cold one at Roger Coueffin's famous Stop Bar. I've sometimes thought that if the Stop Bar was open on D-Day 6 June 1944, I expect we may have had to call a truce for a day or two! We have great 82d museums in U K, Ste Mere Eglise and Groesbeek

For all our Board members of our partnership associations, I thank you for all your separate individual time and effort to keep our friendship continuing to honor our comrades and to maintain our close contact with our friends in England, Normandy, Holland and Belgium and some in Sicily and Italy that General Ed Thomas stays in contact .

If any of our members are planning to go to Emile Lacroix "March" this Feb 2008 or to Normandy next June or to Holland next September, please let me know as soon as possible plan some events, USA Cemetery visits and dinner parties with our friends. I am available by telephone 239-947-1967 or email !! HYPERLINK "mailto:a505@juno.com" ¶a505@juno.com¹ anytime except 11/30 to 20 December as I have advised I am away on a trip.

Airborne all the way!

BOB Murphy, 505RCT President and F&F's Association Trustee

¶ 1 PRESIDENTS "--

Dear Don,

Ralph Yeager

I would like to comment on the 505 RCT reunion at Fort Bragg in October, and thank the people who made it happen and gave us such a fantastic time.

I don't know who all the people are that had a hand in it, but I do know that both Star Jorgensen and Jim Blankenship played key roles. Thanks to everyone involved in making our visit a memorable one.

My daughters, Suzanne and Shirley, and I met so many wonderful people like Carl and Veronica Paul, John Clancy and his daughter Colleen, The Wurst family, Bob Murphy, you Don McKeage and many others.

I have been waiting for years to see the museums at Fayetteville and Fort Bragg. They were amazing. The Memorial luncheon and Banquet were both impressive and delicious.

Although the reception of the troops from Iraq was not initially on the agenda, it proved to be a heart warming experience I will cherish.

Lastly, but not in any way least, the Hospitality Room was truly remarkable all of the good food and drink. It was just outstanding.

Thanks again for everything. We think it was an amazing reunion.

*Don, you might put this in the Panther,
let them know the good time you had.*

Airborne

Ralph Yeager

Col.(ret) Edwin M. Sayre
1 Sierra Drive
Breckenridge, Texas 76424

To the World War Vets and our new organization Friends and Family's of the 505 th Parachute Infantry.

The 505 th reunion for the year 2007 at Fort Bragg was in my opinion as good a reunion as we have ever enjoyed.

The Staff of Moon Hall , with guidance from Star Jorgenson , CSM (ret) Ted Gaweda , Ellen Peters , Barbara Fortenbaugh and many volunteers from our Friends and Families did a great job .

The Hospitality Room , hosted by Jim Blankenship was always open and had all the items required for snacks & drinks . The Reunion committee 's ability to get General James Lindsay (ret) and the XVIII Airborne Corps. Commander Lt. General Austin III as speakers was remarkable considering the fact we are a relative small organization.

Both speakers obviously had a thorough knowledge of our heritage relating to World War II .

It was disappointing that the majority of the active duty members of the 505 th are busy fighting the wars in Iraq and Pakistan .

It would have been a relief and joy if their missions could be accomplished and with as few casualties as possible .

Our prayer's are with them !

God Bless America !

Sincerely,



Edwin M. Sayre
Col. U.S. Army Retired

A MESSAGE FROM IRELAND

Dear Family & Friends and 505 RCT members,

As an Irishman, the opportunity for me to be at this year's reunion in Fort Bragg was immensely significant. Up until then, my relationship with the association and its members was somewhat 'long distance'. But now that I have returned home, the ocean between us seems not so wide, and reflecting on my conversations with the veterans, it is obvious that Northern Ireland does indeed hold a special place in their hearts. Knowing this makes me extremely proud because, although this is a small island with a troubled past, the nature of our people has always been to show kindness to others, and it's clear that this characteristic displayed itself in abundance to the troopers of the 505th during their 1943-44 winter stay in Cookstown. Therefore, in recognition of this link between us, one of my duties at the reunion was to present your outgoing president, Mr Don McKeage, with a plaque from Cookstown District Council.

Of course, one other reason for me being at the reunion was in a consultancy role for a Northern Ireland production company making a documentary for the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) called 'Over Here'. This is a one-hour special reflecting on the personal experiences and social interactions of American troops with Ulster people and society during WWII. The interviews conducted at Bragg were part of a series undertaken over a two-week period bringing us from Syracuse NY to Tampa FL - with several stops in-between. In that period, we interviewed 2nd and 5th Infantry Division, 82nd Airborne Division veterans and a couple of GI brides, including Maggie James (wife of the late Larry James). The documentary is due for release on British TV in the spring with a strong possibility of American channels picking it up later. I will keep you informed.

Finally, let me extend a special thanks to everyone who helped me during what was a stressful time at the reunion. I couldn't have done it without you. Your friendship is very dear to me!

Until we meet again,

John McCann.

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE 82nd AIRBORNE DIVISION
February 23, 2008

For it's 26th edition, our next yearly MARCH "In the Footsteps of the 82nd Airborne Division" is sheduled for February 23, 2008. This year we will follow the trails of the 505PIR and the 551PIB.

The 22 km hike will start from the Noirefontaine farm and follow an cross country itinerary passing by Reharmont, Fosse, Petit-Halleux, Rochelinval, Dairomont, St Jacques and back to Noirefontaine farm. All those battlefields where outstanding valour in combat was demonstrated by the troopers and glidermen of the 82nd Airborne and especially by the 505PIR, and 551PIB troopers that were attached to the 82nd Airborne Division. During lunch time hot soup is served at our field kitchen to all participants and hot dogs and hamburgers can be purchased by participants. At the end, hot wine is served and a collector certificate is presented.

At the evening of the MARCH a banquet is offered to the veterans who attend each year with many others enjoying a good meal with lots of stories and renewing friendships.

This MARCH is attended by people from all over Europe and U K including many reenactors in full WWII uniform and gear. Last year we had around 1000 participants, including many from the USArmy from Germany.

Some places and historical battlefields cited below will be visited by this MARCH.

- The Noirefontaine Farm was attacked by the 551PIB on the night of the 27-28 Dec. 1944 during an important raid ordered by General Gavin to check the enemy resistance before the 82nd counter-attack scheduled for January 3, 1945 and to bring back a German prisoner.

During the January 3 counter-attack, the farm was the objective of the 2nd battalion of the 505PIR.

- Reharmont was the objective of the 1st battalion of the 505PIR during the same counter-attack. Company C, leading the attack, lost around 14 KIA and many others were wounded during that action.

- Fosse was the objective of the 3rd battalion 505 the same day and the I Company lost 13 men KIA and many wounded in attacking the village. A monument, designed by Emile was raised there in 1992 by our club and a small ceremony with laying of flowers will be held by the Marchers.

- Petit-Halleux was the place on the Salm river defense line defended by the G Company of the 3rd Bn 505 during the early stage of the Bulge and before the Christmas eve withdrawal. Company G, commanded by Capt. Jack Isaacs, held valiantly the place in spite of furious repeated German attacks. This actions in Petit-Halleux involved our well known friend Chris Christensen who left us last year.

- Rochelinval was another place on the Salm river line defended by the I Company, 3rd Bn. 505PIR, commanded by Capt. Archie Mac Pheeters, who was killed a few days later leading the attack on Fosse on January 3rd.

On January 7, 1945 the 551st PIB, which had already lost many men in the previous days combat, had the task to retake the village. The Commander, Colonel Wood Joerg was killed during the action and the battalion lost so many men that it was disbanded and the men transferred to different parachute units of the 82nd Airborne.

- Dairomont is the area where, during the counter-attack, the 551st PIB which was on the left of the 505PIR, had to make one of the rare bayonet charges of WWII in the ETO into a wooded forest held by Germans. We are

working now to raise a Memorial in memory of that bloody bayonet attack to be dedicated during the March. This Memorial bronze plaque will probably be placed at the spot I suggested on the side of the house which was the Aid station where Colonel Joerg died after being seriously wounded in the head at Rochelival.

