



*In honor of Jim "Maggie" Megellas the 82nd Airborne's Most Decorated Officer*

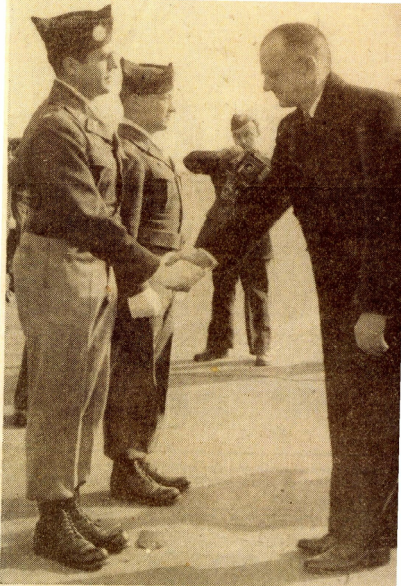
# ALL WISCONSIN AIRBORNE REPORTER

APRIL 2010

ALL WISCONSIN AIRBORNE REPORTER



## Jim "Maggie" Megellas leads Madison Glider Symposium, Sept. 9-11!



**DIVISION HONORED**—1st Lt. James Megellas of Fond du Lac (left) is congratulated by Jan Meijer, Netherlands Minister of War, after accepting a Dutch decoration for the U. S. 82nd Airborne Division in Berlin recently.

Clipping of Maggie accepting the Dutch Orange Lanyard for the 82nd's fierce combat in Market/Garden courtesy of Lester Schwarm, 325 GIR, 82nd, Wausau.

Jim "Maggie" Megellas, 93, sharp as an Airborne tack and one of the most heroic figures in the famed 82nd Airborne's proud history, will keynote Madison's National Glider Symposium next September 9-11.

"This is a very, very big deal for us! Wisconsin's Paratroopers and Glider Riders will be honored by one of our own from Fond du Lac. Maggie is a truly iconic figure in the Paratroops, one of the greatest Airborne Warriors of all time," said Tom Laney, Secretary/Editor of the Badger Chapter, 82nd Airborne Association.

"The The Glider event may well be the last time we have to honor and thank, the WWII Airborne and Glider Riders and Pilots. No one does those honors better than Maggie," Laney said.

"I thank our Airborne friends and human dynamo organizers, Sara Witter Connor and Jim Romlein from the 101st Old Abe Airborne for all their hard work in making this happen."

Witter-Connor is heading up the Symposium and doing one heck of an Airborne job of it and Romlein is handling electronic communications and sundry other things.

The Madison Symposium follows the first held in Mpls two years ago. It will again bring together WWII Glider Riders from all Airborne Divisions, Glider pilots and even manufacturers. A special feature will be the builders of a WWII WACO replica from Wausau and Iron Mountain.

Megellas, Airborne to the core, is always on the move, with itineraries organized by his lovely wife Carole. His recent trips include visits to the 82nd and 101st Troopers in Iraq and Afghanistan; and honors in Holland and Belgium. We are forever in Maggie's debt. This paper is dedicated to him. (See page 2.)

WELCOME HOME DAVE  
GREEN! SEE PAGE 10.

## Olson gets Combat Jump Stars from Badger 82nd Airborne!

Thousands of 82nd, 101st Airborne Paratroopers jumped into Normandy and Holland with Don Olson, 88, Black River Falls, 502nd PIR, 101st Airborne WWII Hero. BUT, Don never received his Combat Jump Wings!

A couple of 82nd guys, Howard Rennhack and Tom Laney fixed that on April 6 with a presentation at the Black River Vets Memorial. Static Line's 325 Man of the Year, Rennhack, Humbird, pinned the Combat Jump Star Wings on Don. Howard looks for Airborne guys everywhere he goes and a few months ago he met a good one in a Merrilan café in Five- O-Deuce Hero Donald R. Olson. "When we saw his Wings, he was missing the Combat Jump Stars and we knew then we had to get him some" Howard said.

