

505 R.C.T. WWII

Regimental Combat Team



3630 Townsend Dr.  
Dallas, TX 75229

DATED MATERIAL

# The Panther

APRIL, 2012





## Message from the President:

**From Katie Troccoli, President of Family and Friends 505<sup>th</sup> RCT Assn:**

Dear Friends,

Soon the 68th Anniversary of D-Day will be here. We must come together to celebrate the lives that were lost, as well as, the lives who lived on in freedom. Had it not been for the brave men of the 82ND Airborne, we could not enjoy the freedom we have today. Those who fought and went before us would not want us to squander their gift. It is in each and every one of us that they live on. It took each and every one of you to achieve the goals and win our freedom.

I am honored to be part of the family of The Greatest Men (my Hero's) who ever walked the earth. A grateful nation salutes you!

Airborne! All The Way!

Katie Dumke Troccoli, A Paratrooper's Daughter. ✚

## 2012 Reunion

For our 2012 Reunion, we will once again be combining with the 508<sup>th</sup> PIR and traveling to El Paso, TX. Both regiments have accepted the invitation of the Roy P. Benavidez – Robert Patterson “All Airborne” Chapter of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division Association to have our reunion in conjunction with their “Fiesta” celebration which they do every three years.

In 2009, the 508<sup>th</sup> had their reunion in conjunction with “Fiesta” and it was really spectacular. They entertained us with dancers from all the different regions of Mexico, live music at the banquet, multiple sites to visit at no extra cost. (I recommend the Mission tour and the trip to Ft. Bliss). The registration fee will go directly to the Benavidez-Patterson Chapter. (i.e.: There will be no additional fees paid to our association.) A registration form is included in this newsletter. Send in your registration form today! ✚

## MY HEROES



**Roy P. Benavidez - Robert Patterson "All Airborne" Chapter  
82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division Association, Inc.**



2608 Fort Boulevard El Paso, Texas 79930-2116  
Tel: (915) 562-9969 Fax: (915) 566-7089  
E-mail: [bp82cmdctr@bpaac.org](mailto:bp82cmdctr@bpaac.org)  
**WEBSITE:** [www.bpaac.org](http://www.bpaac.org)



**Chartered by the United States Congress  
SUN CITY "ALL AIRBORNE" FIESTA VI  
REGISTRATION FORM**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ B-P Chapter Member ? \_\_\_\_\_

WIFE/GUEST: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CHAPTER: \_\_\_\_\_ LAST AIRBORNE UNIT: \_\_\_\_\_

ARRIVAL DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ DEPARTURE DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

REGISTRATION FEE: \$ 75.00 PER PERSON

|                           |             |                 |
|---------------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| <b>OFFICIAL USE ONLY!</b> |             |                 |
| CASH _____                | CHECK _____ | RECEIPT # _____ |

**MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: BENAVIDEZ-PATTERSON CHAPTER**

**MAIL TO: Benavidez-Patterson "All Airborne" Chapter**

**ATTN: RICK TREVIZO, Treasurer**

**2608 Fort Boulevard**

**El Paso, Texas 79930-2116**

**\*\* WWII Vet or Family Member to be Honored- Please provide Vet's name & description of WWII Service. \*\***

**EVENT HIGHLIGHTS**  
(Subject to change)

| <u>July 4</u>                                  | <u>July 5</u>                                   | <u>July 6</u>                                    | <u>July 7</u>              | <u>July 8</u>                             |
|--|---|--|----------------------------|---|
| 0800 - 1600 Registration<br>0800 - 1000 H-Room | 0800 - 1600 Registration<br>0800 - 1000 H-Room  | 0800 - 1600 Registration<br>0800 - 1000 - H-Room | 0800 - 1000 H-Room         | 0800 - 1000 (Chapter)<br>Menudo & Tamales |
| /  | / Coffee, Juice, Pastries & Fruit - Jul 4 - 7 / | /  | /                          | /   |
| 10 - 12 Eastside Parade                        | 10a - 5 p Tour & Shop                           | 10a - 4p Tour & Shop                             | 10a - 4p - Tour & Shop     |   |
| 10 - 4p Tour & Shop                            | 1 - 2p Mtg. W/Nat'l. President                  | 9 - 11:30a Ladies Social                         | 2 - 5p - War Eagles Museum |   |
| 1 - 11p H-Room<br>(Performances)               | 2:30 - 3:30 VA Conference                       | 11:30 - 1 p - LUNCHEON                           | 6 - 7 p Social Hour        |   |
|  | 4 - 11p H-Room                                  | 2 - 4p - WWII Vets                               | 7p - 12a - DINNER/DANCE    |   |
|  | 7 - 8:30p Tequila & Dance                       | 6 - 11p - VIVA El Paso                           |                            |   |

**HOTEL REGISTRATION  
SUN CITY "ALL AIRBORNE" FIESTA VI**



**July 4 - July 8, 2012  
El Paso, Texas**

**\* PLEASE CALL: 1-800-742-7248 Group Code: 82<sup>ND</sup> AIRBORNE DIVISION  
\*\* Ask for IN HOUSE RESERVATIONS \*\***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Arrival Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Departure Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Group Rate: \$89.00 per night**

**\*\* Please advise of special needs or arrangements required \*\***

## EMILE LACROIX HONORED BY THE U.S. ARMY

During the banquet after Emile Lacroix's 30<sup>th</sup> annual In the Footsteps of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division March, Emile, was presented with the below award. I can think of no one more deserving of this high honor. Many congratulations to Emile.

**From:** Emile Lacroix <emile.lacroix@skynet.be>

**To:** Emile Lacroix <emile.lacroix@skynet.be>

**Sent:** Mon, February 27, 2012 4:34:13 PM

**Subject:** award

During the banquet after the march "In the footsteps of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division" this February 25, 2012, I was presented an Award Medal by Larry Mallett talking in the name of US Army for my dedication at the history and tribute to the troopers of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division.

Very proud of this award, I would share this with you.

Emile Lacroix



## DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

EMILE LACROIX

IS PRESENTED THE

### CIVILIAN AWARD FOR HUMANITARIAN SERVICE

FOR EXCEPTIONALLY MERITORIOUS AND UNWAVERING COMMITMENT WHILE SERVING AS A VOLUNTEER WORLD WAR II HISTORIAN, 82ND AIRBORNE ALL AMERICAN JEEP GROUP, HAMBRAINE, BELGIUM FROM MARCH 1983 THROUGH OCTOBER 2011. MR. LACROIX'S SELFLESS SERVICE AND COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE WAS THE DRIVING FORCE FOR THE ANNUAL BATTLE OF THE BULGE COMMEMORATIVE MARCH, "IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE 82ND AIRBORNE DIVISION". HIS DEEP APPRECIATION FOR THE COURAGE AND FORTITUDE OF THE AMERICAN SOLDIER ENSURES THOSE WHO SERVED IN THE EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATION, DURING WORLD WAR II ARE NEVER FORGOTTEN. HIS INFLUENCE AND UNDISPUTED CREDIBILITY AS A "TIRELESS WORKER AND FIRST CLASS HISTORIAN" HAS ALLOWED HIM TO PROVIDE A CONTINUING TRIBUTE TO THE AMERICAN SOLDIER WHO SACRIFICED THEIR LIVES FOR THE GOOD OF ALL. MR. LACROIX'S DISTINCTIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS REFLECT GREAT CREDIT UPON HIM, THE 82ND AIRBORNE DIVISION, XVIII AIRBORNE CORPS, FORCES COMMAND, AND THE UNITED STATES ARMY.

25 February 2012



DAVID M. RODRIGUEZ

General, U.S. Army

Commanding

U.S. Army Forces Command

## A citizen from Hambraine decorated by the U.S. Army

From the Belgian newspaper Vers L'Avenir

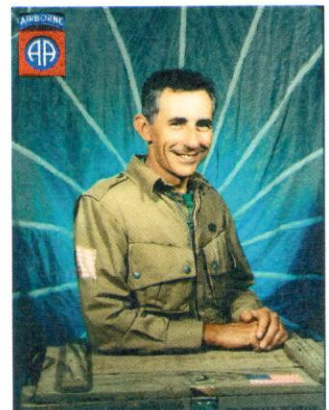
**At a very young age, Emile Lacroix was passionate about the 82nd Airborne Division and its Regiments. He was recently awarded for this.**

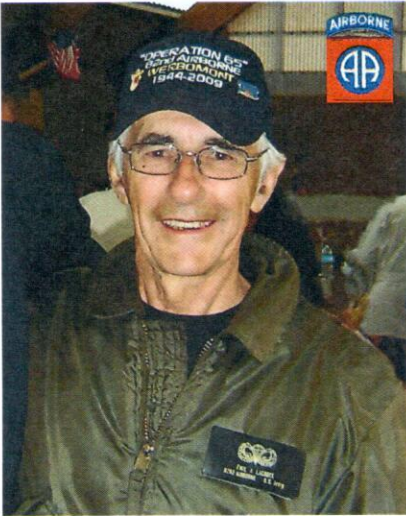
Emile Lacroix was recently decorated by the American Military authorities for his stubbornness and his fidelity to maintain the remembrance of the 82nd Airborne Division during WWII - 1940-1945. Emile was 5 years old at the end of the war. He was living in the area of Mons. With his parents he evacuated his birthplace in 1944 following the assassination of a German Officer and rumors of reprisals were flying against the villagers. With his parents they slipped out of town by train in the middle of the night and they came at the village of Hambraine, a hamlet of Fernelmont, to take refuge at the house of a brother of his mother. The villagers were following the military operations at the little café owned Emile's uncle. It was here that the child was listening attentively to the Allied advance and later was in contact with American soldiers who were billeted in the village castle and who were coming to have a drink at his uncle's café offering him chocolate and chewing gum.