- St. Jacques was also a place in the line of attack of the 551st. Those are several highlight historical points we will visit during this March by following the footsteps of our Ardennes battlefields, as we have done for the last 25 years.

Our main working group for the preparation of the March is composed of Stephane Steeno, Philippe Nollet, Mr and Mrs Meunier and Myself and supported by Tom Goode (American school teacher for US troops in Ramstein Germany) who did a lot of work and publicity for us amongst US troops. And also by Lt. Colonels Maria and Robert EOFF both were in the Airborne troops (Maria 82nd and Robert 101st) before service in Germany. Many other people from our Belgian Ardennes chapter are joining to help during the days of the event.

Some veterans of the 82nd and US Friends will participate as usual and we are preparing a good program for them for the few days following the March. This program is not yet scheduled but I can already tell about a great visit of the Citadel Fortress of the town of Huy which was a prison for Jews, underground and politic people to be sent in concentration camp in Germany. This area in Huy is already a museum about this part of history will be increased in showing more on the history of WWII in which we will be involved. The Mayor who is also a Government Minister will welcome the veterans and friends at the town house.

We welcome friends of the 505PIR and 551PIB attending this 2008 year.

Websites to see photos of the 2005 and 2006 March

! HYPERLINK "<http://82airborne.blogspot.com/>"

¶<http://82airborne.blogspot.com/>¹

2006: ! HYPERLINK "<http://82abn-footsteps2007.blogspot.com/>"

¶<http://82abn-footsteps2007.blogspot.com/>¹

Emile Lacroix
President
82Airborne "All American"
Belgian Ardennes Chapter
C-47 Club

Organizator of the March for 25 years

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Ellen Peters

2007 505th RCT Reunion was spectacular. Better than I ever could have imagined. Star and Jim did an incredible job with everything. Of course, it never would have happened without the help of CSM (R) Ted Gaweda. What an honor it was to meet him.

I ran into Col. Ed Sayre, his nephew (and namesake), Ed Dye, and Carol LaBounty at the airport in Charlotte and we traveled the last leg together. Upon arrival at Moon Hall, we got our room assignments and registered for the reunion. That was where I first met Barbara Fortenbaugh. What a doll she is - I should have known that such lovely people as Jennie and Don McKeage would have a lovely daughter.

Later we all went to lunch together down at the mini-mall. On the way over there I ran into John Clancy and his daughter and son in law, Colleen and Ron Smith. It was wonderful to see them again. What a dear, dear man John is. I always want to hug him whenever I see him. It seems he always has a big smile on his face. At the mini mall we saw some of the Franco clan having lunch and it was great seeing them, too. What a wonderful family they have and they always make a good showing at the reunions. Barbara was there with her two kids, Charles and Margaret and Janet had her kids, Robert and Maya. Of course, it is always wonderful to see Doc and Ilene. I love them. They are wonderful people.

I met so many people I have corresponded with or seen their posts on Family and Friends. It was so great to meet so many new people and meet people with whom I have corresponded and never met before. The first day of these reunions is always so much fun seeing everyone again. It was especially wonderful meeting Katie Troccoli, who always sends the John Steele Chapter updates to Family and Friends. She also sent me a wonderful recording of Chaplain Woods a while back.

Later I returned to the Hospitality Room at Moon Hall where I saw our President, Don McKeage for the first time since last year. It is always such a treat for me to see him. He always has a smile, a big hug, and a kiss for me. Then I saw Bill Sullivan and Bob Murphy whom I saw last summer in France. What a contrast to two short years ago, when I walked into the Hospitality Room and didn't know a single person! Dick Mote was there and it was wonderful to see him - he always wants me to "drop and give him 20" because of some infraction I've committed!

That evening, I saw and visited with Otis Sampson and John Perozzi. Otis and I have become very close since meeting two short years ago at the last Fort Bragg Reunion. We correspond by e-mail almost daily and we often talk on the phone. But there is nothing like seeing him in person. What a treat that was. We had a wonderful visit and I met his son, Otis, Jr. and his lovely wife, Sandra. How wonderful to see father and son together both so proud of the other.

Friday afternoon, we went to the Memorial Luncheon at the officer's club. I was seated at a table that included my 508th friend, Rock Merritt. It is always wonderful to see him. There was a very moving ceremony in which the Gold Star families participated. There was Carol Labounty whose father, George Rajmer, was killed on Hill 131 in Normandy; Tommy Taylor, whose grandfather, Stokes Taylor, was killed in Belgium; and Jim Blankenship, whose brother, Charles, was killed in the square at St. Mere Eglise on D-Day. Jim read the poem, "The Absent Legions." I am always deeply moved by the reading of the names of those who made their "final jump" since the last reunion. One of the things that really moved me at the luncheon was the "Missing Man Table". Star included a write up on it in our reunion packets so I had read all

the symbolism in the items on the table. These men must never be forgotten. I can't imagine having no place to go to mourn the loss of a lost loved one because they simply disappeared into thin air and no trace of them was ever found. There are around 20 men from the 55th who are still classified as Missing in Action from WWII.

General Lindsay was the speaker at the luncheon and he spoke of how General Gavin led from the front. He spoke of an instance when General Gavin decided to do his own reconnaissance of an area they were supposed to attack on the town of Schmidt through the Hurtgen Forest. He said to his knowledge no other General has ever done anything like that. He showed a film of a talk General Gavin gave many years later in which he discussed the reconnaissance and he spoke of the utter destruction they encountered along the way of the 28th Infantry Division troops who had fought there the previous November. It was incredible interesting and one of the highlights of the reunion for me.

Later in the afternoon, we made a trip to the 82nd Airborne Museum which is always a special treat. At the entrance to the exhibits, I was reading the units that were part of the division in WWI and noticed the 307th Engineers and the 325th Infantry Regiment, both of which were in the division in WWII. At the end of the visit I got a great picture of Dick Mote in firing stance at one of the 75mm pack howitzer weapons on the museum grounds.

Saturday afternoon, we were having lunch at the mess hall when a young 505 trooper came over and introduced himself to Otis. His name was Kenneth Drury. His grandfather was Jim Drury and was in Otis and John's platoon in WWII. Ken said it was his grandfather's service that inspired him to become a paratrooper. He spoke of how meaningful it is to him to be in the same unit as his grandfather. He also told us his father had been a Marine and had fought in Viet Nam and the first Gulf War and, of course, he had seen combat in Iraq. Three generations of combat soldiers in his family. Wow - what an honor meeting someone from a family that has served our country so well. I invited him to the hospitality room after the banquet. When he arrived that night he had a copy of Otis's book, "Time Out for Combat" that he asked Otis to sign. He said he also was a platoon sergeant and even with the distance of all the years between WWII and now, he could really relate to some of the problems Otis had with his men. What a wonderful experience listening to two combat soldiers discuss their experiences in two wars over 60 years apart. I asked Ken about the fighting in Iraq and he said the 505th fights very aggressively. I guess some things never change!

I think the highlight of the reunion was getting to be there when some of the soldiers arrived from Iraq. What an incredible experience. That had to be one of the most moving experiences of my life. It still brings tears to my eyes when I think of those young soldiers greeting their families after being gone for 15 months. Some had children they had never seen or their children had been so young when they left that they didn't remember them. A truly heartbreaking scene occurred over and over when some children wouldn't go to their fathers. They didn't know them. I have heard similar stories from some of my WWII veteran friends and they always have tears in their eyes when they relate these stories as if the memory is still painful. So, my heart broke for these young soldiers whose children didn't know them. Of course, there were other children who were all over their fathers and that was wonderful to see.

