

505 R.C.T. WWII Regimental Combat Team



3630 Townsend Dr.
Dallas, TX 75229

DATED MATERIAL

Dec. 2010

The Panther



CENTRAL STAFF

ITALY

President's Reports:

From Duaine Pinkston, President of the 505 RCT WWII Veterans Assn:

To the Family and Friends of the 505 RCT and all veterans:

It was a good reunion. We enjoyed it once we got there!

Thank you, Barbara for pinch hitting at the memorial luncheon. Also, many thanks to Bob Burns, Ted Gaweda, and any others who helped with the reunion.

Several of our regulars weren't able to attend and we hope to see them next year.

We are currently at the following address until the middle of April except Dec 13-28 when we fly back to Michigan for Christmas:

Duaine J. Pinkston
1223 10th Circle, SE
Largo, FL 33771
Ph: 727-581-8293

Many good wishes for a happy, healthy holiday season.

Your president,
Duaine Pinkston

From Katie Troccoli, President of Family and Friends 505 RCT Assn:

It is with great honor and respect that I compose this President's letter.

Growing up with Bob Dumke, I knew I had a special Dad. He was fun loving and caring. I also knew, in his heart there was great suffering. Here in Illinois in December of 2010 we have several inches of snow on the ground and the temperatures are below freezing. I think of my Dad's words every year when winter set in. He would say, "Someone is suffering someplace in this cold". Then he might mention how, in the [Battle of the Bulge](#), he was carrying a message to the front, and he came across a soldier frozen, slumped over a machine gun. He silently wished he were him. He said, "His troubles were over." He hated the cold.

The holidays were always bitter sweet at our house. There was plenty of love and good times to share. But, on [Christmas Eve](#), as we would be opening our gifts, without fail Dad's thoughts would be back in the Ardennes Forest. Tears would well up in his eyes and he would tell us how he had to ask a family to leave their home. It was a Mother, Father, and two small children. Their home was going to be the front line. Out they went into the snow and cold on Christmas Eve with only what they could carry. He knew it was for their safety. But it broke his heart just the same. I trouble back tears myself to write this, as I can still feel his pain.

Sometime after Christmas 1944 Dad was wounded. He was in a fox hole trying to get some rest. He was covered by blankets and tree branches. His buddies had given him their blankets as they had gone on patrol. A phosphorous shell hit near him. Dad threw the branches and blankets off of himself...he was burned quite badly on the face and arms and was evacuated. His buddy's blankets had saved his life.

Dad was quick to remind us that he was only one of many. That he did what he was trained to do as a Paratrooper. The real heroes are buried in the cemeteries in Europe. That many of his friends did not come home.

I am humbled and honored to be part of the family of men of the 82ND Airborne 2ND BTN 505. The world is a better place because of your sacrifice. I pay homage to those whom I never got to meet. May those of you who are with us today know how deeply you are imbedded in my heart. May there be peace on Earth.

Airborne, All The Way!

Katie Dumke Troccoli, a Paratrooper's Daughter

THE OUTPOST

As time marches on and the Taps list grows longer for the 505RCT Assn, the aims and work of the FF505RCT Association takes on proportionately more importance. I am certain that our new president, Katie Troccoli, and her board of directors, will meet all the challenges before us. And with returning 505RCT president, Duane Pinkston, the FF505RCT Assn will forge ahead with bigger and better reunions, a lively Panther Newsletter and ongoing projects to fund and preserve the history of the finest regiment in WWII.

To the Daughter of a Paratrooper, this son of a Glidertrooper pledges his support and best wishes in the weeks and months ahead.

During this Christmas and New Year season, we are reminded of the last great battle that the 505PIR and its combat team fought in the vicious and brutally cold Battle of the Bulge. It saw its sister regiment, the 504, become the first US unit to actually take back ground against the German forces, throwing Kampfgruppe Peiper out of Cheneux, Belgium, denying Lt. Col. Peiper and his combined armored infantry juggernaut the use a vital bridge to march onto Liege, Belgium.