The Battle of the Bulge and the previous Normandy landing became his preferred subjects. Later, the movie "The Longest Day" continued to give him the boost to praise the merits of the 82nd Airborne who had distinguished itself in the Sainte-Mere-Eglise area. The young man dreamed to meet paratroopers and learn about their combat. In the sixties he went to the then annual battle of the Bulge exhibition in La Gleize (now La Gleize Museum) and his passion for the 82nd Airborne never stopped growing. In 1974, he had the occasion to meet a tour of veterans from that Division. He started bonds of friendship and entertained regular correspondence with them. In 1975, Emile bought a genuine WWII US Jeep and marked it with markings of the 82nd Airborne of which he was so passionate. This purchase pushed him to create an Association of WWII US Army vehicles dedicated to the 82nd. It was the beginning of a work of more research to know all about this elite American unit.

In 1983, he organized the first Historical march "*In the Footsteps of the 82nd Airborne Division*" a well known yearly event in the Belgian Ardennes which takes place in the very heart of the battlefields of the 82nd Airborne Division. Emile and his friends initiated the raising of several commemorative monuments with dedications in the presence of American veterans. He had the chance in 1984 to welcome General French, Commander in second of the 82nd Airborne Division who came specially from Fort Bragg with a Honor Guard and for a dedication and a big orchestra from the US Army. During the years Emile Lacroix was made an Honorary Member of the 82nd Airborne Division Association whose first H.M. was President Truman. General Gavin also agreed to be the Honorary President of His Association. Amongst his actions Emile contributed to the writing of books written by veterans and translating some of those books.

Emile became a soldier at heart





## **A Fernelmont citizen decorated by the US Army.** **From the Fernelmont town bulletin**

At dawn of June 6, 1944 operation "Overlord" began. 130,000 Allied soldiers were assaulting the Normandy coast at the cost of high losses. . Before September there were no fewer than 3 million men who were unloaded on the beaches to fight and finally defeat the Nazis aided by the most audacious logistical operation in the history of mankind. During this famous Normandy landing and the numerous feats of arms which followed for the liberation of Europe, two U.S. Airborne Divisions would particularly distinguish themselves; The 101st and the 82nd Airborne Divisions.

Back to our present days..... If the memory of the heroism and sacrifice of those men is perpetuated today, it is also thanks to passionate men who have fanned the flame of remembrance on this side of the Atlantic. Amongst them, a man from Fernelmont, Mr. Emile Lacroix, well known here by his involvement with the local Cyclosporitif Team. More than 35 years ago, Mr. Lacroix started an Association of US WWII vehicle collectors and called it The 82nd Airborne "All American" Jeep Group (dedicated to the history of the 82nd Abn) and each year organizes a historical march in the Ardennes followed by a banquet. However, the memorializing of these actions are not limited to this. Emile Lacroix and his friends initiated and raised monuments in Belgium and foreign countries, they edited brochures and books in French and in English. An important section dedicated to the 82nd Airborne Division is in the "Ardenne 44" museum in La Gleize etc ....

In presenting a new Official decoration to Emile Lacroix who was made an Honorary Col. In 1986 and Honorary Member of the 82nd Airborne Division, the American Authorities are rewarding his devotion, his fortitude and his stubbornness to perpetuate the remembrance of the feats of arms of the 82nd Airborne Division during the Second World War. This Division still exists today and is deployed in Afghanistan.

Our heartiest congratulations to our friend Emile.

## Mail Box

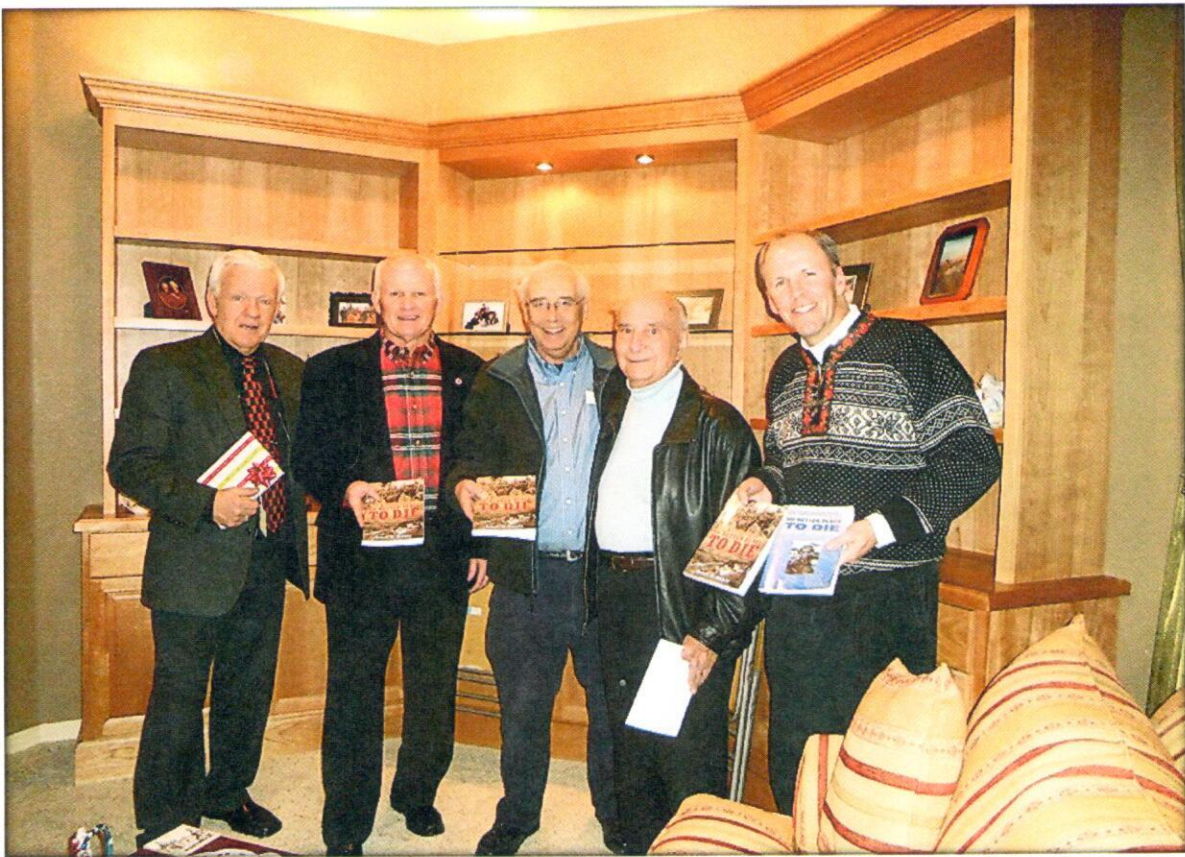
**From:** Barry O'Shea <barryoshea@comcast.net>

**Subject:** Bonne Annee

**To:** ceptx@sbcglobal.net

**Date:** Sunday, January 1, 2012, 6:35 PM

On December 23, 2011 G Co, 505<sup>th</sup> veteran, Duke Boswell's, son, Jamie Boswell held a holiday party at his home in Colorado Springs. Below is a photo of some of the attendees. Near the end of the party, Duke and I asked the group in the photo to gather in a side room where Duke handed out the gifts of the new edition of the Bob Murphy book, "No Better Place to Die" (autographed by Duke). Duke is bringing a group of 11 of us to Ste Mere Eglise and Normandie for the 68th anniversary of D-Day. Nine of the group of 11 heading to France will be staying at the La Fiere Manoir house, while Duke and I will stay with Jean Marie Lemoigne in SME again, just like 2009. Duke and I wanted the group to read about the famous battle that took place right outside the B&B. (Jamie Boswell and Father Steve Jeselnick have stayed at La Fiere Manoir for the 2010 D-Day event when Duke and I did not attend.) The final 2 travelers who are coming to Normandy for our group are Mary Lou Sherwood's brother and sister in law who live in St Louis-they were not at this party).



**From:** Emile Lacroix <emile.lacroix@skynet.be>  
**To:** Ellen Peters <eeptx@sbcglobal.net>  
**Sent:** Tue, March 13, 2012 6:58:31 AM  
**Subject:** RE: 82nd Airborne march

Ellen,  
The ceremony at the 508PIR Memorial was great. The big group of Anglo- Belgian re enactors who had travelled all night in GMC trucks from Sissonne, near Reims to Werbomont as did the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne in 18 Dec. 44 had joined us before the ceremony (they had marched from Werbomont to a point to join the march) joined us as Honor guard with their 70 men in WWII 82<sup>nd</sup>'s combat gear. After a short account of the 508 battle there Philippe Jenaux and I laid the wreath and taps and hymns were played. During all that time, Don Jakeway was in communication with us on my cell phone and Larry Mallet was making the comments. Philippe and I were laying the wreath because the veterans were back to the hotel to take a rest before the banquet. The banquet was great with my team making a homage to me very moving. Then came Larry Mallet with the great surprise to be speaking in the name of the FORTSCOM and presenting me an award medal from the US Army. At the end of the banquet we had a show by the "Andrews Sisters" who brought a terrible ambiance. I am so sorry that you missed that.  
I send you some pictures of the medal presentation and I will send you some more picture in other Emails.

Emile



(Editor's note: I have included Emile's photos in a separate section in my online photo album at [www.eeptx.phanfare.com](http://www.eeptx.phanfare.com))

**From:** Frits Janssen <frits.janssen@planet.nl>  
**To:** Ellen Peters <eeptx@sbcglobal.net>  
**Cc:** Ellen Peters <ff508pir@sbcglobal.net>  
**Sent:** Sat, February 18, 2012 5:26:37 AM  
**Subject:** Mayo S Silvey

Hi Ellen,

I have a question. I am doing research on Lt Col Mayo S Silvey (I think I wrote you before about him). We do have his dress jacket and want to use that on our exhibitions. I am in contact with his relatives, but they don't know much either.

what I do know is that Mayo Silvey ended the war as the Ordnance officer of the 82nd. Do you happen to know veterans of HQ/82nd or the 782nd Co who I may contact for information?

Frits

Dear Ellen Peters  
Newsletter,

April 6, 2012 Editor; Panther

I just wanted to write and thank you for publishing my father's (Francis X. Schweikert) company G photos in the 2011 December issue of the Panther newsletter. My hope was to find a trooper who had been with my father at Grand Halleux around the time of his capture, Christmas Eve 1944. My expectations weren't very high, I have often wished I had started my search years earlier. Little did I know, that was all about to change.