When the soldiers first arrived, they exited the plane and got into formation. They marched into the hangar and stood at attention while

the National Anthem was played and we said the Pledge of Allegiance. Ilene Franco later told me of seeing a trooper standing at attention with an expressionless face and tears steaming down his cheeks. On the other side of the rope was his father with tears streaming down his cheeks. Once the soldiers were released, the two fell into each other's arms. It was an incredible experience I will never forget. Young wives were hugging their husbands as if they would never let them go. There were also some Gold Star families there to greet the troops. My heart broke for them. There would be no happy homecoming memories for them.

There was one of the arriving troopers whose parents had met Otis Sampson the previous day. Their son was a mortar man like Otis was and they introduced their son to Otis. What a thrill to see those two talk. The young trooper asked Otis for his e-mail address and said he would like to correspond with him.

Later, we all piled in the buses and went to the Airborne and Special Operations Museum where Barbara Gavin Fauntleroy gave a slide show presentation and talked about her father. Later she held a book signing and there was a long line of folks getting autographed copies of her book.

We got back to Moon Hall just in time to get ready for the Banquet and what a wonderful experience that was. Everyone looked great. I just love it when they post the colors and the head of the Color Guard salutes and says, "H-Minus, Sir." The 82nd Airborne Division Chorus entertained us and they were spectacular. Star spoke and she gave a very moving speech in which she spoke of our 505th RCT veterans and the active duty troopers. I think she expressed the sentiments of everyone in Family and Friends - she certainly expressed my feelings, but I could never put it as eloquently as she. Her speech was so heartfelt and moving, it brought tears to my eyes. I would not have wanted to follow her to the podium and I don't think LTG Lloyd Austin wanted to either, but he also gave a spectacular speech.

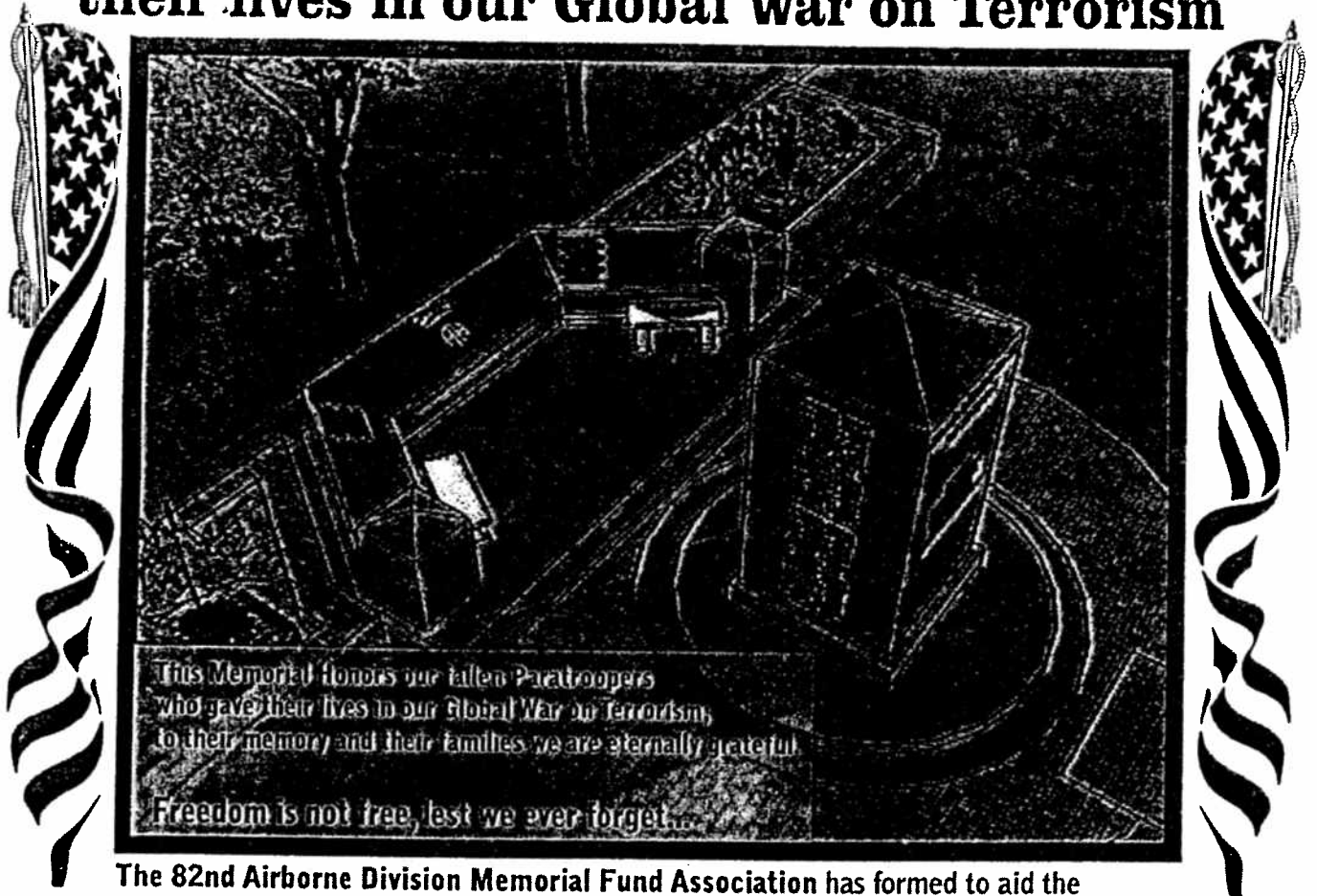
After the banquet, we returned to the Hospitality Room where Jim had set up an incredible spread for everyone to enjoy. He did a spectacular job the reunion with the hospitality room and no one lacked for anything.

At 4:00 AM Sunday morning, I was in the lobby of Moon Hall where one of the troopers assisting us took me, Col. Sayre and his nephew, Ed Dye, and Ilene and Doc Franco to the airport. I mentioned to Doc how he and Ilene always seem to have such fun together. He said it has been almost 60 years of fun! What a lovely couple they are. While waiting in line at airport security, Ilene was madly searching their carry-on luggage for a carton of orange juice she was certain she had put in there. She never did find it and we went on through security. A little while later, I left my gate to go get coffee and I passed Ilene and Doc at their gate. There was Ilene drinking a carton of orange juice!! She found it after passing through security - I'm glad she's on our side!!

All in all the reunion was just incredible. I don't even have the words to express what a great time I had. I thank God every day for the experiences I have had in meeting and getting to know these heroes of mine. These are memories I will cherish all my life.

Ellen Peters

Dedicated to the Fallen Paratroopers who gave their lives in our Global War on Terrorism



The 82nd Airborne Division Memorial Fund Association has formed to aid the 82nd Airborne Division to raise and manage funds acquired from private donations to promote, expand and enhance the Global War on Terror Memorial. The Association will dedicate the Memorial during All American Week 2008.

The Association will fundraise with the goal of enhancing the existing GWOT Memorial located at the 82nd Airborne Division Museum at Fort Bragg. The scope of this project will include an enhanced, more reflective location for the existing monument along with a memorial wall dedicated to our fallen paratroopers. The cost of the Phase II GWOT project is approximately \$200,000.

All donations to the project are tax deductible.
Those making a donation of \$82 or more will receive a certificate from the Memorial Association

Use the form below and mail your donation to:
82nd Airborne Division Memorial Association, P.O. Box 43359, Fayetteville, NC 28309-3359

As a member of the 82nd Airborne Division Association, I am honored to make a donation to the ---

Name	Phone	

Address		

City	State	Zip Code

Signature	Date	Donation Amt

Col. Bryan Owens commanding

Subject: Panther Update Oct 07

Panther Team,

This will be my last update from Iraq. Today as I send this letter to you, we are only days away from our Transition of Authority with 1/101st Airborne (Air Assault). Over the past several weeks we have been busy transitioning responsibility and setting up the Bastogne Soldiers for success. We are nearing the end of our right-seat-left-seat rides, and our Paratroopers are getting ready to come home after a hard 15 months in Iraq. We are grateful for the love and support of everyone back home who kept us going during these trying times. From our families, the FRGs, the 505th Associations, to the numerous organizations who sent us countless care packages, I want to extend my personal appreciation for everything you have done for our Paratroopers.