And when the forces of the 1st SS Panzer and 9th SS Panzer Division sought to cross the Salm River to rescue Peiper's forces and propel them forward again--blocking them from doing so at Trois Pons and Grand Halleux was the 505th with the 456th artillery, 80th AA and 307th Engineers annihilating the attacking forces for four hellish days, forcing the mighty 6th Panzer Army to abandon its mission, setting the stage for the ultimate defeat of the German Army.

There are monuments in several places in Belgium that pay homage to the men who died while accomplishing the seemingly impossible tasks before them.

Our job has been and continues to be to honor these heroes and to make sure that each successive generation never forgets what they sacrificed there.

We stand shoulder to shoulder with them, marveling at their airborne spirit which is best summed up in the words of a glider trooper who was digging a foxhole in preparation for the German onslaught..."I'm the 82nd Airborne and this is as far as the bastards are going."

It is with the same steadfast determination that 2011 and beyond will be years to take pride in.

Robert Burns, Past President
FF505RCT Association

Col. (ret) Edwin M . Sayre
1 Sierra Drive
Breckenridge, Texas 76424-2539

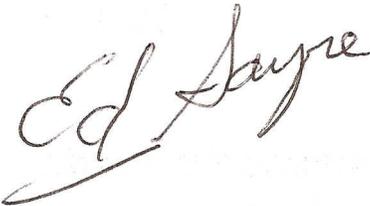
Dear Ellen,

The reunion we just returned from was a joy to me and it appeared to have been to all the people who came . I know the good things that were a part of the reunion did not happen accidentally, there was much work by you and many others to make it possible .

There were so many members of our organization that helped me at different places that I was embarrassed . However I would still like to do it again at Fort Benning next year.

Your help to me will be long remembered . Sarah said you should be here for a visit Saturday the 9 th. We will be delighted to take you out for lunch or dinner, to visit a few hours or days if you can - I can assure you we will be properly chaperoned .

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ed Sayre". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the "Sincerely," text.

2011 Reunion Info

For the 2011 reunion, we will be joining the 508th PIR Family and Friends Assn. at Fort Benning, GA. The reunion is tentatively scheduled for October 12-16. The reunion will include a day at Ft. Benning, where veterans will pin wings on a new graduating class of paratroopers, a visit to the new Infantry Museum, and a visit to the firing range where we will be able to fire the weapons. Mark your calendars. This will be a reunion not to be missed. Updates will be forthcoming in future Panthers.

**505 RCT Board for 2010 – 2011
Governing Board**

President, Duane Pinkston: 1398 Knoll Road; Portland, MI 48875-9763; Home (616) 374-7909; 1223 10th Circle, SE; Largo, FL 33771-3136; Home (727) 581-8293

Vice President, Dr. Robert Franco: 2112 Harris Ave.; Richland, WA 99352-2021; Home: (509) 946-1284; dolly.f@hotmail.com

Asst. Vice President, Barbara Fortenbaugh: 10875 Abercorn Ext. Apt. 811; Savannah, GA 31419-1836; Home: (912) 961-7081; willowbsf@aol.com

Treasurer, Ellen Peters: 3630 Townsend Dr.; Dallas, TX 75229; Home: (214) 352.7002; Cell: (214) 632-1360; Fax: (214) 350-0951; eeptx@sbcglobal.net

Liaison, Ted Gaweda: 1906 Partridge Dr.; Fayetteville, NC 28304-2625; Home: (910) 867-5975; CSMGaweda@aol.com

Chaplin, Jesse Crews: 9222 Shannon Rd.; Mechanicsville, VA 23116-2854; Home: (804); 746-3485; sarahcrews@aol.com

Trustee, Bob Gillette: 1545 SE 223rd Ave. #319; Gresham, OR 97030-2546; Home: (503) 661-5063; bobgillette3@verizon.net

Web Site, John Sparry: 1457 Inwood Ct.; Campbell, CA 95008-4406; Home (408) 429-0098; jsparry@comcast.net

**Family & Friends of the 505 RCT Association
Governing Board
2010-2011**

**Katie Troccoli, President: 1911 Champlain St.; Ottawa, IL 61350; Home: (815) 434-2058;
Cell: (815) 228-2058; katie1@sbcglobal.net**