Shortly after the newsletter went out to the veterans of the 505 RCT, I received a telephone call from John T. Diffin, who after introducing himself, began to tell me the story of my father's capture on that Christmas Eve, so many years ago. It was the night of the Divisions' ordered pull back from their Salm River defensive positions. Their new defensive line was to be formed at Basse-Bodeux, a small Belgium town located three or four miles north, northwest of Grand Halleux. G Company began their pullback shortly after dark. A few miles along their assigned route they stopped to set up a defensive position. My father (Francis), Corporal Carl Cantrell and John were members of the 2nd squad, 2nd platoon of Company G. While their squad was setting up, John became concerned about a nearby path. He asked Francis to take first watch so there wouldn't be any surprises coming from that way. John gave him his watch and sent him down the trail to get into position. Francis was to wake Carl Cantrell in two hours for the next watch. The night was cold and very damp with light rain/sleet falling at times, then out of nowhere, Francis began shouting "let me go, let me go, God damn it, let me go" at the top of his lungs. The damp, still night air in the Salm valley carried Francis's voice a good distance, allowing John and Corporal Cantrell to get a bead on his whereabouts. As Corporal Cantrell and John closed in on the patrol, they opened fire. With German casualties quickly mounting, 6 of the enemy surrendered. They later claimed to be Poles and not of German descent. In the confusion of darkness and worrying that Francis could end up a casualty as well, the fire fight ended with the taking of prisoners. Francis could no longer be heard shouting. (In a 1947 reunion my father told John the Germans had tied his scarf around his head, covering his mouth to quiet him) When the troopers returned in the morning, they found Francis's trench coat with John's watch in the pocket. They counted 11 dead enemy.

In 1947 John visited my Grandparents home on Staten Island to talk over old times with my Dad, it was the first time they talked face to face since the night he was captured. Our family always knew a paratrooper came to the house after the war, however, when my father passed away 34 years ago, so did the trooper's name.

John was able to identify most of the unknown troopers from the pictures shown in December's issue of the Panther. He also turned out to be the soldier who gave my Dad the pictures taken at Camp Quorn, England, just before the Normandy campaign. One of the photos I had mislabeled was a picture of John with his steel pot on, holding a Thompson automatic rifle.

After WW II, John spent a brief period as a civilian. He returned to the 82nd Airborne Division and remained with the Division until he retired, with the exception of two tours. The first tour was with the 187th (Airborne) Regimental Combat Team during the Korean War, and later, a tour in Vietnam with the 101st Airborne Division. In 1974, John flew to Europe for the thirty year D-Day commemoration service held in Sainte Mere Eglise, France, attending as an official representative of the 82nd Airborne Division. In October of 1975 Sergeant Major John T. Diffin retired after a 33 year career. At the time of his retirement he was the last active duty WW II veteran on the 82nd Airborne Division's roll.

Since our first talk on the telephone we've spoke several times. I have developed a deep respect for John and his devotion to our country. I am so glad my search had such a great ending, this wouldn't have been possible without the 505 family and friends network. Thanks again;

Sincerely, Robert Schweikert

**From: "Walther, Larry P." <larry.walther@swri.org>**  
**To: Ellen Peters <eeptx@sbcglobal.net>**  
**Sent: Tue, March 20, 2012 12:56:30 PM**  
**Subject: RE: F&F 505RCT Assn.**

Here is the 1936 Berlin Olympic Pin. Pfc Calvin Henderson 505 PIR company b—He told me that when the war ended in May, he was sent back to France to get the troops back into "respectable military discipline" shape. His group- around July 1945- , got cleaned up and was sent to Berlin as occupation troops. His regiment was billeted in Wansee which was a suburb of Berlin. He told me as he was walking around in all the rubble and destruction of a bombed city, he saw a shiny object in the rocks and he picked this object up. So for 50 years he had this Olympic pin from the famous Jesse Owens 1936 Olympics. My name is Larry Walther and as a son-in-law he graciously gave the pin to me about a year before his passing. All I can say is, Thank you all who served in the 82<sup>N</sup>.



Dear Ellen,

I am trying to locate/find photographs for the following paratroopers of the 505<sup>th</sup> PIR – Company F – 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon – Mortar Squad – who landed at Sainte-Mere-Eglise, France on 6 June 1944. Any ideas or help?

1. Lt. Harold O. Caddis
2. Sgt Edward White
3. Pfc. Clifford Maughan
4. Pfc. Penrose Shearer
5. Pfc. Alfred J. Van Holsbeck
6. Pvt. Ernest Blanchard

Respectfully,

**Mike Bigalke**

**213 North Taylor St.**

**Marengo, IL 60152-3139**

**Ph: 815-568-5887**

**Email: mbigalke@mc.net**

Dear Ellen,

I so enjoy all the news that is associated with the FF505RCT. The veterans of that time in our country's history, so influential, helped give me momentum so often during my time in the service back in 1965-1967 during Viet Nam. I, too, had an uncle who served in WWII – a great motivator for me.

I still keep in touch with my friend, Jim Blankenship, down in Georgia from time to time – and always remain so grateful to him for allowing me membership in such a fine organization.

"Thank you", too, Ellen, for all you do in keeping distances close at hand. God Bless you and all our veterans and their families – all are in my heart with....

....Peace, Love, and Prayers

**David Dawes**

Dear Ellen,

I'm enclosing a check – I know you say I don't have to pay – However the amount isn't going to make you rich or me miss a meal.

I am still navigating on my own but only go out of town when someone takes me.

**Chris Russell** – I'm still using the glass Horse bookends you, mom, and dad, gave Tommy and I when we got married.

**Marjorie Gore**

**From:** Caroline Walsh [caroline.walsh@bbc.co.uk](mailto:caroline.walsh@bbc.co.uk)  
**Sent:** Feb 16, 2012 12:38 PM  
**To:** [hq82dabndivassn@earthlink.net](mailto:hq82dabndivassn@earthlink.net)  
**Subject:** BBC/ Discovery D-Day series

Dear Santiago L. Tijerina and Candace Martin

I am emailing regarding a new series currently being made by BBC Television on the Normandy landings.

To give you a bit of background, the two-part series will transmit on BBC One and the Discovery Channel in 2013. The first film will look at the preparations and training for D-Day and the second will follow the events on the day itself. Each film will combine personal testimony with dramatic reconstruction and archive, including aerial reconnaissance photography.

We are hoping to cover the heroic defence of St Mere Eglise at Neuville au Plain on the 6<sup>th</sup> June and I am writing to ask whether you are aware of any surviving veterans who were involved in that operation? As there were only around 40 men fighting, I realize this is relatively unlikely, but we are very keen to find veterans if they are still living. I believe most men were from the 505<sup>th</sup> PIR of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne and I wondered whether there is a specific association or Old Boys Club for that regiment? Any help or suggestions would be most gratefully received.

Thank you for your time. I hope to hear from you soon.

Best wishes

Caroline Walsh  
**Assistant Producer, BBC History**  
☎: 0208 0084541/ 07748103152  
✉ [caroline.walsh@bbc.co.uk](mailto:caroline.walsh@bbc.co.uk)

**From:** Keith Nightingale <[phred2505@gmail.com](mailto:phred2505@gmail.com)>  
**To:** [gavin505@comcast.net](mailto:gavin505@comcast.net)  
**Sent:** Sat, February 18, 2012 6:58:12 PM  
**Subject:** La Fiere

Barbara,

I wanted to send you a copy of something I wrote for the Panther before it is published. I wrote this because I have read so many mistaken articles on the subject I wanted to make a "for the record" correction before I lost the first person memories I have been so privileged to have. Foremost, of course, was the walk at La Fiere your father gave for the 82d on the 40th anniversary. When it was over, an hour later, every man there understood why your father was so revered by the soldiers and what a debt we owe him. Many years later-a very close family friend re-married to MG (Ret) Frank Norris-the officer mentioned in my article. I spent many hours talking to him about Normandy. He said his most inspirational moment came when he looked down the road at the bridge and saw Gen Ridgway clearing a truck by hand, your father exhorting and leading soldiers across the bridge and other officers and senior NCOs doing everything in their power to carry the day under the most dire and dangerous circumstances-and looking behind him in the field, he saw Gen Collins and Gen Barton with clenched teeth and with their eyes wishing the soldiers across the bridge. It was a grand and terrible day.

I included the part regarding your Father's focus on Cpt Rae rather than Cpt Saul as it is an historical fact. I quizzed him a couple of times about this and while he acknowledged the action of Saul, I believe in his heart he knew an airborne soldier had to take that objective. His final closing remarks to us all at the intersection had a profound effect on every single soldier there. This was truly a life altering event-I always preferred to call it a life-focusing event-I think he would have liked that term better for his soldiers.

See u in Normandy,  
Keith

## **LA FIERE BRIDGE**

**By**  
**Col. (Ret.) Keith Nightingale**

In 1984, the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the D Day insertion, I had the privilege of walking La Fiere with Gen Gavin as he outlined the action to the active duty 82d soldiers that had returned to Normandy for the event. Prior to that walk, as the commander of the composite element, I had face to face and telephonic discussions with most of the major and many of the minor players who were at that location 6-9 June 1944. As they say on Law and Order, here is their story.

The Division had three key missions on D Day; seize and hold St Mere; seize and hold the bridge and bridgehead at Chef du Pont; seize and hold the bridge and bridgehead at La Fiere. The bridgehead is defined as sufficient land on the other side of the bridge to expand forces. The latter two were strategically crucial tasks in order to cut the Cotentin Peninsula, stop German reinforcements and seize Cherbourg. These two insignificant appearing bridges and road nets had to be taken to pass through the major forces coming from Utah Beach so they could complete the strategy. The Division took Chef Du Pont on D Day but battled to hold the La Fiere bridge until 9 June and still did not hold the bridgehead.