"Don has the Silver Star too! He's a real Hero and now he has the Combat Jump Stars on his Wings that he's always deserved. We're doing a bigger story on him soon but for now, what Howard did was just great," said Laney. "They don't come any more Airborne than Howard. He has over 2000 jumps and goes everywhere to back all of our Troops. And Howard is not one of those Paratroopers who quibbles over what Airborne Unit you served with. He always says: 'We're all Airborne when we go out that door. We're all in that Band of Brothers. We are just proud as hell to be friends with a Paratrooper like Don Olson.'"

"Don's a Norwegian deer hunter too. That's just gravy," said Laney. "His Norwegian Doc/Airborne buff Paul Helstad even showed up and bought us lunch! We'll be back with Combat Wings for Floyd Pratt who never got his from the 17th Airborne."



*Howard Rennhack pins Combat Jump Paratrooper Wings on our pal Don Olson. Paratroopers get Bronze Stars for their Wings for each Combat Jump they make. Don jumped into Normandy and Holland but did not receive the Combat Wings until April 6 thanks to Howard. Full story on Don and his Silver Star in next issue. (Laney photo.)*

## Jim Megellas: A Paratrooper's Paratrooper



*"He was the bravest man I ever saw. And he cared about each one of us, he appreciated us all so much! He would do anything for us, and we would follow him anywhere. It wasn't just that he was a Paratrooper and a leader. He was the best at that of course. But he is more. He is a good man. He's done good things for people all his life."*

-S/Sgt Bill Hannigan, 88, St. Paul, MN on Jim Megellas. Bill was a squad leader in Maggie's platoon. Bill is also a very good man.

**"THERE IS A SPECIAL BOND BETWEEN PARATROOPERS AND GLIDER RIDERS, THE AIRBORNE IS A VERY SPECIAL PLACE."  
JIM "MAGGIE" MEGELLAS.**



## JOIN THE 82ND AIRBORNE ASSOCIATION

**The 82nd Airborne Division Association is the largest organization of Paratroopers and Glide Riders in the world.**

**Paratroopers from the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force and Coast Guard and Foreign Services are all welcome.**

**\$15 annual dues.**

**Contact:**

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82nd Airborne Association  
5318 Greenbriar Ln.  
Madison, WI 53714-3404**

<http://sites.google.com/site/badgerairborne/>

## Introduction

This is the first edition of the electronic, quarterly *All Wisconsin Airborne Reporter* dedicated to honoring James "Maggie" Megellas, the most decorated officer in the 82nd Airborne's proud history. This issue is to bring you up to speed on a great Wisconsin Airborne Warrior and the Medal he so justly deserves. The follow-up inaugural issue will be out in about six weeks with stories on Glenn Ward Les Schwarm and your stories if you will send them in.

We will be reporting on all Wisconsin Airborne. We will be working towards getting the Medal of Honor for Maggie— and for our Division and all Airborne Troopers — for which he was submitted in 1945. We will be telling that story and making that case in these pages. We will update new Congressional action for this Medal of Honor. We want this medal for Maggie, for the 504 PIR, the 82nd Airborne Division and for Airborne Troopers everywhere.

We're all Brothers and Sisters here. We will cover all Airborne: Paratroopers, Glider Riders and Air Assault. These pages are open to 82nd, 101st, 173rd, 501st, SEALS, USMC Force Recon. Send us your ideas, pictures and stories! *All The Way!*

- Tom Laney, Editor

715-962-4365 [tlaney1776@gmail.com](mailto:tlaney1776@gmail.com)



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT



*82nd Airborne Division Association, Inc.*

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*The United States Congress*

20 July 2007

To: The Members of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division Association

Subject: Congressional Medal of Honor for James "Maggie" Megellas

Dear Association Members,

House Bill 795 is now before the House of Representatives to finally award the Congressional Medal of Honor - for which he was recommended in 1944 - to one of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division's most noted heroes, James "Maggie" Megellas.

We at National support this Bill and hope you will too.

I encourage you to read this newsletter regarding the facts around the Herresbach Battle during the Battle of the Bulge. You will notice that Lt. Megellas's platoon killed and captured 100's of the enemy without losing a single man.