**Barbara Fortenbaugh, Vice-President: 10875 Abercorn Ext. Apt. 811; Savannah,
GA 31419-1836; Home: (912) 961-7081; willowbsf@aol.com**

**Ellen Peters, Secretary-Treasurer: 3630 Townsend Dr.; Dallas, TX 75229; Home:
(214) 352-7002; Cell: (214) 632-1360; Fax: (214) 350-0951; eeptx@sbcglobal.net**

**Jim Blankenship, 4-Year Trustee: 2135 Saint Thomas Way; Suwanee, GA 30024; Home:
Cell: (404) 906-5646; Fax (770) 822-4751; jimspix@charter.net;
airbornealltheway.blankenship@gmail.com**

**Duke Boswell, 3-Year Trustee: 930 Crown Ridge Dr.; Colorado Springs, CO 80904-1734;
Home: (719) 633-3569; bos930@aol.com**

**Gene Garren, 2-Year Trustee: 656 Winter Star Rd.; Burnsville, NC 28714;
Home: (828) 682-6650; Cell: (828) 284-0951; genegarren@aol.com**

**Barbara Gavin Fauntleroy, 1 -Year Trustee: 19 Prospect Ridge - Unit 29; Ridgefield,
CT 06877-5129; Home: (203) 438-2461; gavin505@comcast.net**

**Ray Fary, Veterans' Liaison Trustee: 8254 Madison Ave.; Munster, IN 46321-1627;
Home: (219) 836-7974; RFARY@mailstation.com**



THE OPEN DOOR
By
Col. (Ret) Keith Nightingale

In Honor of the Airborne Spirit and those Airborne soldiers who went before, are going and will always go in support of our Nation and its ideals.

Everyone has a dream or a fantasy. Mine-for many years-was to jump into Normandy as an 82d trooper. I had thought this since a small boy reading a Life Magazine article on D Day. Sometimes dreams become reality and realized mine on the 40th anniversary of D Day as the commander of troops for the 82d Airborne on their first return to Normandy since 6 June 1944. This led to all else that follows.

As Commander of 2-505, I had suggested to MG Jim Lindsay, that the 82d return to Normandy for the 40th Anniversary. The Division had not been back to France since the 6th of June 1944 and this was long overdue for the Division, the Nation and our Airborne Vets. He approved and I began a year of preparing the handpicked soldiers from throughout the Division for this historic return. We established a reading program as well as historical reviews. Each regimental unit and support element had to study and brief the events and actions of their veteran predecessors. One of my tasks and most personally rewarding was to talk to some of the key players of the Division on D Day as well as the enlisted soldiers who did the heavy lifting. On several occasions, they talked to the assembled soldiers who would retrace their path. These talks and the subsequent history lessons transformed this from another task to be accomplished to a personal quest and homage of remembrance of those that had gone before.

General Gavin, though frail and somewhat hesitant in speech, clearly showed the fire and strength that made him the most revered of combat leaders. He addressed our group directly, said what a wonderful honor it would be to return and that we were going to be successful in any battlefield and any war because we were Airborne and there weren't any better soldiers in the world. When he finished, we knew we would go wherever he directed. Later, a vet from the 505, Bill Sullivan, told us that his most significant personal moment came when in England, BG Gavin stood on a jeep hood to address the 505 PIR and said;

“I will not lead you to Normandy, I will take you.”

Leadership cannot be taught but in the most cursory way. Gen Gavin was born with immense quantities in his core which was clear to us and consistently reinforced by the vets. If he would take us, we would all surely follow.

General Ridgeway was interviewed by me at his home near Pittsburgh. He was in his 90's and still active, engaged and enthused with life. He recounted the training in England and the immense pride he held for the soldiers and their ability to overcome the worst of circumstances. He addressed North Africa, Sicily, Salerno and Normandy. In his kitchen, he lost 40 years of age and was on the ground of which he spoke. The immensity of his pride in his soldiers was clear. For all of his titles, ranks and positions, his time as Commander of the 82d and its soldiers was in the front of his personal honors list. Looking into his dark eagle eyes combined with his direct delivery, there was no doubt you would do what he told you to and that it was the right and only answer. The measure of the man who saved our army in Korea had never changed from what the troopers knew in Africa.