The morning of 9 June, MG Collins, the VII Corps Commander (of which the 82d and 101<sup>st</sup> were a part for the battle) arrived in SME, surveyed the battlefield and troops and met MG Ridgway approximately where the railroad tracks cross under the road to La Fiere. Note that the field next to the location was the major medical dressing area and casualty/KIA collection point. In his (Collins) words, he saw the troops were extremely tired, seriously weakened by losses and in his view, marginally effective as a major fighting unit. He went to Ridgway, an old friend, and said; "Matt. Your troops are tired and beat up and fought themselves to a standstill. Why don't I pass the 90<sup>th</sup> through and have them clear the causeway and move west?"

In 1983, in General Ridgway's kitchen, I asked him about this. Then 91, he looked at me with his sharp hawk-like eyes and said with all the youth and vigor of 9 June 1944, "This is the only mission this division has not accomplished and we will complete it." I am fairly certain that this is almost verbatim what he told Collins as when I corresponded with him (Collins) this is almost exactly what he wrote to me regarding the meeting.

Also present was MG Barton, the 4<sup>th</sup> ID CG who was also very close to Ridgway. He turned to Ridgway and with intensity said; "What do you need Matt. It's yours. Trucks, guns, ammunition? Whatever you need I will get you." Gavin and Bob Piper said this had an electrifying effect on the 82d command group. Eyes lifted, they suddenly felt infused with positive energy. Ridgway turned to Gavin and said; "You are in charge. We attack at 0930." That was about two hours later.

Also present with Barton was LTC Frank Norris, the commander of the 90<sup>th</sup> Division 155 arty battalion. He told Ridgway and Gavin he was moving his unit off the beach but it wouldn't be ready to fire until around 1030. Ridgway looked at Norris and said; "Can you do this by then? Its imperative that you can do what you say you can do." Norris thought a moment and said; "Yes sir. We can do it but not until 1030." Ridgway turned to Gavin; "The attack is postponed until 1030."

As an aside, Frank Norris, later a Major General, was my next door neighbor for many years and in his book, The 90<sup>th</sup> Division, he related how terror-struck he was when Ridgway asked him that question with those cold brown laser eyes less than three feet from his face. This was a moment he could not fail for he knew how crucial this attack was. Virtually every vet I have met that described Ridgway, highlighted those eyes and their plasma-like abilities to penetrate the soul of the recipient. I saw that in his kitchen and the force had not diminished in 40 years.

Bob Piper described this gathering as one of the best examples of leadership at the higher levels he saw in the war. They were standing in a circle with a map on a C ration box in the center. Ridgway, tired, haggard and full of nervous adrenalin-charged intensity. Gavin, the tallest and somewhat stooped with a uniform in tatters, dirt and sweat on his face like a basic infantryman, intent on the map. Collins, immaculate, holding his helmet in hand with a shock of white hair around a pink face, feet spread equally apart looking at Ridgway. Barton, shorter than the rest with a prominent stomach (hence his nickname Tubby) but exuding physical energy. Norris, the tallest of the group as well as the youngest, nervously moving his feet side to side and looking back and forth to the others as a cat eyes a group of dogs. The respective staffs were equally circled outside the ring of principles. Within 30 yards and well within view, were the wounded and dead of the 505<sup>th</sup> and other units-a constant reminder to the commanders of the distilled cost and consequences of their deliberations.

Gavin mentally went over the division force list available and immediately selected the 325 PIR as the assault force. Despite its bad experiences on landing, approximately 30% casualties, it was intact, rested and uncommitted. He ordered them to move immediately from their position in SME to La Fiere where he intended to brief them. His intent was: force a crossing over the causeway; place one battalion on the left/south of the bridgehead after relieving LTC Shanley and his force on Hill 30; place one battalion on the right/north after relieving LTC Timmes and his force from the orchard along the Merderet and place the third battalion in the center in the approximate position of Le Motey. The 325 GIR would then assume control of the bridgehead and pass the 90<sup>th</sup> Division through. Who would actually lead the initial assault was entirely dependent upon who led the march column from SME. This is their story.....

At approximately 0900 on 9 June, G Co, 3-325 led the regimental column on the road from SME, crossed the railroad overpass and turned the downsloping corner toward the bridge. The column stopped at the large protective cut in the road just before it turns into the bridge/causeway. This could not have been a pleasant traverse on a warm June day.

The cut was the final protected ground from the ongoing raging battles continuously engaging the bridge and its defenders. Casualties had been so high in 1-505 that Gavin relieved the remnants with a scratch company of 1-507 soldiers and odd pickups organized as A/1-507 under the command of Captain Rae. They now occupied the Manoir area and the ground where today's present Iron Mike stands.

Only briefly described in historical narratives but vivid in the mind of participants on site was the incredible noise, smoke, shrapnel, dust, dirt and material continuously assailing the defenders and now the march column. The Germans were engaging the whole area with mortars, artillery and small arms from the other side of the Merderet. Gavin believed, and it must have felt so to the defenders, that the Germans were giving much better than they got. LTC Norris noted that from his position on the high ground looking to the bend in the road where today's "Gen Gavin foxhole" is marked, the pavement was continuously dancing with bullet and shrapnel impact as if a giant vibrator under the pavement was at work. That piece of road, which the 325 had to cross would surely be Purple Heart alley. The effect of all this was overwhelming to the senses but especially so to the unblooded G/3-325.

To add to the psychological impact, was the physical and visual nature of the cut. The arriving soldiers were standing on a narrow farm road subjected to the worst noise and realities of a true combat engagement-and this after an extremely bad experience just landing into Normandy. The right side of the road cut (west) was stacked with the poncho covered bodies of dead troopers. The right (east) was the immediate aid station. Wounded troopers were laying on every inch of available space, legs and boots on the road and medics were going from patient to patient administering aid, inserting IV's and moving the dead to the other side of the road between the standing rows of soldiers. For G/3-325, there could have been no better reality check on the true nature of combat than their immersion in the road cut.

Just before the bend in the road, Gen Gavin and Col Lewis (325 PIR Commander) met the column. LTC Carrell, battalion commander, and Captain Saul approached the pair. In Gen Gavin's description to me, he said the noise and distractions were so great that they had to be almost face to face to effectively converse. Gavin assumed that Carrell was already aware of the task and was going to brief him on the plan. Carrell wavered a bit and told Gavin he felt ill and wasn't sure he could physically lead the assault. He also made a comment regarding the plan itself which Gavin interpreted as showing distinct lack of confidence. He immediately informed Carrell that he was relieved and asked for the battalion XO. While this was going on, he turned to Saul and told him to get ready.

In Saul's later narrative, he told Gavin "I think there is a better way to do this rather than down this road. Give me some time to make a recon." Gavin said; "OK. You have 30 minutes. At 1030 you go." It was now about 0945 and LTC Norris, above them on the high ground was beginning to adjust his artillery.

Saul passed through Norris' position and went down behind the stone manoir and followed the defense line established by Rae's soldiers and crept along the stone wall that reached almost to the bridge road. Satisfied that he had a covered and concealed position as close as possible to the causeway, he returned to the column and briefed his soldiers and began moving them to their assault positions.

Meanwhile, the respective Generals were performing their tasks. Ridgway went through all the troop groupments and picked up a number of stray unattached field grade officers-most of whom had lost their units on the jump but were reliable soldiers such as LTC Maloney of the 507<sup>th</sup> and LTC Ostberg of the 508<sup>th</sup>. These and several senior NCO's he assembled in the courtyard of the Manoir. His intent, as he explained, was to insert them in whatever critical situation arose to insure his polyglot force did what it must to carry the causeway. He positioned himself in what is now the garage of the Manoir, less than 50 feet from the frontline.

Collins and Barton, now joined by a Colonel from the 90<sup>th</sup> Division, sat behind Norris' position on the high ground where they were relatively safe from incoming but could still see the objective, brilliant in the morning sunshine but largely obscured by the smoke, haze and fires of the opposing exchanges. Portions of the church and stone buildings at Cauquigny would be exposed as the smoke ebbed and flowed. Just to the rear of the cut, a number of Sherman tanks from the 4<sup>th</sup> ID had arrived as well as two 57mm anti-tank guns. They were deployed in a line on the high ground overlooking the causeway and began to seek and engage targets with their main gun.

Gavin, after seeing Saul off, went to Cpt Rae and pulled him aside. The precise location of this conversation is where the manoir stone barn abuts the wall leading to the main road. In Gavin's description at the bridge in 1984, he told Rae; "I don't think these guys can take the causeway. At some point they will falter. I need your people to be prepared to carry it. When I give you the sign, move out and take over. We must take this causeway." Rae said he understood completely and began to brief his soldiers. This was all done under the heavy backdrop of a continuous rain of artillery, mortars and machinegun fire.

The causeway presented a number of issues for Saul and his assault. The road itself was narrow with a high crown in the center. It was lined with old Sycamore and willow trees anywhere from two feet to four feet in girth. Over the course of the battle, they had been shattered and shaved to where nothing remained of the trees but three or four feet of trunk connected by brush and debris. The Germans had dug fighting positions between the trees on both sides of the road and many were still actively occupied. There was less than 20 feet of ground between the lapping waters of the flooded Merderet on both sides. Maneuver space would be at a premium.

Immediately in front of the bridge was an overturned French truck placed earlier by A/1-505 as a roadblock. They had also scattered a number of anti-tank mines on both sides. The width of the road on the bridge preceding this obstacle, the first thing to be crossed by Saul, was about 12 feet. Further along the road

were the three Renault tanks killed by the A/1-505 bazooka teams on 6 June. One was less than 50 feet from the truck partially skewed on the south side of the road. The second was another 50 yards further along the causeway on the north side astride the road. The third was another 50 yards back on the south side of the road, tilting against the tree stumps. Remaining throughout the road, both on the pavement and between the trees were innumerable bodies, mostly German but some scattered US soldiers from previous engagements. Saul and his soldiers would have to assault what was in effect a bowling alley lane with obstacles throughout as well as dug in and fully engaged Germans.

The Germans were very mindful of the significance of this causeway and were sensitive to any penetration to their side of the bank. They had reacted strongly to Shanley and Timmes' elements and had insured they were bottled up and could not assist the units on the other side of the lake. Earlier in the week, 7 June, a battalion of the 325 under LTC Terry Sanford had attempted to relieve Timmes and secure Cauquigny but had been strongly counter-attacked and had to join Timmes force to keep from being annihilated. It was this action in which PFC DeGlopper earned his Medal of Honor.