A big reason that no Paratroopers were lost in this battle is because Lt. Megellas attacked and destroyed a Panther Tank that was firing on his platoon. In this newsletter, you will see that this heroic action was originally included in the recommendation for the Medal of Honor but somehow was lost. The Medal of Honor request then resulted in The Silver Star.

I think you will agree that, when the tank action is considered with all that occurred during this battle, James Megellas is long overdue for this Medal of Honor.

James Megellas was born in Wisconsin and still calls Fond du Lac "home". His Brothers in the Badger Chapter are supporting this Bill and they are asking for your help to get your House of Representatives Members to read the facts in this case and to then get behind Bill.

James Megellas, his platoon, H Company of the 504 PIR and the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division deserve this honor. Please help us work for it.

All the Way,

RONALD H. RATH  
President

*"America's Guard of Honor"*

AFRICA SICILY ITALY FRANCE THE NETHERLANDS BELGIUM GERMANY  
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC VIETNAM GRENADA PANAMA PERSIAN GULF



## A patient patriot

*Comrades still trying to get Medal of Honor for Colleyville man*

**BY CHRIS VAUGHN, STAR-TELEGRAM STAFF WRITER**

COLLEYVILLE, TX — No officer in the history of the 82nd Airborne Division is believed to be as highly decorated as James Megellas. The shadow box in his house contains a Distinguished Service Cross, two Silver Stars, two Bronze Stars for valor and two Purple Hearts.

But the men who served with Megellas during World War II believe that even those medals don't fully tell the story of his exploits. There, at the top, they say, should hang a Medal of Honor.

"He was the best officer I ever saw in 51 years of service," said retired Army Lt. Col. George Heib. "And as an infantry soldier in two wars with two Combat Infantryman Badges, I never saw a braver act in my lifetime." For eight years, a group of men appealed to the Army to upgrade a Silver Star that Megellas earned on Jan. 28, 1945, during the Battle of the Bulge, believing that crucial information was left out of the original nomination. Twice, though, they were rebuffed.

Megellas moved to Colleyville in 2002 to be closer to his sons and grandchildren. While he

believes that a Medal of Honor is warranted, he's certainly not counting on it. He knows the odds are long.

"In a war, everybody does things to survive and accomplish the objective," said

its history as the battles it fought.

"This would be another Medal of Honor for the 82nd Airborne," said Edward J. Sims, a retired Army colonel who started the appeals initiative.

**"I NEVER SAW A BRAVER ACT IN MY LIFETIME."  
-LTC GEORGE HEIB**



*Badger Airborne and Ripon College honor Maggie and 82nd last August. (Photo by Barb Laney.)*

Megellas who is now 93.

"A lot of guys did things that they never got medals for. If I don't get it, I have no problem with that. I've lived this long without it."

After so many years, one might wonder why it matters so much to the men who fought with Megellas in the Devils of the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment. They'll be glad to answer that, too — because a Medal of Honor reflects on all who served in that unit, past and future.

Unlike most medals earned by individuals, the Medal of Honor gives a unit a special status, every bit as important to

"It's important to all who were members of the 504th. We were all part of it."

The incident in question occurred toward the end of the epochal Battle of the Bulge, the Germans' massive counter-attack in December 1944.

It was outside Herresbach, a town in Belgium. Lt. Megellas' platoon, moving through deep snow and freezing cold, had surprised 200 Germans heading out of town. His men decimated the Germans' ranks and were preparing to attack the town when a German Mark V tank took aim at them.

Megellas ran toward the tank, got close enough to throw a grenade at the track and dis-



abled it. He then climbed on top of the tank and dropped another grenade in the hatch. His men then moved on and captured the town. Not one of his men was hurt.

“I know what heroism is,” said Heib, who was then an 18-year-old assistant machine gunner in the unit. “I’ve seen a lot of it. Anytime you destroy a tank up close and personal with two grenades while under fire, that’s extraordinary heroism.”

Megellas’ commanders nominated him for the Medal of Honor, but somewhere along the line, the part about the tank was left out of the nomination. They also misspelled his name. Instead, he received a Silver Star. Everyone went on about their business. There was still a war on.