Ben Vandervoort spoke to us on several occasions as he lived relatively close by in Hilton Head. He was always humble, direct and matter of fact. You didn't realize he was a god from Olympus unless you were paying close attention. He had a great humanity and an immensity of character as well as a very clear vision of what had to be done and how it had to be done. Any soldier that served with him knew he was in the presence

of someone very special and would probably be much better for the association. He didn't advertise as he didn't need to.

By late May of 1984, our group got on the C130's and headed to the UK to begin this voyage of remembrance. Each of the 350 soldiers had realized his own epiphany and the legacy he was tracing. More than one soldier told me, referring to the many vets we had encountered- We will not fail you. A sense of purpose and dedication was clear to us all.

Our force of about 350 airborne soldiers, with the new Division CG, Ed Trobaugh, assembled at RAF Lyham much as the originals did on their day of days. Other than a difference in aircraft-C130's for C47's- the scene would have been very familiar to the originals which gave us all a sense of poignancy and reflection. Many vets had followed us throughout our England tour and were at the airfield to mingle and see us off.

The aircraft were lined on the ramp, doors open with each stick of fully loaded soldiers sitting under the shade of the wings with their equipment and parachutes in various stages of dress and undress. Ones and twos were lined behind the aircraft on the edge of the grass relieving themselves-an event all the vets volunteered was a direct reflection of their activities on D Day eve. Jeeps were running back and forth with crews and messages. For myself, I could close my eyes and relive what must have been and which we now so ardently had wished to participate-now we were there.

Slowly with full gear and a non-historic sunny sky, we loaded through the rear ramp and found our places on the red nylon outboard and in-board seats. I was sitting in the third position on the stick and the CG at the eighth-where we guessed he would land mid-drop zone. As the airborne commander, I had on a headset connecting me with the pilot and crew. In that this event was drawing a huge population at St Mere Eglise and we had half the brass and politicians in the world engaged, we were getting constant changes, adjustments and "suggestions," much of which we ignored. I talked to my DZSO, Cpt Dave McNeil from the DZ and he indicated the largest and most significant issue was people on the DZ and that the Gendarmes were only beginning to deal with the problem.

I was called forward by the pilot just before takeoff. He was an older Colonel who shook my hand and introduced himself. He said he had a special request-If it was ok with us, he would like to fly the course with the doors open as they did on the original run. I thought it a good idea but said I had to get permission from the CG. Gen Trobaugh, overcome with an avalanche of PR issues-not his forte-nodded and said OK. I gave the pilot a thumbs up. I had no idea beyond what he stated as to why this was important. The engines began their rev up to takeoff and with a sudden release, we were rolling down the runway following the path of history.

Though the noise and blurring images through the now open doors were momentarily disconcerting, they brought a strange peacefulness and isolation to each of us. It was clear that this was not an ordinary trip. If anything, we were in a time machine. I looked back on the troops and each was looking out the doors and immersed in the residue of his thoughts, distilled by all that had taken place to this moment. This was a serious moment and not just another jump.

Before the jump, we briefed our plan and that of the original drop and had a number of airborne vets-US and Brit- talk to us on the ramp-among them LTC Ben Vandervoort-my predecessor battalion commander that night and LTG Napier Crookenden who jumped with the Brit 5 Para on D day. There was a consistency about all of their discussions. They displayed no bravado or ego which would have been expected and accepted in the light of history but rather joked and made matter of fact comments about the great weights they carried and the difficulty in getting into the aircraft, the problems with relieving themselves once loaded, excited pltdrs yelling orders and mass confusion as to who and what went on which aircraft.

One enlisted vet described the incident where the Gammon grenade went off destroying an adjacent 82d aircraft and killing part of the stick on the ground just before takeoff. He related that one of the shaken

survivors emerged from the aircraft with remnants of people and explosives on his uniform , struggled toward the closest aircraft occupied by the vet describing the incident and was pushed in the door by the ground crew- the vet said

“He wasn’t going to stay and we weren’t going to leave him.”