As our Paratroopers arrive home, they will have a period of well-earned rest and recuperation. The first weekend upon return to Fort Bragg every Paratrooper will receive a four-day weekend followed by 10 half-days of reintegration. During reintegration every Paratrooper will have a series of finance, medical and dental screenings and briefings. Much of the reintegration period is geared towards allowing time for Paratroopers to get personal matters in order and to spend as much time as possible with their families.

Every Paratrooper will go through Basic Airborne Refresher and will jump the last week of November after a 7-day Thanksgiving holiday (normal 4-day weekend plus 3 x admin days, one for each month after 12 in combat). Early December, we will depart for one month of block leave. This schedule will allow every Paratrooper to spend the holidays with his or her loved ones. It will allow time for all of us to get re-acquainted with family members whom we have not seen for the past 15 months.

Since my last update our main focus in Salah ad Din has centered on starting local reconciliation with the tribes and their sheiks. As I mentioned before, in early July, most of the sheiks in the province came together and created the Salad ad Din Support Council. The goal of this organization is to fight al-Qaeda and other terrorist elements in the province and deny the enemy safe havens in tribal areas.

Our battalion commanders established security contracts with the sheiks in their areas and created what has come to be known as the Concerned Local Citizens program. The security contracts allows for each sheik to hire members of his tribe to protect critical infrastructure in their areas and to curb violence levels. As of date we have contracts with 26 tribes, and more than 2,700 Iraqis are a part of the CLC program. They are making a great contribution in making Salah ad Din a safer place. We have seen a reduction of 150 IED events per month in the Province since the contracts were signed and a commensurate decrease in significant activities by our enemy. I just want to highlight a couple of the successes of this program.

In Bayji, 1-Panther has seen a significant reduction in IED attacks. In fact, the 20 mile stretch of road north of the Fertilizer Plant saw a reduction from 39 IEDs to just 3 over a period of 15 days at the end of August.

East side of Tikrit, on the other side of the Tigris River, Task Force Loyalty has done a great job providing security for the city of Ad-Dawr. As many of you may remember, Ad-Dawr was the city where Saddam Hussein was captured in 2003, and it was also the place where we established Patrol Base Woodcock after Operation Hershey. Hand-in-hand with the security forces in Ad-Dawr and the CLCs, the Paratroopers of Loyalty worked to bring stability and security to surrounding towns and villages. Their success has been noticed by the COIN academy, where Ad-Dawr has become a case

study for incoming units on how to conduct a classic counterinsurgency operation.

The Paratroopers of 2-Panther, working with a local tribe and the National Police have had great success against al-Qaeda in the Samarra area. The Golden Mosque bomber, Haitham Sabah al-Badri met his end at the hands of well-integrated U.S. attack helicopters in early August. As the city moves towards the reconstruction of the Golden Dome Mosque, it will also experience a holistic program of revitalization and rejuvenation. The city of Samarra will move into this next phase with the help of Bastogne, but it was due to 2-Panther's efforts that Samarra is ready to make the leap into a new era.

Eventually the Iraqis working on the CLC contracts will become policemen or find legitimate jobs as the economy improves. As violence levels decrease throughout the province, reconstruction can occur at a much larger level and jobs can be created for Iraqis. The Bastogne BCT, led by COL Scott McBride, will lead Salah ad Din into the next phase and will be successful in helping the province reach Provincial Iraqi Control. The Bastognes are a great unit, led by capable leaders, and we will keep them in our thoughts and prayers as we begin to redeploy.

Unfortunately we have lost 10 Paratroopers, Soldiers, and Seamen during the past two months, and we pray for their families and loved ones. During the past two months 2-Panther lost two Paratroopers: SGT Joshua Morley and SPC Tracy Willis both on August 26 after heroically fighting off an al-Qaeda onslaught on their position in Samarra. 5-73 CAV lost SSG Joshua Mattero on July 29 and SSG Joan Duran on August 10. 1-Panther lost SFC David Heringes from an IED on August 24 and CPL Anthony Bento from a landmine on September 24. We lost two soldiers from 3-8 CAV: PFC Dane Balcon and CPL William Warford on September 9 from an IED blast. We also lost two Navy EOD techs in an IED blast: Petty Officer 1st Class Jeffery Chaney and Chief Petty Officer Patrick Wade. Their sacrifice will never be forgotten and their contributions to this fight were countless. Our prayers are with the families that were left behind.

All The Way!! H-Minus!! Panther 6 (COL Bryan Owens)

Dear Friends.....

Col Bob Piper

>

> It is with a broken heart that I inform you that Bob passed away, Sunday morning at 8:21 AM at home with me beside him.

>

> The funeral will be Thursday here in Daytona Beach. His burial will be with full honors at Arlington National Cemetery sometime in January.

>

> Nancy Piper

Family & Friends.....We are all saddened to hear of the passing of Col. Bob Piper. Bob was a legend in the 505RCT and we will all miss him greatly. Our hearts go out to Nancy and her family at this sorrowful time in their life. We all are thinking of you Nancy and your family and may God be with you in the loss of a wonderful husband and father.

Jim Blankenship

Bob Burns

Dear Don: Just as I began to wonder if I had missed the Panther, it arrived the other day with lots of good and some bad news. You gave us an explanation, in part, why those of us who subscribe to the Static Line saw a different kind of 505RCT column.

A few pages inward, I saw Ray Fary's note about a planned tour to Belgium and Holland in September. I don't think Ray will mind if I flesh out some important news about that tour and how it relates to our 505 Family & Friends.

After years of effort, the Mayor of Trois Pontois has agreed that the 80th AAA can erect a Memorial to the four troopers of anti-tankers who were KIA in defense of his town on Dec 21, 1944. Veterans of the 2nd battalion 505 recognize this date, and a monument to the paratroopers who lost their life up on the hill on that day and the night before already stands in Trois Pontois.

Happy that the 80th would have an opportunity to Honor its fallen comrades (4) and especially two who were awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for their heroics in the battle, Ray and I began to sweat out the language that would pay the men homage.

The simple way to begin was to look to the language used in the two DSC citations.

However, all medal citations with the 80th AA were somewhat flawed in that they identified the 80th as a Coast Artillery Corp unit, which it technically was, rather than an organic unit of the 82nd ABN.

We needed to make sure that those who read the plaque from day one to the end of history understood that the 80th AA was reared in the 82nd tradition and that it was a glider-borne unit in an unique airborne organization.

Moreover, another flaw existed. The wording of the citations sounded as though the 80th AA was up on the hill alone, defending the town with a single .57MM gun squad (11 in all, and eventually a 2nd AT gun) facing down a battalion of 1 SS armored grenadiers.

Very impressive. But not the whole story.

Despite the fact that the 505PIR has its own monument in Trois Pontois to its fallen, Ray and I decided that the 80th AA memorial should include language that mentions the 505 and E company, in particular. Why? Because the role of the 80th as conceived and used by Gen. Ridgway and Gen. Gavin was to be used as a trump card--to be parcelled out in little pieces to support the lightly armed paratroopers as needed--to get them that extra firepower--an AT gun or a .50 cal MG crew that could help put the paratroops on a more equal footing with the enemy, and that usually meant that the Airborne unit would win out even when the odds were against them.

The 80th AA men who were KIA at Trois Pontois were attached to E Company. And I'm sure they recognized their role of support, important support when armored units were attacking. And they also realized that their own safety was interdependent on the infantry who had to keep enemy forces from getting too close to them where the gun crews could be ambushed or sniped.

So it is, that the wording of this plaque to be emplaced in Trois Pontois on September 7, 2007 mentions in the first sentence that the hill overlooking Trois Pontois was defended by "E Co., 505PIR and A Bty, 80AA."