The primary force Saul was asked to overcome was an approximate regiment from the 91<sup>st</sup> Airlanding Division. At this point, the true size was unknown by the 82d.

It was well-disposed along the flooded bank on both sides of the lake and with plentiful artillery and mortars to its rear. The German CP was established in the stone barns and outbuildings behind the church and was impregnable to all but heavy artillery of which there was very little. The front line, with many MG 42's, was forward of the church cemetery and almost at the water's edge. Both German and US troops were continuously engaging each other across the water creating a torrent of fire in both directions. Both sides could interdict the causeway with ease. Saul recounted later that as he observed the causeway and mapped his assault in his mind, he was distinctly aware of the constant falling rain of leaves, twigs, bark and pavement along his restricted course as both sides engaged each other.

At this time, neither Gavin or Ridgway were aware of the true defensive strength holding the bridgehead. Intelligence indicated portions of a battalion albeit reinforced with some heavy weapons. In Gavin's mind, he had now assembled sufficient force and reinforcement to carry the position with relative ease. At 1030, he would find out.

While Saul was maneuvering his force into position, Norris was conducting the artillery barrage. Saul brought his company around the rear of Le Manoir and using the protection of the stone wall ringing the property, he slid his unit along its length. He and his lead platoon squeezed tightly into the last 30 feet of wall before it ended at the road. It was his estimation that this got his force closest to the bridge, minimizing their exposure before actually clearing the causeway. The other two platoons massed just behind a hole in the protective wall to Saul's rear that had been created by earlier German fire.

Erroneously, Saul was informed that he was to assault as soon as he saw smoke rounds which would be the final rounds fired. Much later, Norris said that he never addressed smoke and if it had been raised he would have informed them that no smoke was available. He was firing with what the guns arrived with in caisson. The bulk of ammo was still on trucks moving from Utah.

At approximately 1035, the barrage ceased and there was a stunning silence as the smoke slowly drifted away from the targets. Some Germans began appearing on the road and around Cauquigny dazed and bloody from the barrage. Gavin looked at Saul and shouted "Go. Go!" Saul looked back and then led the way to the road and the near side of the bridge followed by his lead platoon, a total of 31 people on the most significant journey the 82d Airborne had taken to that point.

By the time Saul exposed himself, the Germans began to recover from the artillery and resumed firing. Immediately behind the lead platoon, the first man in the second platoon began to cross the hole in the wall. He was virtually decapitated by a stream of MG 42 rounds, fell in a heap and everyone behind him froze. Unbeknownst to Saul, he and 30 soldiers were on their own for this journey.

How did they survive? The disabled truck on the other end of the bridge forced the unit to split in half, Saul leading one column and an NCO the other. Both elements sought the relative protection of the tree stumps lining the road as they moved down the road. As either would come across an occupied German position they would grenade it and clear with Thompson's-the paratroopers favorite close-in weapon.

By this time, both sides were fully engaged with a hail of fire going both ways. In fact, the assaulting force was already flanked by enemy elements lining the banks perpendicular to the causeway. They only had to fire into the causeway to engage Saul which they did. The A/1-507 troops, the Shermans and elements of 1-505 from forward reserve positions were firing across the entire front in support of the assault.

About a third of the way down the road, the terrain makes a subtle but significant change. The bridge can no longer be seen and the friendly support forces can no longer see the assault force. Friendly fire necessarily slackened and diverted to the positions on the far bank. Any friendly fire on the causeway would have to come from Saul and his small group.

Slightly less than halfway along the causeway, as the assault moved forward, it came upon the second tank on the left of the road. Immediately, the road took a straight line to the edge of Cauquigny. In front of the church wall and aimed straight down the narrow road was an MG 42 position fully engaging the assault force. The two split elements received unexpected cover from the second and third dead tanks protecting them from the withering machinegun fire but not from flanking fires.

Saul and his platoon were moving at a trot as the enemy and the debris permitted. German mortar and artillery fire now began to fall along the causeway. Airborne mortar and artillery also began to renew their coverage of German positions. At this point, Saul and his two elements reached the point where the causeway meets dry ground. They had made it but with significantly less personnel than they began. The 43 had shrunk to less than 25 but this was all unknown to Saul who assumed the rest of the company and the regiment were following just behind. He was totally focused on what was forward and could discern nothing toward the rear due to the smoke and flying debris.

At Le Manoir, the leadership was equally ignorant of events. Both Gavin and Ridgway saw the collapse of the G Company elements and began to take action. Gavin and the senior leadership pool Ridgway had assembled began to hastily pickup and push the soldiers down the road. Ridgway waved a tank forward and personally pulled the tow cable out and tried to attach it to the overturned truck to get it out of the way so tanks could support Saul.

As a Major General lecturing at the Joint War College in Norfolk, Va, Frank Norris recounted this scene. Ridgway with stars on his shoulder trying to tie a cable to the truck. Gavin picking up and pushing soldiers down the road. Lewis leading a tank around the curve. Officers and NCO's moving back and forth trying to get the frightened and wary soldiers moving forward. It was a stunning example of the very best in combat leadership under the most trying conditions.

As soon as the G company troops were pushed down the road, they began coalescing in frightened leaderless groups. Ridgway sent LTC Maloney to the first bunch. Maloney was a big man with a nasty head wound, face and neck covered with blood. He literally threw soldiers down the road and began to get them moving. They began to halt and buildup behind the first knocked out tank. Gavin sent more leaders to that

location to repeat what Maloney had done. It was imperative that the division get as many people as possible to the other side if it was to succeed.

Gavin could see nothing to his front but confusion, fear and failure. Smoke and fire obscured any vision past the bridge itself. Just as Ridgway waved a tank past the truck, it hit one of the earlier Airborne-emplaced mines and lost its track, effectively blocking the road except for a small opening to the right of the truck-sufficient for a single person to pass. At this moment, enduring increasingly heavy German incoming fire and assuming Saul had failed, Gavin grabbed Rae at the point where the stone wall meets the road and said; "You have to go. You have to do this. Go. Go."

Rae waved at his troops, now assembled behind the wall, shouted "Let's Go" and ran straight for the bridge, his soldiers close behind. Once past the truck and Sherman, Rae's men spread out and ran as best they could through the smoke, haze and fire at the enemy beyond which they could not yet see. Rae assumed he was now the point of the assault and all depended on his success.

Meanwhile, Saul and his now reduced force were quickly reacting to fortune and fire. Somehow, the machinegun on the road had been silenced. It was either hit by a mortar or withdrew. Saul's force now momentarily slowed their progress as they met the dry ground. They had effectively flanked the German positions on the left and were receiving withering fire from the Church area on the right. Saul took one element and went down the flank positions clearing Germans as it went. The second element raced up the small rise and hedgerow left of the road which gave them protection from the church positions and also provided a flank opportunity.

In Saul's interview in England after withdrawal. He noted that his mission was to clear to Hill 30 (South). This plus the very heavy fire from the church area convinced him to continue on the left and south, ignoring the right. After all, he had the rest of his company and battalion immediately behind.

Rae and his soldiers arrived at the church positions and were immediately taken under heavy fire from their right and saw no sign of Saul or his people. Rae immediately began clearing the buildings and was heavily engaged. Time was now about 1115. Between both Saul and Rae, in the apple orchard between the road splits astride the Cauquigny complex, was a very active MG 42. Both commanders made an independent decision to take it out, each ignorant of the existence of the other. Rae's soldiers began directing suppressive fire at the gun while Saul's RTO crawled behind the position using a hedgerow for cover and killed the crew with his M1. With that issue settled, both returned to their seemingly independent tasks.

Nervous and with increased tension and frustration, Gavin decided to go to the other side. Eyes focused straight ahead and seemingly oblivious to his surroundings-the constant fire, explosions, ricochets, quickly moving soldiers, falling wounded and dead and the huge detritus of battle littering the now conquered roadway-he reached Cauquigny, spotted the intersection just ahead and found Rae clearing the orchard and barns. He, as Rae, assumed Saul and his element were dead on the causeway and that Rae had taken the prize. Gavin ordered Rae to clear the complex and as soon as relieved by the 325 GIR, move forward to Le Motay and hold. This would be the most advanced element of the Division and the route the relieving 90<sup>th</sup> Division would take.

Oblivious to all this was Saul and his small band. They continued clearing the southern area, their actions muffled by all the other battlefield noises. Only when he sent out a team to bring up the rest of the unit, did he realize he was utterly alone-just he and his surviving 12 soldiers. But, in truth, he had carried the position with 12 with what should have been 140. Historically, he and his soldiers received little credit while Rae received a great deal. Such is the fog and confusion of war.

In July 1944, the Army Historian, BG SLA Marshall and his team assembled elements of the division and debriefed them at the small unit level to gain insight into what actually happened. Only then did the facts come together in an indisputable manner. For whatever reason, General Gavin was always reluctant to award Saul and his men full credit. In his heart, I believe he thought that it was really Rae and A/1-507 that truly saved the day. In several interviews with him, he would acknowledge Saul's actions albeit with some hesitation. Of note is that Rae was awarded an impact Distinguished Service Cross for his actions whereas Saul, later in England, was awarded a Silver Star.

On the terrain walk in 1984, General Gavin led us all on the route of Saul and Rae, stopping and explaining actions and issues much as this narrative repeats. He halted us all at the intersection of the split where Saul and Rae's elements divided-he looking back to the causeway and we all at him in a crowded semi-circle. His voice dropped several octaves and he looked at us and said; "When I came to this point and met Rae, I had no idea as to how hard this fight was. I looked back down the causeway. It was covered from the church to as far as I could see with bodies. I could have walked back to the bridge and never stepped on pavement. I just had no idea as to the strength of the position. It took Airborne soldiers to do this." He then looked up at us and the sea of red berets, swept his eyes past everyone and said; "Don't you ever forget what you have to do. Our Nation depends on you like it depends on no others."