Said in a quiet unemotional manner-it made a distinct impact on all of us. Through the many individual veteran recounting, there was a very clear pride in doing what they did and an even clearer conviction that they would succeed-that made the greatest impact on us all. Most of the troopers had never heard a shot fired in anger and most wondered how they would perform in combat. Every participating trooper knew he was taking part in a personally important moment and having the rare gift of being able to walk and talk with the ghosts.

Ben Vandervoort said the 24 hour delay on 4/5 June wasn’t wasted on much sleep-lots of poker, craps, conversation, letter writing, re-checking gear and just trying to get to the mess hall and back while eating in the pouring rain. No pub crawl which was a disappointment to many. The next day was as much an emotional drain as a break. Most of the sleep achieved was under the wing of the C47 in the early evening of 5 June. A fact which they would pay for later.

The invasion aircraft, like ours, took off in almost broad daylight-around 2300 English double daylight savings time and blended into huge circles until all were airborne and then began to fly in a v of v’s south and east. We followed in their wake.

The vets stood by the runway and waved at us as we passed. What a flood of memories they must have held. A consistent theme from the veterans -from Generals to privates-was the tremendous feeling of confidence and personal awe they felt as they looked out the door of their aircraft enroute to Normandy. For the first time, they were able to put the true size and resource endeavor together in a personal visceral sense. It was the one binding, overarching impression that uniformly affected them all and provided a tremendous sense of confidence-confidence in themselves and in the mission and was perhaps the single most unifying impression of that night. General’s Ridgeway, Taylor and Gavin, LTC Vandervoort, PFC Murphy and countless other airborne vets had the same view out the door and the same lasting impressions. This was a bonding moment that is so crucial to a soldier’s mental state going into combat.

During the invasion, most jump aircraft had their doors removed prior to takeoff from the UK. This permitted the jump masters (the senior officer or NCO on board) to have an unimpeded view of the sea and land below. For PFC Murphy, that was virtual daylight as the pathfinder’s departed at roughly 2200 British Double Daylight Saving Time. For the others, while it was after dusk, the full moon and the receding twilight still provided sufficient visual reference to the horizon and the English Channel below.

LTC Vandervoort, Commander, 2-505, looked out from his position by the open door as the plane reached altitude and leveled off.

I looked out and as far as I could see in front of me, in back of me and off to each side, the sky was filled with aircraft. The V of V’s went to the horizons at all points of the compass. I could see the slight tracing of contrails of the following jump aircraft in the receding rear as well as hundreds of fighters escorting us all on the flanks. I had never seen so many aircraft at any one time and hardly realized so many existed.

I looked below as we flew the Channel. All I could see was an immense trail of white wakes of the ships pointing toward France, the moon glinting off the barrage balloons tethered to them. I felt I could have walked to France and never gotten my feet wet. I knew then we were going to win this war.

Gen Gavin. Much the same but added;

I saw the immensity of the power we had concentrated for this moment, the focus of all our resources and preparation and thought to myself there wasn't a force on earth that could stop us. I had always thought that of the invasion but now I knew it.

Gen Taylor.

I looked out and was startled at the vastness of the air and sea force all moving steadily to France. Its one thing to see it presented in a briefing and on paper but quite another to actually see it arrayed. I turned to my aide and told him to look at it and remember the sight-he would never see its like again. I then went to the middle of the aircraft and slept on the floor for a brief time.

PFC Murphy.

I looked out and said to my buddies, the German's are in for a hell of a night.

As our aircraft ran down the runway with each soldier resting in his personal world, I closed my eyes with those comments in my mind and reflected on this shared moment with those that I had interviewed prior to this flight. Vandervoort, Gavin, Ridgeway, Murphy, Piper, Timmes and Sullivan independently had the same impression and reaction. Paraphrasing-

I looked out and saw all those planes and ships and I realized for the first time what I was part of and what was about to happen. I had never seen so many ships and planes before. We were always training by ourselves and never saw all the parts, only our part. From that moment, I was absolutely sure we were going to win. I had never felt so good about anything or had such a sense of pride and confidence. We were going to beat the Germans and I was going to be part of it.

In later conversations with vets I always made a point to ask them what they saw on their flight and their thoughts. Universally, their impression was of the impact of the physical reality of the immensity of the undertaking and their individual immediate absolute confidence in the outcome. Our flight was insignificant compared to that but immensely important to each of us.