Even here, the infantrymen are mentioned before our own men of the 80th because it relates the proper role as it was conceived and applied.

Yes, there were times the 80th was used as infantry and in the end, 3 of the four KIAs were firing their M1s and BAR like any infantryman trying to survive a battle. But this was not their real role.

Sorry, space on the plaque did not allow us to tell another part of the story, that F Company was brought in to assist the withdrawal--or as you like to say, Don "Save E company's ass."

Spencer Worth did a great job in his book describing what it was like up the hill that fateful day.

Nor is it possible to describe the role of the 456PFAB in firing down on the Nazi troops in defense of Trois Ponts in such a one-paragraph citation to memorialize the 80th AA KIAs in the early stages of the Battle of the Bulge. Of the 11 known men of the 80th on that hill that day(I suspect there was a 12th), seven were casualties. Two awarded the DSC and one the Bronze Star. (I think it was Dick Winters, CO of E Co 506 who remarked that all veterans of Bastogne were casualties and that is probably true of most veterans of the Bulge).

I am happy to note that a 2nd battalion veteran, Frank Bilich, is making a special effort to make the long journey against the advice of his Dr.-- a typical airborne move!!

It would be great if other Panthers could make it...perhaps use the opportunity to place a wreath at the 505 monument, as well.

In any case, Don, you understand my point.

Much has been written about the 505 regiment and rightly so. Only the 504 record can stand alongside the 505 history. None could surpass it.

I'm sure, in combat, the Panthers must have wondered on more than one occasion... "why can't those engineers clear this minefield; where are all the medics and aid stations for our wounded, where the hell is our artillery support..and so on?"

The stories of the Direct Combat Support units of the 505 is a vital part of 82nd ABN history.

The legendary stand of the 101st ABN at Bastogne would be told today as a Custer-like massacre if not for the massive artillery support provided by its own batteries and those of Attached Units that fate brought to the surrounded village.

Today's Army has issued a Close Combat Support badge to augment the Combat Infantry Badge for units that are in direct firefights and shelling distance of the enemy.

It is within that spirit of recognition and the RCT concept that I offer you and our Family members thanks.

Bob Burns

Mr.McKeage, I had a great time at the reunion and thought everything went fine.Just sorry i could not stay longer.I am glad i got to meet you and spend some time talking.The Memorial Luncheon was very nice and it meant alot to stand in for my Grandfather Stokes.Is thier a way to get a copy of the Gen.Gavin tape we got to watch?I'm sure more people would like one also.Just sorry i didn't get to meet a few more people than i did but i'll try to do better.Hats off to everybody involed in getting the reunion setup and all the help from the people at Ft.Bragg.Thanks to all,Tommy T.

Tommy Taylor: Grand Father KIA on East side Salem River

At Trois Ponts

Deceased from 06 Reunion to Present



FALLEN COMRADES

Axman, Julius O.	E Co
Bell, Elmo	C Co
Bowman, Jasper J.	C Co
Brown, William H.	D Co
Christensen, Wheatley T. Sr.	G Co
Dixon, Floyd	HHB 80th AA
Ellis, Samuel F.	307 ENG/B Co
Follmer, William R.	I Co
Hebein, Fred J.	Regt HQ
Jacobus, George R. Jr.	E Co
Jaeger, Anthony J.	80th AA
McCool, James H.	Regt SV Co
McLean, Thomas	D Co
Mignone, Roland J. Sr.	HQ 2nd
Miller, Stanley	Regt SV Co
Moore, Joseph D.	Regt HQ
Murphy, Ray G.	HQ 3rd
Riniker, Earl	G Co
Ritter, Bruce A.	456 PFAB/HQ Btry
Roddy, Kenneth W.	307th Medical
Rupaner, Mark	B Co
Saylor, Samuel C.	Regt HQ
Schlesener, Catheryn	Wife of Milton Schlesener
Schwan, Kay	Wife of Joseph Schwan
Semenock, Michael N.	HQ 2nd
Shulak, John F.	Regt HQ
Silva, Charles A.	Regt HQ
Skolek, Leonard M.	D Co
Smith, Marvin O.	Regt HQ
Spartichino, George W.	H Co
Tague, Robert M.	Regt HQ
Veria, Robert J.	Regt HQ
Whalen, Edward P.	307 ENG/B Co
Wurst, Millie	Wife of Spencer Wurst
Zahurance, Paul	F Co
Zupazic, Edward	HHB 80th AA
French, William P.	G Co
Vincent, Joseph W.	C Co
Winton, Walter F.	Hdqs 1 st
Mrs Frank Bilick	
Wife of Frank	D Co
Col. Bob Piper	Org G Co
	12-16-07



INVOCATION

Let Us Pray:

Lord God in Heaven, today as we hear the music of our Country and listen to the words which honor those who have gone on before us, thank you for once again reminding us that we are one nation, under God, built upon the words and the principles found in your holy word.

For the warriors who stand here today, we thank you for their Courage, their strength, and their devotion to God and Country. The sounds of their actions have been heard and felt all the way from the hills of Italy, the hedge rows of Normandy, the bridges of The Netherlands, to the streets of Fallujah. Continue to bless them Lord, as they have blessed the world with their lives and their sacrifices.

For the families of these "Panther Warriors" we also ask for a special blessing. For they too have given of themselves in support of our nation. Fill them with your goodness and kindness as they have given of their goodness, kindness, and love to those who have fought for the freedoms we have today in this great Country.

We thank you also for our daily bread. By it may we be given the strength to carry on in the service to which you have called us all.

It is in Jesus' name I pray. And all the Panther's said:

ALL RESPOND: AMEN!

"Missing-Man Table"

Approximately 20 troopers of the World War II 505 Regimental Combat Team were classified as "missing in action," perhaps even dying in a German POW camp. Their remains have never been found, and their names are inscribed upon a "Wall of Missing" in each of the American cemeteries overseas.

To honor them, military and veterans' gatherings set a "Missing-Man Table," but many organizations, such as the 505 RCT Association, also use the symbol to honor those who, as James Gavin said so often during the war, were "lost along the way."

The table is round, to show everlasting concern.

The cloth is white as a symbol of the purity of their motives when answering the Call of Duty.

The red rose, in a vase tied with a red ribbon, is to remind us of the life each of these heroes is missing, and their loved ones and friends who continue to honor their memory, and "keep the faith."

A slice of lemon on the bread plate is to remind us of the bitter fate of those captured, missing, and slain heroes.

A pinch of salt is to symbolize the tears endured by those missing, and their families.

The Bible represents the strength gained through faith to sustain those lost from the United States of America, a Nation founded under God.

The glass is inverted to symbolize the heroes inability to share in the meal's toast.

The chair is empty—they are lost.

Subject: NEW LAW ON RENDERING SALUTE TO OUR FLAG!!!!

greetings from Nijmegen in Holland

Jan Bos

>

It's Now OFFICIAL!

WASHINGTON, D.C.

U.S. Senator Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.) today praised

- > the passage by unanimous consent of his bill (S. 1877) clarifying U.S. law
- > to allow veterans and servicemen not in uniform to salute the flag. Current
- > law (US Code Title 4, Chapter 1) states that veterans and servicemen not in
- > uniform should place their hand over their heart without clarifying whether
- > they can or should salute the flag.

>

- > "The salute is a form of honor and respect, representing pride in
- > one's military service," Senator Inhofe said. "Veterans and service members
- > continue representing the military services even when not in uniform.

>

>

- > "Unfortunately, current U.S. law leaves confusion as to whether
- > veterans and service members out of uniform can or should salute the flag.
- > My legislation will clarify this regulation, allowing veterans and
- > servicemen alike to salute the flag, whether they are in uniform or not.