“Guys who have ever been in combat will tell you they don’t pay much attention to it,” Megellas said. “I had other things to worry about.”

Decades later, in the late 1990s, Sims reread the Silver Star citation and noticed the missing part. He contacted eyewitnesses, got sworn statements and then submitted everything to the military for reconsideration.

Two secretaries of the Army wrote back, though, that they believed the Silver Star was the appropriate recognition for the action. Neither secretary mentioned the tank, which perturbed Sims greatly.

Sims saw a lot of combat during World War II and Korea — all told, 440 days of front-line duty from Sicily and Anzio to the Battle of the Bulge to Korea. He knew the difference between Silver Star actions and Medal of Honor actions.

“It was ridiculous,” said Sims, who is 87 and lives in New Jersey. “Their decisions were based on the old citation. No

“The recognition from my peers is enough —when they believe in you and what you did and go to such trouble for you. The satisfaction I’ve gotten from that is reward enough.”

JAMES “MAGGIE” MEGELLAS

**Age:** 92

**Wife:** Carole. They have two sons.

**Home:** Colleyville

**Hometown:** Fond du Lac, Wis.

**College:** B.A. from Ripon College in Wisconsin

**Army service:** Commissioned in May 1942 at graduation.

Served on active duty in the 82nd Airborne Division until 1946.

Continued in the Army Reserve for 16 years. Retired as a lieutenant colonel.

**Battles:** Naples, Anzio, Operation Market Garden, Battle of the Bulge, Ruhr Pocket

**Career:** Served in the foreign service in Yemen, Colombia, Panama and Vietnam.

**Still active:** In 2006, he traveled to Afghanistan for his old regiment, the 504th Parachute Infantry. He went on patrol, attended briefings and spoke to soldiers about leadership under fire. He plans to go to Iraq this year. He is the author of one book, *All the Way to Berlin* (Presidio Press, 2003).

**Web site:**

[www.jamesmegellas.org](http://www.jamesmegellas.org)



Maggie with Sgt. LeRoy Richmond after crossing the Waal and seizing the Nijmegen Bridge.



Maggie shows off his .45 to 505 PIR Market/Garden Vet and his Squad Leader Bill Hannigan.

one ever looked at my recommendation to judge the two side-by-side.”

U.S. Rep. Tom Petri, R-Wisconsin, got wind of the story about three years ago at a reunion of the 504th. He knew Megellas, a native and longtime resident of Fond du Lac, Wis. Petri filed the bill last week.

While it is unusual to upgrade a decoration to the Medal of Honor, it has happened to 31 men since 2000.

For Megellas, who retired as a lieutenant colonel, the effort has already rewarded him.

“What E.J. Sims and the others have done is amazing,” he said.

**Ten Hut!**

*Press CTRL + click  
to follow links!*

# Special Honors from the Hometown

Jim Megellas made it perfectly clear during the past few days that special honors bestowed by his hometown rank among the most meaningful of his life. And the 91-year-old World War II hero and Congressional Medal of Honor nominee has indeed relished an interesting and meaningful life.

The Fond du Lac County Veterans Memorial Building at 500 Fond du Lac Ave. was named in his honor Saturday. He has been a card-carrying member of Fond du Lac's Trier-Puddy American Legion Post 75 for 61 years. Family members, friends, Army buddies old and new, and fellow Fond du Lac residents gathered to celebrate the honor with him. As he would gladly tell anyone within earshot, it was an honor not only for him but also for the community that nurtured and molded him.

For those who don't know Megellas, it's worth pointing out that he is a genuine war hero and a person dedicated to a life of public service. For those who do know him, nothing more needs to be said.

## It's time to decide

The description of his gallantry at the Battle of the Bulge reads like the climax of a movie. His book, "All the Way to Berlin: A Paratrooper at War in Europe," is a best-seller. He is the most decorated officer in the history of the acclaimed 82nd Airborne Division. Among his more than 20 military medals are The Distinguished Service Cross, two Silver Stars, two Bronze Stars and two Purple Hearts.

It's no secret that he deserves the nation's highest military honor — the Congressional Medal of Honor — even if it is six decades too late. Bills exist in the House and U.S. Senate urging that the highest honor be accorded to Megellas. It's about time Congress voted.