The flight was in brilliant English color-verdant green of the pastures below, then the white chalky beach and the deep blue-black English channel with high patches of bright white Monet-like clouds stretching to the horizon and a brilliant golden rising morning sun burning off the evening dew from the farm fields below-D Day in our minds was no longer in black and white. D+40 was in brilliant color.

The 250 knot wind coursed easily by the fuselage enveloping each of us in a sensory canopy permitting the deepest personal reflections. Unlike all other airborne movements, I didn't see a single soldier sleeping-like me, each was in his own world taking a trip in which they were well-versed but had never replicated. As I looked down both sides of the aircraft, I could see the intensity in their eyes that had been born by their exposure to this history and their part in it.

As we reached flight altitude, I was called on the headphones and asked for the second time to go to the cockpit. Somewhat bewildered, I struggled there with all my gear and the pilot got out of his chair-highly unusual-extended his hand, looked me in the eye and said-

"This is my last flight. I am retiring after this mission as flight lead and from the Air Force Reserve. 40 years ago tonight I was flying a C47 as flight lead for elements of the 82d Airborne. Thankyou for making this happen. This is one of the greatest moments of my life."

I was stunned speechless but returned his handshake and gave him a salute and said-“Thankyou”, returning to my stick with a much clearer understanding of his original request. What he must have seen and carried with him to be released at this moment in time.....

The red light came on just before the Channel coast. The other jumpmasters and I stood up, hooked up and looked at the sticks. My right foot was hooked in the open frame and the wind blew briskly by my uniform and equipment. Each soldier in line-inboard and outboard stick-General through Private-looked up anxious and alert awaiting instructions as they had done 40 years before on this date.

The verdant green broken checkerboard fields of Normandy swept as a blur past my eyes as we went through the timeless rituals of the jump commands-Stand Up. Hook Up. Check static lines. Check Equipment. Sound off for equipment check. Stand by. Looking at the men and their demeanor-they all knew that not only were they jumping for the sake of history, they were part of it. It was a moment.

At the 2 min warning, I placed both feet flush on the fuselage frame, reached out with my left hand, grasped the wind deflector and leaned out the door into the rush to confirm the drop zone. I was momentarily transfixed by the warm humid air and wind blurred vision. Then the landmarks became crystal clear in my mind-Vandervoort had said he flew his route on the map and aerial photos in his mind a hundred times so he could pick out key route features and insure his bearings.(This was prescient as he had the pilot turn off the red light once when he saw the pilot had misread the landmarks. Had he followed the sequence, his stick would have landed miles from their intended drop zone).

In the brilliant rising morning sun, I had it much easier and without ground fire. Clearly distinguishable below were the key 101st objective towns with their distinctive church towers, St Come Du Mont, St Marie Dumont, further was Utah Beach and the critical causeways. To the north, Omaha Beach and the receding coast toward the British beaches could be readily seen. Then suddenly the patchwork quilt of the Norman fields and small villages and bisecting roads came up. Then dead ahead-St Mere Eglise-distinct on the main Cherbourg-Carentan highway with its dramatic church square. Just in front of it was a small curling stream of yellow smoke marking the drop zone. Clear spot! Thumbs up the JM's and troops. Stand In The Door! The loadmaster stood to my rear with his fingers in front of my face counting the last 5 seconds.....Green Light. Go! We were jumping into a time warp. The first two jumpers were away and I inserted myself in the column with the A/JM taking the door. I watched my chute deploy, straightened out the lines and then looked down.

The drop zone was a sea of humanity. Women, children, men, Gendarmes, French and US Army running across the narrow fields so thick they blotted out the ground. I couldn't see an open spot to steer to and tried to move closest to the smoke. The drop zone was a series of typical small hedgerow fields designated La Londe and had been theoretically isolated hours earlier by the gendarmes. However, within a couple of hours of the jump, thousands of French infiltrated everywhere in their intense desire to see this return and touch the successors of those that came before and delivered them. In Normandy, the invasion has always been current events and those that participated are truly treated as gods on earth never to be forgotten. As surrogates, the first return en masse was a moment to be remembered by us but to be treasured by them.