>

- > "I look forward to seeing those who have served saluting proudly
- > at baseball games, parades, and formal events. I believe this is an
- > appropriate way to honor and recognize the 25 million veterans in the
- > United States who have served in the military and remain as role models to
- > other citizens. Those who are currently serving or have served in the
- > military have earned this right, and their recognition will be an
- > inspiration to others."

>

>

>

>

>

>

- > "If It Weren't For The United States military"

- > "There Would Be NO United States of America"

- > "Home of The Free, Because of the Brave"

One reason the Military Services have trouble operating jointly is that they don't speak the same language. For example, if you told Navy personnel to "secure a building," they would turn off the lights and lock the doors. The Army would occupy the building so no one could enter. Marines would assault the building, capture it, and defend it with suppressive fire and close combat. The Air Force, on the other hand, would take out a three-year lease with an option to buy.

October 2007

Dear 505th Veterans, Family members and Readers,

My name is Jim Goodspeed and I am a high school teacher in mid-Michigan and I am writing to tell you about some amazing experiences that high school students in Michigan have had regarding a time and place that involved many 505th veterans from 1945.

Since 2000, I have been going with students into an area around Ludwigslust, Germany as part of student exchange program. Students from 8-10 different mid-Michigan high schools spend two weeks attending school in this part of Germany and live with a German family. Each October (even as I write this), German students come to our schools and live with our families for two weeks. Usually each exchange involves 75-90 people traveling each way on each exchange, both Americans and Germans. This exchange has touched and involved literally hundreds of American and German families during this time. This is the only exchange in the United States in which adjoining school districts band together to travel to Germany to visit school districts in southern Mecklenburg-Vorpommern.

Little did I know that in 1999 my involvement with the German Exchange Program would bring me into contact with the 505th and a concentration camp that they liberated outside of Ludwigslust. Some of you may remember it as the Wobbelin concentration camp, which held about 3,500 people which the 82nd Airborne liberated on the morning of May 2, 1945.

When I first heard about this concentration camp, I started visiting it with my students and became actively involved with helping the curator and volunteers at the Wobbelin Memorial with research. Since 1999, I have made nine trips to Ludwigslust and hopefully in March, 2008 I will make number ten. Each time that I travel with students, stopping at the Wobbelin Memorial is an important part of our schedule. It has been very encouraging to see these numbers grow in terms of students and schools in our exchange who visit each spring. As a result of this, more German students and citizens have been brought into closer contact and involvement with the Memorial.

As you read this letter, you probably do not know it, but the Wobbelin Memorial is looking for you. If you, or a parent, relative or friend was one of those liberators (or if you were in the Ludwigslust area during May-June, 1945), both the Memorial and I would like to hear from you. *In short, the Memorial needs your help – in terms of recording the names of 505 men who were there, as well as what they may have seen or experienced.*

Because it is important to find these 505 men, I have a free packet of information that you may request and have sent to you. This packet of information tells about the Wobbelin Memorial today, what high school students are doing in that region of Germany as part of our school exchange as well as a project that I did for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. *There is no charge for these materials, you only need to contact me and tell me where to send them.*

The Wobbelin Memorial is hoping that 505 men, their families and readers will respond to this request. We do not want to forget the many veterans who not only defended our country, but helped to liberate this camp.

In closing, we also want to ask veterans and readers if they have any knowledge about several American Red Cross volunteers who were with the 82nd in different roles during 1944-1945. We have learned that there were American ARC women who helped to set up a soup kitchen in Ludwigslust to feed the displaced persons and Wobbelin survivors. If anyone knows anything about these women, please contact me. We are looking for information on Dottie Davis, Louise Shepard, Violet Kochendoerfer, Violet O'Nett, Glennyth Woods, and Evelyn Stevens.

Please contact me with any questions that you have – thank you for taking time to read this request.

Sincerely,
Jim Goodspeed
Fulton High School
8060 Ely Highway
Middleton, Michigan 48856
Phone: 989-236-7232 (school)
989-875-2352 (Goodspeed at home)
email: jgoodspe@edzone.net
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Teacher Fellow

My favorite poem about our war dead is the Absent Legions by Edgar Guest:

The Absent Legions

***Somewhere, far away, they heard us
When the word of Victory stirred us.
Safe within God's Holy keeping,
Heard us cheer and saw us weeping;***

Shared in all we did or said—

Freedom's glorious, youngest dead.

***Never doubt it, there was gladness
Where the dead are done with madness,
Hate and hurt, and need for dying.***

As they saw our banners flying

***On our day of joyous pride,
" 'Twas for this," said they,
"We died!"***

***What if tears our eyes had blinded,
As of them we were reminded?
Never doubt it, they were voicing
Somewhere, songs of great rejoicing;
Glad to look on earth and see
Safe our country, still, and free.***

**Family & Friends of the 505 RCT Association
Governing Board
2006-2007**

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Hello Don

We had a great time at the reunion. We met many very interesting 505 friends. We hope to attend the reunion in 2008. I was happy to finally get to meet you, I would again like to thank you for all you have done for me in the past. You have always been very generous with you time and information. It was a pleasure meeting your daughter Barbara, you must extremely proud of her. Next year I hope to have more time to visit with the veterans. I talked with many of them but not all, lots of interesting stories. Thanks for everything! I will keep in touch.

Roger Dinelt

Roger Dinelt's Father Served in "F" Co.

Jim:

All the best to you and our many dear friends coming for the 505 RCT Reunion. I am sorry that I couldn't make it this year, but wish to stay connected. I'm definitely planning on attending the 65th Anniversary of D-day trip to Normandy in 2009. Hope you have a wonder gathering. I know that the spirit of Jack Norton will be there with you.

John Norton Jr.



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Speaker Memorial Luncheon



General James J. Lindsay (Retired)

General Lindsay was born on 10 October 1932 in Portage, Wisconsin. He enlisted in the Army in 1952 and graduated from the Army Officer Candidate School in May 1953 as a Second Lieutenant in the Infantry. His military education includes the Infantry Officer Advanced Course, the United States Marine Corps Command and Staff College and the National War College. He holds a Bachelor's Degree from the University of Nebraska (Omaha) and a Master of Science Degree in Foreign Affairs from George Washington University.

General Lindsay's command assignments range from platoon through MACOM in peacetime and war. His early assignments were with the 82nd Airborne Division and 77th Special Forces Group. He held eight different positions in the 82nd Airborne from platoon to division level. In Vietnam, he served with the Vietnamese Airborne Brigade, commanded the 2d Battalion 60th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division and was the G3, 9th Infantry Division.

As a General Officer, General Lindsay commanded the 82nd Airborne Division, the Infantry School, and the XVIII Airborne Corps. He also served as Commander in Chief, United States Readiness Command and was the first Commander in Chief, United States Special Operations Command. General Lindsay retired 1 July 1990.

General Lindsay's awards and decorations include: Distinguished Service Cross, Distinguished Service Medal, Silver Star (with four Oak Leaf Clusters), Legion of Merit, Bronze Star with "V" device (with three Oak Leaf Clusters), Combat Infantryman's Badge, Master Parachutist Badge, Ranger Tab, and Special Forces Tab.

Currently, General Lindsay is president of the Airborne and Special Operations Museum Foundation, and a Senior Observer with the Army's Battle Command Training Program. He is a member of the United States Army Ranger Hall of Fame and Officer Candidate School Hall of Fame. He was also the 1996 recipient of the Infantry's Doughboy Award, and the 1998 recipient of the United States Special Operations Command Bull Simon Award.

General Lindsay and his wife Gerry live in Vass, North Carolina.