Somewhat later in life, as the honored guest, he attended a small insignificant dinner at the invitation of another Division veteran. The flight and travel had taken a toll combined with his advancing Parkinson's. Before the dinner began, he turned to his host and inviter and said; "Do you know why I came here?" The veteran, taken somewhat aback, said "No." The general turned to him with a shake of the head but firm voice, "I can never say No to someone who crossed the Causeway."

## **ADDITIONAL NOTE ON CASUALTIES**

The fighting in and around La Fiere was the most intense the 82d experienced in the entire war. This is reflected in the casualty figures:

### **A/1-505**

147 men assembled on the drop zone under Lt Dolan. By 10 June there were 46 KIA and 81 WIA. The KIA included two battalion commanders.

### **A/1-507**

Assembled 90 men under Cpt Rae. By 10 June they had 20 KIA and 35 WIA

### **G/3-325**

In march column on 9 June, Cpt Saul had 148 men. By 10 June there were 35 KIA and 102 WIA. Within that total, of the 32 men, including himself, who reached the other side of the Causeway on the assault, 12 remained.

### **Timmes Orchard**

LTC Timmes initial headcount was 142 men. On 10 June there were 65 KIA and 45 WIA

### **Hill 30**

LTC Shanley assembled 206 men. On 10 June there were 58 KIA and 82 WIA. †

The below was submitted by Colleen Clancy, daughter of 1<sup>st</sup> Bn Medic, John Clancy. It is a 2009 article about her father.

Reunion attendees will remember John from our San Antonio and Ft. Bragg reunions in 2006 and 2007. San Antonio was the first reunion John had attended since the war. Seeing him with fellow medics, Pinky Pinkston and Fred Morgan, one would have thought they saw each other a week prior! Just the other day, Pinky told me that upon his arrival at the hotel, he asked for John's room number. It turned out John was right next door to Pinky. Pinky went to John's room and knocked on the door. John answered the door and Pinky just stood there. The two men looked at each other for a moment or two and then Pinky smiled. John's response was "PINKY!!" He recognized that smile.

In the brief time I knew, John came to be very dear to me. I will always remember him with a big smile on his face, singing "Blood on the Risers" with members of the Airborne Demonstration Team. John is missed by all who knew him.

## Thank your heroes while you have the chance

By KEVIN WESTBERG  
and CURTIS CARDINE  
COMMENTARY

**H**is absence was palatable. "Where's John?" "Have you seen John?"

Questions like this echoed through a south Gilbert fitness center throughout the month of January.

Finally as the month ended, another regular member in the 60-plus crowd approached and passed on the message we had all dreaded. John Clancy had passed several weeks earlier.

We had lost our hero.

Attaining hero status in a weight room normally entails an ability to lift impressive weights or bulging biceps. John had neither.

When we first met John, we saw an elderly man with an oxygen tank, tubes dangling from his nose. He moved in a youthful and determined manner from machine to machine that was surprising to us all. He was unassuming.

We were all drawn to John, initially out of curiosity. "Who is this old guy and why is he pushing himself so hard?"



SUBMITTED

For reasons unknown we felt compelled to speak to this "geez-er." Unlike most first conversations, one could immediately detect an aura of sincere kindness and genuine interest from John. He was authentically concerned about the well being of anybody who took the time to talk to him. John always ended a conversation with a heartfelt goodbye and said, "God Bless and be safe."

Those who listened to John quickly discovered a source of inspiration, beyond the scope of what most measured as relevant in the weight room and also in life.

One by one, we gradually extracted details of John's past life as a member of the 82nd Airborne Division, 505th Paratroop Infantry Regiment. John served his country as a medic in this

elite unit during World War II. He participated in every jump in all four major campaigns.

Bit by bit, we would relay pieces of intelligence we had gathered about John and marveled at this hero in our midst. Mixed in with conversations about the mundane day to day accomplishments achieved by gym rats, were the awe-inspiring details of John's first-person accounts of events, which could normally only be read about.

More importantly for the married guys, embedded in John's conversation were his deep love for his (departed) wife of 56-plus years and his family.

Through conversation alone, John impacted our lives in deep and profound ways. One local police officer and accomplished triathlete summed up John's impact on all of us when he said, "I really regret not having the chance to tell him that he was my hero."

Our hero's words will be repeated in this final farewell, "Goodbye and God bless you, John."

Kevin Westberg is a detective with an East Valley police agency. Curtis Cardine is a retired school district superintendent from New Hampshire and a former Olympic weight lifter.

## **In the Footsteps of the 82nd Airborne – 2012**

On February 23, I flew to Brussels for Emile Lacroix's 30th Annual "In the Footsteps of the 82nd Airborne Division" march. This year, the march was in the 508th PIR's battle areas. The march began at Goronne and went through Abrefontaine, Noirfontaine Farm, Erria, and Thier-du-Mont.

### **Friday, February 24:**

Upon arrival in Brussels, I met 551st veteran, Dick Field, and his daughter Ginni. We picked up my rental car and I drove about 10 feet when Ginni insisted on driving! We drove to Baraque de Fraiture and checked into the Auberge du Carrefour. Dominique Potier, Jennifer Minshall, Gene Garren, Ray Fary, and Rick Holle whose father served in the 80th Abn. AA Btn were there and getting ready to go visit the army barracks in Bastogne. I joined them. This was where General Anthony McAuliffe, acting 101st Division Commander, had his command post during the Battle of the Bulge. There are several rooms in the barracks with various displays. Gene Garren demonstrated an M3 Grease gun, a Thompson sub machine gun, and an MP-40 German sub machine gun for us. He kept disappearing into other rooms and reappearing with weapons. Of course, Gene is our favorite "Special Forces Weapons Man"!

After touring the barracks, we visited the cemetery across the street and visited the grave of Belgian nurse, Rene Lemaire, the Angel of Bastogne. Rene had returned to Bastogne to visit her family for Christmas. She was stranded there when Bastogne became surrounded by the Germans and volunteered to help in an aid station. She was killed during the bombing of Bastogne.

Next we went to the Bois Jacques woods, where E Co., 506th was dug in as depicted in the television series, "Band of Brothers". Someone had put a cross in the woods with "Easy 101" inscribed on it. Dominique pointed out the foxhole of Lt. Ed Shames whom I met last fall during the Currahee Military Weekend at Toccoa, GA. I had my picture taken standing in his foxhole.

We returned to the Auberge where the dining room had been prepared for a special dinner honoring Ray, Dick and Gene. Bernadette, the owner of the Auberge, had chocolate bars with photos of Ray, Dick, and Gene on the wrappers. Also, honored at the dinner were 551st KIAs Lt. Donald Booth and Pvt. John McAtee. In attendance at the dinner were the niece of Lt. Booth, Gigi Minshall, and the niece and nephew of Pvt. McAtee, Susan and Frank Gahagen. Also, in attendance were several active duty 82nd Airborne troopers just back from Afghanistan and several American Boy Scouts, who are the sons of American soldiers stationed in Germany.

### **Saturday, February 25:**

Saturday was the day of the march. Gene Garren, who is 100% service related disabled, had permission from Emile to begin the march early. Gene's son, Michael, Rick Holle, Dominique Potier, Gigi Minshall and I started the march with him. Along the route, there were several re-enactors who had camps set up. The day was overcast and foggy and I got some great photos of the re-enactors.

Rick Holle and I got somewhat ahead of the others. About two hours into the march, other marchers began passing us. I had somewhat of a difficult time on the march. I have had problems with my left hip and shoulder for a few years now, but lately they were doing much better. I think carrying my backpack loaded down with all my stuff - camera, two large bottles of water, extra clothing, etc. put extra strain on them. To make matters worse, I tripped over some tree roots and fell. I landed right on my knee. I was in agony and was unable to complete the march. Actually, I did not even complete the first half. Rick and Dutch, friend, Frank Mesu who joined us, insisted I get in one of the jeeps, which I did. At the lunch site, I ran into Nathalie Hainaut, Ray Fary, and Dick and Ginni Field. Nathalie gave us a ride back to the Auberge, for a rest before the banquet. I took a hot bath

and laid down for a nap. I did not wake up until 10:30 that night! I was really sick I missed the banquet as Emile was presented with a "Civilian Award for Humanitarian Service" by the Department of the Army. I would have loved to have seen that.



**Rick Holle, Gene Garren, Ellen Peters, Gigi Minshall, Michael Garren**

### **Sunday, February 26:**

On Sunday, we toured the 551st battlefields with Dick Field. We went to Norfontaine Farm which the 551st cleared of Germans, Dairemont, site of the famous A Co. bayonet charge, and RochelINVAL, where the 551st was virtually destroyed and deactivated shortly thereafter. Dick told us how at RochelINVAL, his buddy was wounded. Dick carried him to the aid station. When they arrived at the aid station, he removed his boots to try and warm up his feet a bit. The medic noticed ice crystals had formed between his toes. He was sent back to a field hospital. As he told the story and looked out at the field that he had carried his friend over, he had tears in his eyes and spoke of his memory of the field strewn with bodies. He said he never was able to get that image out of his mind. I had tears in my eyes, too. These scenes are truly heartbreaking to me, but I wish everyone could experience them. Perhaps then they would realize how much we owe to our veterans and the sacrifices they were willing to make and the sacrifices so many of their buddies did make.

RochelINVAL was also the site where Lt. Booth lost his life. Our Belgian friends, Dominique Potier and Pascal Hainaut, knew the site of his death and took his niece, Jennifer "Gigi" Minshall to the site. It was quite an emotional experience for her and quite heartbreaking to see.

Prior to our trip, I wrote to our Belgian friends, Dominique Potier and Pascal Hainaut, and asked about the possibility of having a small ceremony at the RochelINVAL monument and asking Dick to read the prayer found in the pocket of LTC Wood Joerg after his death. LTC Joerg was the C.O. of the 551st PIB. The Belgians agreed and I wrote to Dick who also agreed to read the prayer. I thought it was going to be a small ceremony with 10 or 12 of us attending. I was to read a brief statement about the action there and Dick was to read the prayer.

Upon arrival at the monument, the mayor was there with several town officials and many people in attendance. They had the American and Belgian flags along with the 551st flag with battle streamers at the monument.