I had the pleasure to meet Megellas last week during his hometown visit. There is an indefinable quality about him that emanates from people of his caliber. There is nothing "91" about him, except the wisdom and the insights that naturally flow from experiences of people of that vintage.



Tom Laney, Maggie and the USMC's Fond du Lac Favorite Son, Eddie Barnes at the American Legion Memorial Dedication to Maggie, July 2008.

## Thoughts and insights

He talked about the Medal of Honor, his regard for today's soldiers, the need for a military draft and the seemingly unending war in which the nation is embroiled.

"It has greater significance than the man who wears it," he said of the Medal of the Honor. It would be "an honor for Fond du Lac, an honor for Wisconsin, for all of us."

On the status of the War on Terror, he noted, "America is at war, but the American people are not at war." Unlike the World War II era, the only ones making sacrifices in the war effort are the troops and their families, he stressed.

His most animated, almost joyous, comments came in response to a question about where he went to grade school. "Washington School at the corner of Doty and Follett," he said with a wide grin he couldn't tone down even if he had wanted to. The memories poured out as fast as he could frame the sentences.

## Boyhood memories

He remembered the Armistice Days of his boyhood and how all the sirens in the city sounded and students faced east at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month to recall the end of World War I and honor those who had died. He recalled Civil War and

Spanish-American War veterans in the city's Memorial Day parades. "I remember the impact it had on me growing up — the military history of Fond du Lac," he added. He also remembered Sarah Fahey, the principal at Washington School in the distinctive Greek neighborhood near Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox and St. Louis churches on the city's northwest side. Washington School is long gone, but the Fahey School building on Doty Street stands as a reminder of a special ethnic neighborhood and an educator who obviously left her mark on local members of the Greatest Generation.

## Abiding by his principles

As a member of a distinct ethnic minority, Megellas experienced the sting of prejudice and discrimination. So did his Washington School classmates, the great majority of whom distinguished themselves during the war and the years since. It's not a subject Megellas dwells on. But it is a part of him. He proved throughout his life what is important to him. He had the highest regard for his ethnic background, his city, his country and the principles on which this nation was founded. He understood the principles for which he fought even if others in his treasured hometown did not. He did his duty to the utmost of his ability.

For that alone, he is a man of honor.

- Michael Mentzer, Fond du Lac Reporter



Lester Schwarm, 325 GIR, reads the Badger Airborne Maggie Tribute Case dedication at the Ripon College Muesum last August, with Badger Chair Mike Haller and Maggie enjoying it. (Photo by Justin Connaher.)

# James Megellas on Albert Tarbull

THE VETERANS OF THE 504TH PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENT OF THE 82d AIRBORNE DIVISION JOIN ME IN EXTENDING OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO THE FAMILY OF ALBERT TARBELL, AS WE MOURN THE PASSING OF A COURAGEOUS COMRADE IN ARMS.

*ALBERT TARBELL ENTERED THE SERVICE AS A TEENAGER, IMBUED WITH A SPIRIT OF PATRIOTISM, FROM ST. RAEGIS MOHAWK INDIAN RESERVATION, NY. HE WAS THE FIRST MOHAWK INDIAN TO GRADUATE FROM THE US ARMY PARACHUTE SCHOOL THEREBY BECOMING THE FIRST MOHAWK INDIAN PARATROOPER IN THE FAMED 82d AIRBORNE DIVISION.*

REFLECTING UPON HIS LIFE, ALBERT WILL BEST BE REMEMBERED FOR HIS DEDICATION TO THE FREEDOM OF THE COUNTRY THAT HE LOVED. HE DEFINED THE TERM "HERO" BY HIS RECORD OF COURAGE AND LEADERSHIP IN THE FACE OF ENEMY FIRE. ALBERT AND I WERE IN THE SAME RIFLE COMPANY FROM ANZIO IN JANUARY 1944 UNTIL THE END OF THE WAR. HE SURVIVED THE FURY OF BATTLE AND THE KILLING FIELDS IN THE BATTLE OF ANZIO, ONE OF THE BLOODIEST BATTLES OF WW II. WE WERE IN THE SAME FLIMSY CANVAS BOAT IN THE FIRST WAVE THAT CROSSED THE WAAL RIVER IN NIJMEGEN, HOLLAND ON SEPTEMBER 20th 1944. HE SHOWED UTTER DISREGARD FOR HIS LIFE AND SAFETY WHILE ASSAULTING ENTRENCHED ENEMY MACHINE GUNS WHICH TOOK A HEAVY TOLL ON THE LIVES OF HIS BUD-  
DIES.