Speaker Memorial Banquet

LTG Lloyd J. Austin, III ***Commanding General*** ***XVIII Airborne Corps and Fort Bragg***

LTG Austin hails from GA and was commissioned as a 2LT in the Infantry in June 1975 after graduation from West Point. His tours of Army service include assignments throughout the United States and Germany. His education includes a Bachelor of Science Degree from the U.S. Military Academy, a Master's Degree in Education from Auburn University, and a Master's Degree in Business Management from Webster University. He is a graduate of IOBC and Advanced courses, the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, and the U.S. Army War College. His initial assignment was to the 3rd ID (Mechanized) in Germany where he served as a Rifle Platoon Leader in A Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry and Scout Platoon Leader in the Combat Support Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry. Following this assignment and attendance at the IOAC, he was assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, NC, where he commanded the Combat Support Company, 2nd Battalion (Airborne), 508th Infantry and served as the Assistant S-3 (Operations) for 1st Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division. In 1981 he was assigned to Indianapolis, IN where he served as the Operations Officer for the U.S. Army Indianapolis District Recruiting Command and later commanded a company in the U.S. Army Recruiting Battalion. Upon completing this assignment, he attended Auburn University where he completed studies for a Master's Degree in Education. He was then assigned to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, NY, where he served as a Company Tactical Officer. After his selection and subsequent completion of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KAS, he was assigned to the 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry), Fort Drum, NY, where he served as the S-3 (Operations) and later Executive Officer for the 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry. He subsequently served as Executive Officer for 1st Brigade, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) and later as Director of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security for Fort Drum, NY. Austin served from Sep 2003 until Aug 2005 as the Commanding General of the U.S. 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry), stationed at Fort Drum, NY, with duty as Commander, CJTF-180, OEF, Afghanistan. His next position was Chief of Staff of the United States Central Command at MacDill AFB, in Tampa, FL from September 2005 until October 2006. On December 8, 2006, Austin was promoted to Lieutenant General, and assumed command of the XVIII Airborne Corps, Fort Bragg, NC. Lieutenant General Austin's awards and decorations include the Silver Star, the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit (with Oak Leaf Cluster), the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal (with Four Oak Leaf Clusters), the Joint Service Commendation Medal, the Army Commendation Medal (with Five Oak Leaf Clusters), Army Achievement Medal (with Oak Leaf Cluster), Expert Infantryman Badge, Master Parachutist Badge and the Ranger Tab.

Kevin Distel

All,

I've recently returned from a trip to Italy with Beth, my gracious, significant other. Unlike other vacations I've taken in the past, this was NOT supposed to be a WWII themed vacation, but since I was staying near, or passing by so many so areas where so much happened during the war, I had to make an effort to visit them.

Without much preparation I managed to fit in a number of sites without interfering with the many other things we wanted to see. Much of this wasn't on my original list but Beth graciously suggested we take a night in Anzio so that was nice.

I've put together a blog and a photo page to go along with it. I'm really glad I took the time out to visit some of the sites that have captured my interest for so long.

The blog is:

<http://ww2italy.blogspot.com/> there is a narrative up there, which describes some of the actions, and also my impressions upon exploring the battlefields. There are also links to some maps and things like that.

If you just want to look at the photos you can go here. If there are some things you want to see photos of in those areas chances are I have something, I took a ton of pics.

<https://community.webshots.com/user/KevinDistel>

Briefly, this is what I was able to take in:

ANZIO:

Mussolini Canal (504th, FSSF, 15th, 7th Rgt, (3rd ID) positions

Carano, Crocetta: 509th positions

Conca-Cisterna road (Isola Bella) : 1st, 3rd, and 4th Ranger Btn engagements.

American Cemetery at Anzio

MISSED: British (& 3/504th) engagements at Aprilia

British landing beaches

The road from Anzio to Aprilia, the "Bowling Alley"

British Cemetery.

AVALANCHE: SALERNO-PAESTUM

10/6/2007

36th ID landing beaches

504th, and 505th DZs off the beach at Paestum (the oil drum jump)

Altavilla-site of 36th ID, and later 504th engagement on hill 424.

Avellino-509th drop 25 miles north of Salerno.

Maiori-Chiunzi Pass. Ranger Btns, H/504 and later 505th and 325th (plus their usual supporting units).

MISSED:

British landings, Battipaglia, Eboli, Vietri Sul Mare'.

The 505th sites on Mt. Soprano and down to the south near Agropoli where they tied in and eventually met the Eighth Army coming up from the south.

I hope you enjoy.

Thanks,

Kevin

All,

I just wanted to say that it was great seeing many of you again, as well as meeting many others for the first time. Beth and I truly had a wonderful time at the reunion, it is always such a pleasure to spend time with our veterans, and those who share so much in common with them. Meeting and talking with the active duty soliders, and seeing the boys coming home was also something else we'll not soon forget either. We are both so happy we went, it was truly an honor to attend.

Thanks to Star, Ellen, Jim, and all else who put so much into making it such a success. We look forward to seeing you again at the next 505th event!

Regards,

Kevin

Dear Kevin: Nice meeting you and your best gal at Ft. Bragg. It was a super Reunion enjoyed by all. 08 reunion will be in colorado springs, probably Mid Sept, Like President Murphy would say ' bring your snow shoes just in case; HA HA only kidding. Best always and always AIRBORNE Don McKeage. that finished out our 21st yr. sunday the 28th started our 22 yr. and we plan to see you in Colorado

LTC Bryan Hernandez, J-3 Plans

This past weekend I spoke at the South Florida Chapter of the 82nd Airborne Association Veteran's Day reunion. As I entered the small conference room, tucked quietly within the corner of a suburban restaurant, I quickly noticed the age difference between those of the chapter's proud veterans and myself. I was the "honored" guest, a young 37 years old veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom, amongst men that had parachuted into the fields of Normandy over 60 years ago, delayed Communist forces along the Yalu River in the Korean War, and fought in the jungles of the Mekong Delta in Vietnam. I felt like a dwarf amongst giants, humbled by those who had written the pages of modern history by their sweat and blood. I did not feel special but rather honored to sit and talk with these quiet men with whom time has slowly taken away their youthfulness but not their pride and patriotism.

Upon arriving that evening, I walked around to greet people and introduce my wife, but I could not help noticing that we were the youngest people within the room. Suddenly, a feeling of sorrow and shame embraced me as I wondered where my fellow veterans were. Within the small room were men of all different parts of American society that held a special bond and pride of their service and sacrifice, given to their nation during perilous times in their youth. They all answered the call to serve and following their duty, they made a commitment to come back together in order to remember and take care of those who returned less fortunate. Unfortunately, this group of veterans, once bursting with membership is slowly withering away. Further, this phenomenon is not exclusive to the veteran's chapter that I met, but is occurring throughout this nation as more and more veterans leave their ranks with few, younger veterans replacing their hallowed halls. When I finally sat down, I asked a question to the veterans at my table, "Where are the veterans from our recent wars?" The answer was, "Not here." My next thought was why.

The history of veteran's association is intricately linked with the history of our nation both in their development and in their purpose. Since the War of Independence to the Civil War and following America's world wars in the 20th century, veterans have organized into collective groups in order to advocate both recognition of their service and request assistance in areas such as health care and education. More importantly, they have served as institutions to remind Americans of the human costs of war and the sacrifice made by so few for so many. These institutions are dying with their aged members and as they disappear, so will their wisdom and history.

During the mid-20th century veterans associations were successful recruiting service members from World War II and Korea due to the large number of veterans involved in these conflicts and their political activity to advance veteran rights as the country absorbed them back into society. In the political aftermath of the Vietnam War, other veteran organizations began appearing as disenfranchised veterans called for attention and gratitude for their service in an unpopular war. However, there has been a noticeable decline in the membership of many veteran groups since these wars. The decline seems attributable to the lack of sustained conflicts, with combat affected veterans, in the 1980s

and 1990s, disinterest by younger vets, and a general misconception that veteran organizations are for the older generations of WWII, Korea, and Vietnam. The question is if the hundred of thousands of veterans returning from Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere will replenish the depleted ranks of America's veteran organizations.