The ceremony began with the mayor making a few comments which our Belgian friend, Pascal Hainaut, translated into English. I read a brief statement about the fighting that occurred there and acknowledged the presence of Lt. Booth's and Pvt. McAtee's family members who were in attendance and spoke of their families sacrifices. Then I asked Dick to read the prayer. He took the prayer from his pocket, opened the folded paper and overcome with emotion handed the prayer to his daughter to read. The text of the prayer is as follows:

**Oh God, Commander of all men, we stand before Thee asking Thy help in the execution of the many tasks which confront us. Give us strength, courage, daring, intelligence and devotion to duty, so that we may from day to day perfect ourselves as fighting men--so that some day, in some foreign land--we may, by our fighting ability, bring glory to ourselves, our country and to Thee.**

**And, Oh God, if the price we must pay for eternal freedom of man be great, give us strength so that we will not hesitate to sacrifice ourselves for a cause so sacred. All of this we ask in Thy name Amen.**

At the end of the ceremony, the family members of Lt. Booth and Pvt. McAtee were presented with baskets filled with Belgian goodies, a wooden plaque with the 551st insignia and the names of Lt. Booth and Pvt. McAtee inscribed on it and a certificate of honorary citizenship. All in all, it was a lovely ceremony. After the ceremony while visiting with Susan and Frank Gahagen, I learned that their uncle is buried at Henri-Chapelle Cemetery. I assured them I would add his name to my list of graves that I visit and would visit his grave every time I am at the Henri-Chapelle cemetery. They were deeply grateful for this and their reaction touched my heart.

### **Monday, February 27:**

Monday and Tuesday were truly the highlight of the trip for me. Last summer in Normandie, I met Belgian tour guide, Reg Jans, who specializes in the Bastogne area of the Battle of the Bulge, when we were both guests in the home of mutual friend, Sharron Pike. I scheduled two days with Reg several months ago. I sent him a listing of everything I wanted to see. We saw all the things on my list and more.

80th AA veteran, Ray Fary, and Rick Holle, the son of an 80th AA veteran, joined me on the first day of the tour. We were supposed to meet Reg at the Mardasson Memorial, but we ran into him on the way there. I gave Reg a copy of Otis Sampson's book, "Time Out For Combat". It was a copy Otis sent me several years ago with the intent of giving it to my British friend, Dave Pike. Sadly, Dave passed away before I was able to give it to him.

We drove to the Mardasson Memorial where I parked my car and we all got in Reg's "Battle Bus" and headed out. Reg is truly a remarkable tour guide and I would recommend his services to anyone interested in the fighting in the Bastogne area. He really makes history come alive. He had an album of war time photos and we were able to do many "then and now" comparisons. Not only does Reg know the detailed history of the 101st Airborne battlefields, he has toured the area with many veterans who fought there. He was able to take me to the specific foxholes of 101st veterans that I personally know. For me, that was pretty incredible.

Our first stop was in Bastogne. He took us to the spot behind the Seminary where 13 501st soldiers were killed on January 5, 1945 when the truck they were loading with mines suddenly exploded. Many years later, their buddies returned to erect a memorial to them.

Reg showed us the street by which the 506th entered Bastogne after their "tailgate jump" at Mande Sainte-Etienne. He took us to the field where the gliders landed on December 26, 1944. He

showed us the waterhouse in Savy where a tank was taken after it had been knocked out by the 463rd PFAB in Hemroulle and presented to General Anthony McAuliffe as a gift. Prior to being acting Division Commander during the siege of Bastogne, General McAuliffe was the Artillery Commander of the 101st. We visited the site where the 326th Airborne Medical Co. was captured on Dec. 19. Major William Desobry of the 10th Armored Division's CCB was taken to this hospital when he was wounded earlier in the day. He was knocked unconscious and when he awoke, he was a POW having no memory of how he became one!

We visited Castle Rolle which acted as the Command Post for Col. Steve Chappuis, C.O. Of the 502nd PIR. Reg had photos showing General Patton pinning DSCs on Col. Chappuis and Gen. McAuliffe. I stood on the same spot with Reg and had my photo taken. We visited the village of Hemroulle where Maj. John Hanlon, C.O. of 1st Btn, 502nd asked the town to give their bed sheets and linens to provide camouflage for his men and vehicles during the upcoming battle. He promised the linens would be replaced. In 1948, he kept his promise, returning to Hemroulle with linens provided by his hometown. During the ceremony, he was made an honorary citizen of the village.

We returned to Bastogne for lunch at Le Nuts Cafe. Reg pointed out the former family home of Rene Lemaire - the Belgian nurse who was killed during the siege of Bastogne. We had a nice lunch and Rick Holle and I ran around McAuliffe square taking pictures of each other with the tank there. I climbed up on the tank for a photo and was holding on for dear life - no foot room!

After lunch, Reg took us to the field where the pathfinders landed on December 23 and showed us the site where they set up their Eureka beacon for the re-supply drop to the surrounded troops. He also took us to the spot where on Dec. 26th Lt. Charles Boggess of 4th Armored Division met 2nd Lt. Duane Webster of the 326th Airborne Engineers thus lifting the siege of Bastogne.

Reg also took us to the site where the German ultimatum was issued on Dec 22 and received the famous "NUTS" reply. Also, the site where Generals Eisenhower, Bradley and Patton met in Bastogne.

He took me to the foxhole of my D Co. 501st friend, Bobby Hunter had his foxhole. And also Bobby's platoon leader, Bert Collier's C.P. I met Bobby and Bert at an Open Hanger Day at the Airborne Demonstration Team in Frederick, OK in 2008. Bobby lives near me and we have since become good friends. It was a real thrill for me to stand in his foxhole. Reg told me that several years ago, Bobby and Bert were visiting the area and located their foxholes. Bert told him how they were being overrun and had to get out in a hurry. In the confusion, Bert left his glasses in his foxhole. Someone in their group had a metal detector and managed to locate Bert's glasses!

Reg showed us the house from a scene in "Band of Brothers" where Sgt. Carwood Lipton and Shifty Powers took out a sniper. The house is still riddled with bullet holes. We also visited the foxhole of Jim "Pee Wee" Martin of G Co., 506th near Recogne, Belgium. Pee Wee was one of the characters depicted in the film "Band of Brothers". I met him last summer in Normandie and also on two other occasions. We have become pretty good friends and he has sent me lots of war time photos and copies of letters he wrote home to his family during the war. He has become very dear to me. Jim was a 60mm mortar man during the war. I am rather partial to those 60 mm mortar men! Last summer was his first trip back to Europe since the end of the war.

Our day ended with a visit to the German cemetery in Recogne. The Germans are buried six to a grave. We returned to the Auberge where the first thing I did was order a cup of hot chocolate. It really hit the spot. Ray, Rick and I discussed what a wonderful, interesting, and educational day we had. Ray was very impressed with Reg's skills as a guide. Ray would have liked to join me for day 2

of my tour, but he had plans to visit his Belgisn friend, Joesph Fourgon. Ray met Joseph when he spent Christmas Eve at his family's home in 1944. Ray's gun was right outside Joseph's house.

### **Tuesday, February 28:**

Tuesday morning, I arrived early at the Mardasson Memorial. I wanted to get some photos of it prior to meeting Reg. Reg arrived while I was photographing the memorial. He asked me if I had ever been to the crypt below the memorial. I hadn't. I didn't even know there was one. It was dedicated on July 16, 1950. Reg knows the combination to the padlocked gates and let us in. Inside are three beautiful tile mosaics depicting the religions of the soldiers who served in the American army during WWII - Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant. Neither of us could tell which mosaic was for the Catholics and which was for the Protestants.

Our first stop was near the village of Longvilly where Lt. Edward Hyduke of the 10th Armored Div., 3rd Tank Bn. set up a hasty roadblock with between 8 and 20 men on Dec 19. It was near the site of an ancient pilgrimage stopover point with a religious memorial and across the street from the memorial was a statue of Jesus and markers denoting the stations of the cross. The roadblock was only able to delay the Germans for an hour, but that was enough time for the arrival of the 501st PIR. They arrived on the 19th from Camp Mourmelon and went right into the battle. Reg told me that one of the veterans manning the road block told him that when word came down "Every man for himself", he escaped through the cemetery and the headstones provided some cover against German fire. Reg thought "what is he talking about - there is no cemetery around here". Upon visiting the area, he realized that in the dark, the soldier must have mistaken the stones depicting the stations of the cross for being headstones in a cemetery. They do look like headstones.

Reg took me to the field where the famous photo was taken of the abandoned tanks of Team Cherry and remnants of the 9th Armored Division. He had a copy of the photo and I could clearly tell it was the same field. There are fewer trees now, but the fence line is the same. We went to the village of Bizory and he showed me where E and F Co., 501st had their CPs.

While in Bizory, Reg showed me the site where a story told to me by 501st veteran, John Primerano occurred. I met John in Frederick, OK at the Airborne Demonstration Team's Open Hanger Day last summer. John was in the communications section. He was in his foxhole along side a farm road one night when three guys came to him and said there was a break in the wire and he needed to go find it. He was pulling up the wire looking for the break. He rounded a corner of the field and stopped dead in his tracks. A German soldier had his rifle pointed directly at John. John put up his hands and said "Amen". At that moment he saw the German had a bullet hole between his eyes and he heard laughing behind him. His buddies found the dead German, propped him up on the fence and decided to play a trick on John. In the same area, he showed me the site of another story relayed by John. After a battle, John was taking several prisoners back to Bastogne. They had a truck to transport them. As John was climbing on the truck, without thinking, he handed his M-1 to one of the prisoners. As soon as he was aboard the truck, the prisoner very gingerly handed the weapon back to John.

The previous day, we learned of the death of Lt. Buck Compton who served as a platoon leader in E Co., 506th. Reg made up a remembrance to him and laminated it. We placed it in the Bois Jacques at the Easy Company cross.