IN THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE WE WERE ON THE CUTTING EDGE OF BATTLE FOR THE CITY OF HERRESBACH, AN IMPORTANT ENEMY CENTER WHERE WE WERE OUT NUMBERED 10 TO 1. WITH JUST TWO PLATOONS ABOUT 56 MEN WE TOOK THE CITY WITHOUT THE LOSS OF A SINGLE 504 PARATROOPER.

IN THE BATTLE AT DEN HUEVEL WOODS IN HOLLAND SEPTEMBER 1944 WHEN THE ENEMY HAD ENCIRCLED ONE OF OUR PLATOONS IN H COMPANY. THEIR MASSIVE ARTILLERY BARRAGE HAD KNOCKED OUT THE TELEPHONE LINES BETWEEN COMPANY HEADQUARTERS AND THE BELEAGUERED OUTPOST. SGT. ALBERT TARBELL VOLUNTEERED TO REPAIR THE PHONE LINES WHILE THE ENEMY BARRAGE WAS STILL ON. HIS ACT OF BRAVERY REPAIRED THE LINES AND RESTORED COMMUNICATIONS. HIS ACT OF COURAGE HELPED SAVE THE LIVES OF MANY OF HIS FRIENDS.

DURING THE COURSE OF OUR MILITARY SERVICE ALBERT AND I FORGED A BOND BETWEEN US GREATER THAN BROTHERHOOD. SINCE THEN WE KEPT IN CLOSE CONTACT AND THE BOND WE FORGED IN COMBAT STRENGTHENED BETWEEN US.

WHILE WE MOURN THE PASSING OF A TRULY GREAT AMERICAN HERO AND PATRIOT, I PERSONALLY HAVE LOST MORE THAN JUST A FRIEND BUT A PIECE OF MY SELF. FOR ALL OF USE WHO GRIEVE HIS PASSING, WE CAN FIND SOLACE KNOWING HE HELPED MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE AND OUR LIVES HAVING BEEN ENRICHED BY KNOWING HIM.

ALBERT TARBELL'S RECORD OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN WAR AND PEACE WILL FOREVER BE A SOURCE OF PRIDE FOR THE MOHAWK INDIAN NATION AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

JAMES MEGELLAS DSC  
1st Lt. H COMPANY, 504 PIR 82d AIRBORNE DIV.  
AUGUST 25, 2009



### Geronimo's family sues Skull & Bones



Geronimo's family permitted 501st PIR patch in 1941.

#### OUR NAMESAKE GERONIMO

The descendants of Apache Special Forces leader Geronimo filed suit against the Skull & Bones Society recently to recover the remains of Geronimo. Skull & Bones, the Secret Society which produces some of the country most corrupt leaders, has long bragged that it holds Geronimo's skeleton but is now denying it. The 501st has been named after Geronimo since 1941 when the

family granted permissions to the 501st to use the name. "Yea, we take a very personal interest in this case. We may just drop in on these Skull & Bones punks and restore Geronimo to his family should the suit fail," said one 501st Paratrooper. From the Wik: Skull and Bones members supposedly stole the bones of Geronimo from Fort Sill, Oklahoma during World War I. In 1986, former San Carlos Apache Chairman Ned Anderson received an anonymous letter with a photograph and a copy of a log book claiming that Skull & Bones held the skull. He met with Skull & Bones officials about the rumor; the group's attorney, Endicott P. Davidson, denied that the group held the skull, and said that the 1918 ledger saying otherwise was a hoax.<sup>[30]</sup> The