As the evening continued, I asked dozens of questions about the experiences of the veterans at my table, which included a former Tuskegee Airman turned combat paratrooper in the Korean War. There was a glaring point that these men, and their spouses, shared a camaraderie that our generation of veterans needs to continue. While we continued to talk, it came time for me to deliver my speech and so I humbly went to the small podium situated in the middle of the room among tightly packed dinner tables. I talked briefly about the history of Veteran's Day, the 82nd Airborne Division, and proudly discussed the division's many deployments in the current Global War of Terror, to include my former battalion that is now on its fourth deployment in five years. At the end, I concluded with what I termed a "Call to us". I explained that the "call" was our need and responsibility, as a collective group, to honor the thousands of service members who will not return from the war and to be prepared to receive the thousands of veterans that are coming home wounded and fatigued through organizations such as theirs. Veteran organizations are invaluable and not a relic of past conflicts but institutions that need to engender the new wave of American veterans fresh from the sands of the Middle East.

At the end of the night's events, my wife and I stayed around to give our thanks for the invitation and say our goodbyes to the many veterans that attended. Many veterans stopped to say thank you in a way that made me feel even more humble, it was if I was a visiting dignitary or movie star. I quickly let them know that I was the one humbled because they were, and continue to be, my heroes. As I delicately shook many tired and aged hands, I made a promise to them that my generation would honor them not through words but rather by stepping up to take their place to ensure America does not forget those who have bled for its freedom.

Dear All: This is a special Message to all of you who may be planning on attending the 2008 reunion planned for Colorado springs in Mid-Sept. Please take a few moments and Send Jim Blankenship a note by regular Mail or E-Mail. Stating you will be planning to Attend the 2008 reunion. This will help the Reunion comm. In there planning to come up with a count for activities rooms, meals etc. thank you very much. Don McKeage PP And Panther Editor. His address can be found in list of Family & Friends Officers.

±BRAGG REUNION REPORT

TO SAY THAT OUR 505 RCT/FAMILY & FRIENDS REUNION WAS A SUCCESS WOULD BE AN UNDERSTATEMENT. SEVERAL OF OUR BOARD MEMBERS HAVE ARTICLES IN THIS ISSUE OF THE PANTHER SO I WILL NOT DUPLICATE THEIR COVERAGE.

I WOULD LIKE TO TELL YOU THAT OUR F&F PRESIDENT, STAR JORGENSEN HAS BEEN ILL SINCE RETURNING FROM FT. BRAGG. WITH HEALTH ISSUES IN HER FAMILY AND BOUTS OF DEPRESSION, THINGS HAVE BEEN DIFFICULT FOR HER LATELY. I AM SURE EVERYONE WISHES HER A SPEEDY RECOVERY. STAR DID A FANTASTIC JOB HEADING UP THIS REUNION AS WELL AS THE REST OF THE REUNION COMMITTEE. WE ARE ALL LOOKING FORWARD TO NEXT YEARS GET TOGETHER AT COLORADO SPRINGS IN MID SEPTEMBER.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

JIM BLANKENSHIP
PAST PRESIDENT & FOUNDER
FAMILY & FRIENDS 505RCT

Just got this note from Bob. Sounds like he is really "roughing it".

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

JIM. I am now in Gibraltar "on the rocks", and have been all over Italy, Spain, France, Visited with Maurice Renaud in Cannes. I'll be home on 20 Dec about 3pm Advise all on emails. It is sunny and 68oF here in Gibraltar. Nice ship and too much food. BOB MURPHY

Bob Murphy

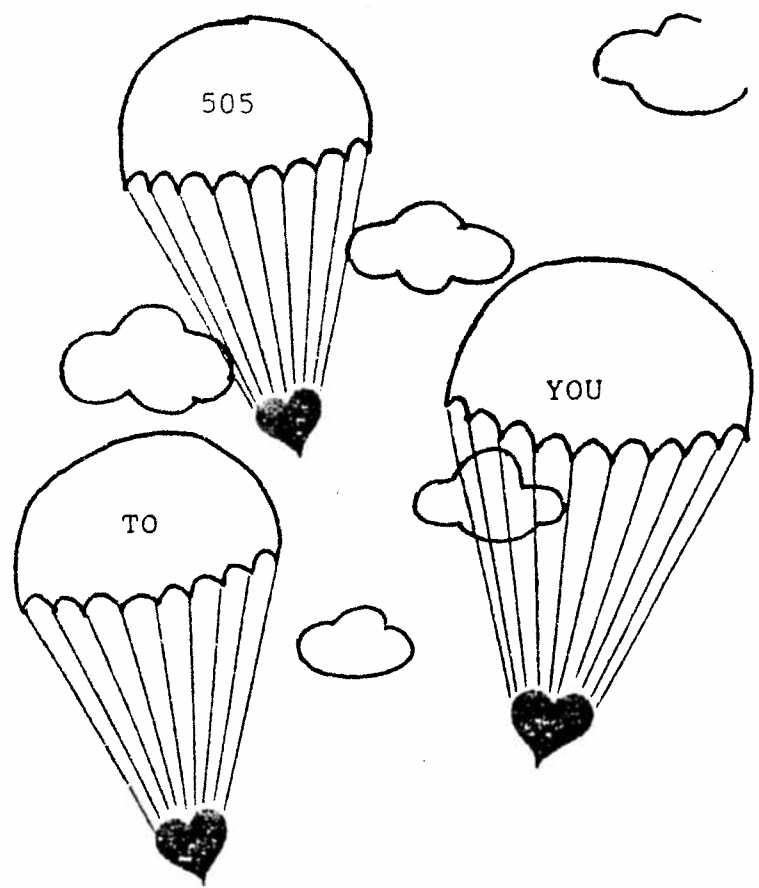
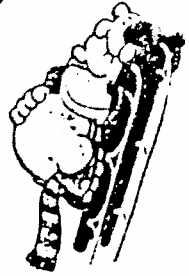
Your Attention, Pvt Mart Smith "F" Co. 33655865 KIA Sept 19th 1944. Nijmegen, Hunner Park; approach Waal river Bridge. Last Interment Margration Cemetery, south Holland F-13-26. If anyone remembers Mart; or what happened when he was killed, please contact Jim Blankenship of Family & friends. He can pass the word along. I my report to F&F. I did not know Mart. We lost 19 Troopers on the 19th & 20th of Sept in this area. We Did havce 3-4 smiths in "F" co at that time. The SAD part now is that we have very few Veterans left from that time Period. Best of Luck for an Answer. Don McKeage

Jennie & Don SAYS
"HAVE A GOOD ONE"

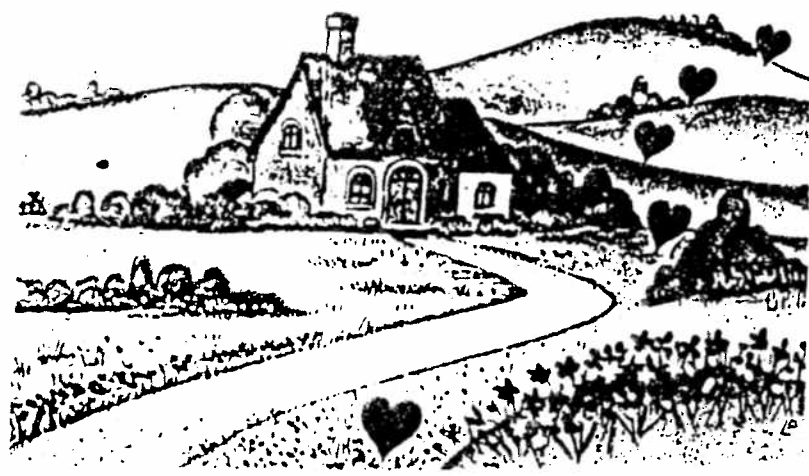
Joyous greetings at Christmas
and best wishes
for the New Year
505 R. C. T.
Association

Joyeux Noël

Prettige Kerstdagen
en
Gelukkig Nieuwjaar!



Trouw Amor



MEILLEURS VOEUX....