After our tribute to Lt. Compton, we went to Noville where Reg showed me the house where Maj. William Desobry and LTC James LaPrade, C.O. of 1st Bn, 506th had their CP. Maj. Desobry was wounded and LTC LaPrade was killed in this house on Dec 19. We also visited a memorial to Noville civilians who were killed by the Germans when they discovered photographs of the civilians

celebrating their liberation in September, 1944. Reg also showed me the house in Champs where Capt. Wallace Swanson, A Co., 502nd PIR, C.O. and Captain Jim Hatch, the Regimental S-3, were when they heard a loud rumbling noise outside. They both went outside, pistols drawn when they saw a tank coming from their rear and heading towards their front lines. Capt. Hatch said, "This is no place for a pistol!". They went back inside the house and out the window. The tank just went on by and was later knocked out by a bazooka.

Reg also showed the site of one of my favorite Christmas Eve, 1944 stories. I specifically asked him to show me this place. It occurred under a railroad trestle. A 501st soldier was taking a bunch of champagne and cognac out to the front line troops near Mont. He cut through the underpass where he came face to face with a German soldier who entered from the opposite side. Both soldiers frantically grabbed for their weapons while slipping around on the icy ground. Their eyes met and the 501st soldier smiled and winked at the German. In English, the German asked for a cigarette. They sat down and shared a bottle of cognac and began to talk. Each man pulled out his wallet and shared family photos and exchanged names and addresses. After a brief interlude from the war, the two men parted company from opposite sides of the underpass. Each man fired a burst from his weapon straight up into the air. Many years later, the American was contacted by the daughter of the German and learned that her father had survived the war.

That night, upon return to the Auberge, Bernadette had a dinner for all of us. It was wonderful. Pascal presented her with a framed poster of the famous photo with the caption "I'm 82nd Airborne and this is as far as the bastards are going."

### **Wednesday, February 29:**

My final day in Belgium was spent visiting sites I have always wanted to see. First I went to Meyerode and visited the memorial to Lt. Eric Wood of the 106th ID. Lt. Wood conducted a one man guerrilla war in the woods around Meyerode. When his body was found, there were seven dead Germans around him.

Next I visited the Wereth 11 Memorial dedicated to the 11 African-American soldiers of the 333rd Field Artillery Bn who were tortured and murdered by the SS. A wreath from the 505th PIR Belgium was laid at the memorial.

Next I went to the twin villages of Rocherath and Krinkelt. The day before, Reg told me of a place near there in the woods where there were American and German positions labeled with plaques. He gave me specific directions how to get there. To my surprise, it was the Elsenborn Ridge. I had just been asking someone a couple of days before if it was possible to visit the area where the fighting occurred. Not only is it possible, but the various positions are actually labeled. In 2000, the area was declared protected. I saw a two man foxhole, a U.S. L-shaped trench, an American C.P., a German C.P., several impact holes and an underground American aid station. Being alone in those woods, it was very eerie.

Lastly, I went into Germany to try and find remnants of the Siegfried Line. Barry O'Shea gave me directions to find them in Hofen. I was unable to find the same ones Barry saw, but someone in Hofen gave me directions to find some in Aachen. I had a heck of a time trying to get a photo of myself in front of the Dragon's Teeth. In the late afternoon, I drove to Brussels where I checked into the hotel and returned my rental car. I had an early morning flight out of Brussels the next morning. My photos can be seen at [www.eeptx.phanfare.com](http://www.eeptx.phanfare.com) →

Airborne All The Way,  
Ellen Peters

# Scouts march through history

March 8, 2012

By **Mr Mark Iacampo ( Hohenfels )**



HOHENFELS, Germany -- Covered in mud, Clinton Schwarz crouched in the back of an armored jeep parked along a road in Hierlot, Belgium, his M2, 50-caliber machine gun trained down the muddy lane in anticipation of the advancing German line.

Though this could be a description during the Battle of the Bulge, it was in fact a re-enactment, and Schwarz is not a Soldier, but an Eagle Scout in Hohenfels' Boy Scout Troop 303.

Three times a year, Belgium re-enactment groups gather across the country to pay tribute to the Soldiers who fought and died in one of the bloodiest battles of the Second World War.

Remembrance marches are held along actual paths tropped by troops, and re-enactors are positioned to add ambience and to talk with participants about the history of the battle.

"Every year they choose different groups to retrace their steps throughout the battle, and this year they followed the 82nd Airborne Division," said Schwarz. The march specifically followed 24 kilometers along the trail of the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment.

Schwarz attended the march along with 13 fellow troop members, in a trip that was initially inspired by Lt. Col. Bryan E. Denny, brigade senior trainer at Hohenfels. As a participant of the "Remember" re-enactment group out of Belgium, Denny had participated in this re-enactment before.

"I wanted to get Troop 303 and the Remember guys together and have them learn something from one another," Denny said.

When he realized he was going to have to miss out on the trip, Denny decided to send a replacement to -- literally -- fill his shoes.

"It occurred to me that Clinton (Schwarz) is about my size, and this would be a unique way for him to participate in this," said Denny. "And this guy looks like one of the Soldiers from World War II!"

Apparently, Denny isn't the only person who thought so.

"There was a veteran from this division marching by," Schwarz said. "He told me I looked like one of his friends who had been fighting in this general area, and who had been lost up there."

"He said he had been about 19 when he was in the war, and I was one of the only people of age," said Schwarz, who is 16. "I felt like I was in place for that. He wasn't so much telling me so I would know; it was more that it stunned him a little bit and brought back some memories."

"That was a real highlight of the event," Schwarz added. "He patted me on the shoulder, smiled and walked away."

Schwarz said he and his fellow re-enactors took their responsibility to present the troops accurately very seriously.

"I had to have food that was from there. They even took some of the food and put it in ration boxes so that it looked like you were eating the same food that the Soldiers did," he said.

When the day started, Schwarz said he felt excited like "a little kid playing war," but as time wore on, his perspective shifted.

"I realized I was in exactly the same place, in the same scenario and situation as the guys who fought there, in the same foxholes that they fought, and died, and won in. It was really cool to re-enact that, like we were reliving what they did. I knew it was a re-enactment, but I felt like I was in it," he said.

"When that veteran came up, it really set in what we were doing, and how important it is that we remember it," he added.

While he may have been the only one with a complete World War II kit, Schwarz wasn't the only scout to get an up-close look at a Soldier's life. The Remember group took Troop 303 under its wing, making them honorary members and even allowing the scouts to camp out with the regiment on the battlefield.

Scoutmaster Kirstin Reed explained that the scouts' governing group, the Transatlantic Council, provides a 20-page Battle of the Bulge historic trail document, and most troops take the hike, stop off in the museum, and answer the questions.

"We got to camp with these guys on a farm, cook out in the field," she said. "We had 11-year-old boys out there living just like on the battlefield; no facilities, no running water, but not a single complaint. They had so much fun!"

"They really got to see how Soldiers could have lived in the field during World War II," Denny added.

"We owe a tremendous debt to (the Remember group) because they're not Americans, but they keep the spirit of what our grandfathers did alive," said Denny.

"They do this stuff, and most of the time they're just trying to express what our grandfathers did a bunch of Belgium kids running around, but this time they have a chance to talk with American kids about it. These are the subject experts on the battlefield and to get to talk to a bunch of American scouts about their own history was pretty special," Denny said.

For Schwarz, experiences like this are what make scouting with Troop 303 so special. Having scouted in the States for three years, Schwarz said he always had lots of fun, but never experienced the sense of growth that he feels here.

"Being over here in Europe and doing these things that changed the world and the outcome of our lives, and you get to experience a part of that," he said. "You come back from these trips here, and you get boys who are changing just over a weekend, little bit by little bit."

*(Editor's Note: Thanks to Emile Lacroix for submitting the above)*

## FINAL JUMPS

### **Benzaia, Benjamin**

Benjamin Benzaia passed away on June 23, 2011. Condolences may be sent to the Benzaia family at 46 Shady Hill Rd.; Weare, NH 03281

### **Morris, Rollo**

Rollo Morris passed away on November 14, 2011. Condolences may be sent to the Morris family at 3384 Chaucer Way; Eugene, OR 97405

## ANNOUNCEMENT

Robert "Bob" Schweikert has graciously agreed to take over the 505<sup>th</sup> webmaster duties. Many thanks to John Sparry for the outstanding job you have done these past several years.

## Copies of "Ready" Available

Several copies of the original "Ready" were found in the Static Line wear house and are available for purchase. Price is \$250.00 + \$25.35 postage for a total of \$274.35. Contact Jim Blankenship at 2135 Saint Thomas Way; Suwanee, GA 30024-3285; Home: (678) 349-2262 Cell: (404) 906-5646 email: [jimspix@charter.net](mailto:jimspix@charter.net) or [ff505rct@charter.net](mailto:ff505rct@charter.net) or Ellen Peters at 3630 Townsend Dr.; Dallas, TX 75229-3805; Home: (214) 352-7002 or Cell: (214) 632-1360; email: [eeptx@sbcglobal.net](mailto:eeptx@sbcglobal.net).

## Call for Dues!

Dues for the new fiscal year of Family and Friends of the 505th PIR Assn. were due on July 1. WWII 505 RCT veterans, widows of WWII 505 RCT veterans, and Honorary Members are not required to pay dues. All others are. Your dues are critical to our FF505RCT operations and reunions.

Dues are \$12.00 per year. Multiple years may be paid if desired and donations are gratefully accepted. Please send dues to:

**F&F505RCT Assn.  
3630 Townsend Dr.  
Dallas, TX 75229-3805**

## Changes of Address

Please forward change of email addresses to [ff505rct@charter.net](mailto:ff505rct@charter.net) or [eeptx@sbcglobal.net](mailto:eeptx@sbcglobal.net) and postal changes of address to: Ellen Peters; 3630 Townsend Dr.; Dallas, TX 75229-3805

## Panther Submissions

### **Panther Submissions:**

If you have something you would like to put in the Panther, kindly send it to Ellen Peters; 3630 Townsend Dr.; Dallas, TX 75229-3805 or [eeptx@sbcglobal.net](mailto:eeptx@sbcglobal.net). Send all changes of physical and/or email addresses to the same address/email.

## Dedication

This and all Panther newsletters are dedicated in loving memory to our original Panther editor, Don McKeage. We love and miss you.