group offered Anderson a glass case with a skull of a ten-year-old boy, but Anderson refused it.<sup>[31]</sup> In 2006, Marc Wortman discovered a 1918 letter<sup>[32]</sup> from Skull & Bones member Winter Mead to F. Trubee Davison that claimed the theft was "exhumed" from Fort Sill by the club and was "safe" in the club's headquarters.<sup>[33]</sup> In 2009, Ramsey Clark filed a lawsuit on behalf of people claiming to be Geronimo's descendants, against, among others, Barack Obama, Robert Gates, and Skull and Bones, asking for the return of Geronimo's bones.<sup>[30]</sup> An article in The New York Times states that Clark "acknowledged he had no hard proof that the story was true."<sup>[34]</sup> Alexandra Robbins says this is one of the more plausible items said to be in the organization's Tomb.

### RESPECT FOR GERONIMO AND THE SCREAMING EAGLES 501ST PIR IS SHOWN IN THE ANGOVILLE AU PLAIN, NORMANDY CHURCH WINDOW

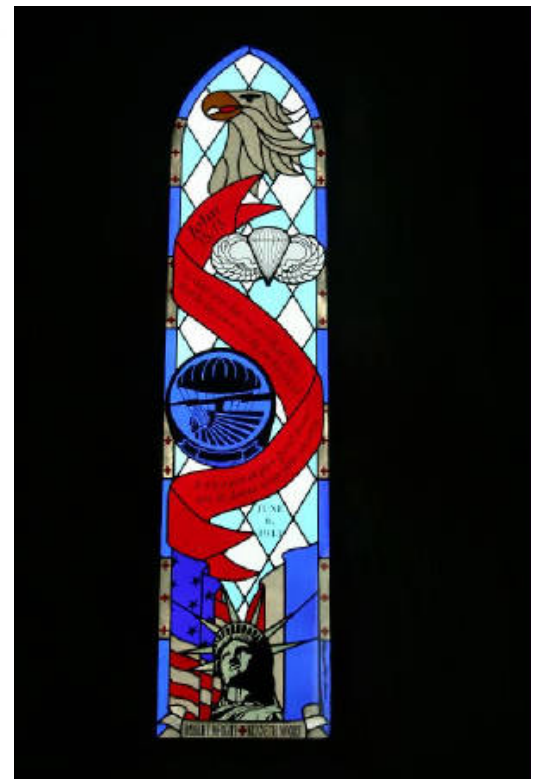
[HTTP:// WW2PARATROOPERS.COM/ ID17.HTML](http://ww2paratroopers.com/id17.html)

The Angoville au Plain Stained Glass Window Project.



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By Mark Patterson







Bob Blecke, even though he's a Leg, comes highly recommended by our favorite Airborne photog, the incomparable **Justin Conaher!**



**Bob Blecke, Leg, 401st GIR**

<http://www.401gir.com/indexnewb.html>

We are a group of WWII reenactors from Wisconsin, Iowa, and Illinois.

Our first goal is to portray for the public the 1/401st GIR of the 101st Airborne division. In order to accomplish this we participate in living history and tactical reenactments throughout the year.

Our second goal is to educate the public about these Americans who sacrificed so much to preserve the freedoms that we all enjoy today, and ensure that their memories and experiences are not forgotten. We accomplish this both sharing the results of library research, veteran interviews, and to the extent possible, our experiences.

**“....(our) story is often overlooked compared to our more glamorous brethren, the Paratroopers”**

# 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION 1/401ST GLIDER INFANTRY REGIMENT C COMPANY

We are a fairly new WW2 Living History organization with a growing membership and a wide range of members – with and without prior military and/or re-enacting experience, from young men just out of high school to age-defying ‘seasoned’ members. We are a member unit of the [World War Two Historical Reenactment Society](#) (WWIIHRS).

We chose the 401 GIR for several reasons, both historical as well as practical. Being part of the storied 101st Airborne, they participated in the keynote conflicts of the European Theater: D-Day, hedgerow fighting in Normandy, Operation Market-Garden, the Battle of the Bulge.