In the air, I had this vision which I always carried of the St Mere church stained glass-of the airborne soldier suspended with the town on fire with raised knees. I assumed that pose for a moment in homage and then went about my business of looking for a safe spot to land. If a town of 2,000 years history can redesign its entire heraldry and honor a single moment in time, so could I.

Fearing to hurt someone and no clear spot of ground to see, I tried to twist away from the closest mass but simply slammed into the ground, my parachute collapsing over several milling families. While still lying on my back, I was grabbed by several small boys, a man and a woman-the man shook my hand and the woman with tears in her eyes quietly applauded with her hands tightly grasped at her chin. The boys grabbed my chute and helped me roll it up. I couldn't see a soldier for the exuberantly happy humanity surrounding each of us.

We were the surrogates for those people whose parents and grandparents could not perform the same act of gratitude 40 years before. The 82d Airborne had returned to France but in truth it had never left-nor will it. The cemetery at Omaha Beach attests to that. †

Condolences

Our dear Doc Franco lost his beloved wife, Ilene, August 31, 2010. Doc and Ilene were married for 62 years. Ilene was a wonderful woman and will long be remembered with love and great fondness by all who knew her. Cards and letters may be sent to the Franco family at: 2112 Harris Avenue
Richland, WA 99354-2021

Ilene's Obituary as it appeared in the TriCity Herald is below:

"Ilene Franco passed away August 31, 2010, at her home in Richland, Washington. She was born in 1927 to Harry and Minnie Andler in Boston. She graduated from Beth Israel Hospital School of Nursing in Boston. During her training, she met Dr. Robert Franco, originally from Seattle. Ilene accepted Robert's proposal of marriage at Fenway Park. On November 22, 1947, they began their 62-year marriage.

The new family lived in Boise, Pasadena, Seattle, and Los Angeles prior to moving to Richland in 1954. Their family grew to include sons: Marc of Seattle; and Michael (Cheryl) of Kent; daughters: Barbara Sherer of Bellevue; Janet Franco of Portland; Ellen Wilbur (John) of Laguna Niguel, California; and Martha Kennedy (Dave) of Denver, Colorado; and nine grandchildren.

Ilene was very involved in the community her entire life. During her children's early years, she was active in the PTA, Scouts, Brownies, and other school- and youth-related activities. Ilene and Bob were very committed to the growth and development of Congregation Beth Shalom in Richland, including the Sisterhood and United Synagogue Youth organization. She was active in the League of Women Voters for over 60 years. Ilene was deeply committed to the local United Way and served a term on the State of Washington United Way Board of Directors. She also served on the Richland Cemetery Board.

As her children grew, Ilene worked as a nurse for McDonnell Douglas Labs in the Hanford area. In 1985, she completed a bachelor's degree from Central Washington State University. Lifelong learners, Ilene and Bob spent much of their spare time taking classes, attending lectures, and enjoying the arts. Bob and Ilene also hosted several foreign exchange students. Later in life, she and Bob enjoyed traveling all over the world. Ilene was a passionate knitter and cook.

Her entire adult life, neighbors, friends, and friends of her children made time to visit when they were in Richland. Ilene collected friends like some collect stamps. Ilene maintained close relationships with ALL her family, aunts, uncles, and first, second, and third cousins.

Ilene is preceded in death by her father Harry, mother Minnie, and brother Irving 'Sonny.' In addition to husband Bob and her six grown children, she is also survived by nine grandchildren.

During the last few months, the generosity and love of family and friends who helped care for her was incredible and astonishing. Our heartfelt thanks go out to the many people who gave their time and effort so generously.

Ilene-Mom-Grandma will be deeply missed. She was always a person of significance. Her memory will be equally significant for all of us."

Get Well Soon

Our dear friend from Leicester, Deryk Wills, had an operation on November 4 to install a drainage valve and tube in his head to allow the excess spinal fluid to drain off into his stomach. His balance and walking ability had been badly affected by his condition. The operation was a success and the latest word from son David (December 7) is that Deryk is: "Dad is making good progress with his recovery. The operation to install the drainage stint has improved his balance and walking ability, so he can now get around with much more confidence. He went out for the first time in weeks on Saturday morning."

Cards and letter can be sent to Deryk at: Deryk Wills, 70 Hidcote Road, Oadby, Leicester, LE2 5PF, England, UK.

Milestone Birthday

E Co's Otis Sampson, will be 100 years young January 19, 2011. Otis is still going strong and attends the 505th RCT reunions. Cards and greetings can be sent to Otis at:

Otis Sampson
33691 Rancho Vista Drive
Cathedral City, CA 92234

Jeep Dedication

Family and Friends member, Philippe Chateau, writes:

"I bought his Jeep in August 16th 2008. Funny fact - It turns out to be National Airborne Day. Maybe that is why I decided to paint the marking of the 82nd A/B 505 Regiment. So, restoration began on July 3rd 2009. It took a lot of hours and a lot of dedication to achieve such a degree of correctness in the restoration. Some connoisseurs can appreciate the work done and the details on the Jeep. Now that the Jeep is finished, I wanted to dedicate the Jeep to Mr. Bob Murphy. I have had the pleasure and honor to have known him personally. He will forever be part of the D-Day Ceremonies in Ste Mere Eglise."



PhilippeChateau and Bob Murphy jeep.

Lost and Found

Seventeen original editions of the 505th Regimental History, "**Ready**", were found in the Static Line wear house. Family and Friends has purchased the books which are now available to our members at \$250.00 plus shipping and insurance. Funds received will go towards memorials for the 505th in Europe and the United States. These books will be available until March 31, 2011 at which time they will be made available to the general public. If you are interested in purchasing a copy, kindly contact Ellen Peters; 3630 Townsend Dr.; Dallas, TX 75229-3805; (h) 214-352-7002; (c) 214-632-1360; Email: eeptx@sbcglobal.net or epeterstx@gmail.com.



82nd Airborne "All American" J. G. Historical Society



Contact: Emile Lacroix, 10 Rue du Bois 5380 – Hambraine (Fernelmont)
Tel: 081/834171 - Email: emile.lacroix@skynet.be - Cell: 0497/809352

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE 82nd AIRBORNE DIVISION 29th EDITION

Date : February 26, 2011

Start : At Manhay at : 9H00

**Following the trails of the 325th Glider Infantry Regiment
of the 82nd Airborne Division U.S.**

**Through the villages Dri-Le-Cheslain, Houte-si-Plout, Baneux, Fraiture, Malempré
and back to Manhay**

This 24 km long march is dedicated in homage to the troopers of the famous **82nd Airborne Division** and will follow an itinerary by the roads and trails taken by different **82nd Airborne's** units during the battle of the Bulge. This year, we will walk in the trails of the **325th Glider Infantry Regiment**, crossing the village of Fraiture where this unit fought a bitter battle for the defence of the Baraque de Fraiture crossroads. A memorial for the **325IR** is raised in Manhay. A little ceremony wreath laying will be held there before the start.

The lunch time will take place around noon at Fraiture where hot soup will be provided free by the QM field service of the **82nd Airborne "All American" Jeep Group**. It's also possible to purchase there some drink and some hot food (hamburgers etc..) at our field kitchen.

Back to Manhay, a traditional hot wine will be served by the same QM service and a souvenir certificate will be presented to the marchers.

We ask all the participants to register (6 €) as soon as their arrival.

The registration fee covers the logistic support, the hot soup at lunch, the souvenir certificate, hot wine at the end of the march, insurance and different other services. (A red cross unit will also be in support.)

Several Veterans of the **82nd Airborne Division** who witnessed the battle would participate as well as re-enactment groups from Belgium and other countries. The logistic support will be provided by WWII vehicles from the **82nd Airborne "All American" Jeep Group** reinforced by other friendly clubs.

It will be remembered that the 82nd's memorials along the road are part of the 12 memorials raised at the initiative of the **82nd Airborne "All American" Jeep Group** in homage of the **82nd Airborne Division** and its units.

All are welcome to participate in the march and join the **All American Jeep Group** whose only goal is to honor the brave men of the 82nd Airborne Division and to commemorate their valiant combat actions. _

A Belgian club dedicated to the 82nd Airborne Division