Their story is often overlooked compared to their more glamorous brethren, the paratroopers, and we enjoy educating the public as to their contributions to these historic events.

From a practical standpoint, the Glider Troops were equipped much like regular infantry (“We fight in fatigues, no fancy jump suits, no bright leather jackets, no polished jump boots” from the Glider Rider’s song) so due to its more generic GI impression you can get started for a relatively lower expense for the uniform and equipment as compared to the more expensive Paratrooper impression.

We are always looking for new members! If you are interested in learning more about, or joining our unit, please contact us by clicking here: [401st Recruiting](#)



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IS FOR  
GUTS!**

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<http://www.2ndwwii.org/home>



## Glenn Ward Column Coming



*Glenn Ward, 508th PIR, Rhinelander with friends.*

**Glenn Ward**, 508th PIR, 82nd Airborne Division was KIA fighting for his friends in the Battle of the Bulge. He left wife Evelyn and daughter Judy Durkee who was three years old then.

Judy remembers her father by helping others. Her search for information on Glenn has led to many friendships with the Airborne. She even found a friend in Belgium who located her father's battle place.

No one in Wisconsin does more for the Airborne Spirit and all our Troops than Judy Durkee. She has recently returned from Washington, DC where she accompanied a Paratrooper to the WWII Memorial. An amazing story next month.

<http://sites.google.com/site/badgerairborne/>

Hit Ctrl and click on link. Or else.

## *Airborne Beer on sale at LZLambeau!*

### **SCREAMING EAGLES DEPT.**

Thanks to Jim Romlein, Chair, 101st Airborne Old Abe Chapter you'll be able to buy multiple cold ones from real Airborne folks in Green Bay! Jim has arranged for the 82nd, 101st and 401st Chapters to handle beer sales at LZLambeau.

In the finest negotiations since Tony McAuliffe told off the Nazis, Jim has managed to get our Chapters 10% of the beers sales as Chapter fundraisers!

Please buy a round for every Vietnam Vet you see!

<http://ops.oldabechapter.org/>



2010 Baraboo Air Show  
Honors Veterans  
June 25 - 27, 2010  
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S 3440 Hwy 12  
Baraboo, WI 53913  
Display? Contact Tom Laney,  
715-962-4365; or Mike Haller,  
608-356-3235

## *Paratrooper Ben Collins, SF, runs for Wisco Lt. Gov.*

Ben Collins is a Special Forces Paratrooper who commanded 150 SF Troopers in Afghanistan. Ben is now running for Lt. Governor of Wisconsin and deserves your look. Tired of losing jobs and paying taxes for businesses to move to China and Mexico? Tired of Trade Agreements which favor slave states?

Are we ready for a Patriotic politician who loves OUR country?

Ben Collins is committed to creating jobs IN AMERICA for us through support for those old-fashioned, small business folks who serve OUR communities at a fair profit. Bring American business home. Take a look at Ben: <http://www.facebook.com/VoteBenCollins?v=wall&viewas=0#!/VoteBenCollins?ref=mf>



**Ben Collins, Patriot**

## Welcome Home Dave Green!

**“I MADE UP MY MIND THAT NO PARATROOPER, SOLDIER, SAILOR, FLIER, OR MARINE WOULD EVER COME HOME AGAIN WITHOUT A WELCOME IF I COULD DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT.”**

**- 75TH RANGER & SKY SOLDIER DAVE GREEN**



*Dave Green with Lawrence Marino, Tracy and son Lawrence Jr., who was one of Patton's Armored Heroes who saved the Airborne during The Bulge. The 82nd and 101st were happy to see Larry! (Laney photo.)*

A new unit was being drawn from the 82nd that was going to be "...the best of the best" and Dave volunteered for the 173rd Airborne Sky Soldiers and 75th Rangers and went to Vietnam.

He doesn't make a big deal of it but Dave served courageously in the RVN being awarded the Silver Star, Bronze Star and Purple Heart.

It was hard to leave the war behind. No one thanked him for

fighting for his 173rd Brothers. When the young vets began to come home to New Richmond, Dave went out of his way to thank them. And then he went *All The Way* to start a bigger, more formal Welcome Home organized by VFW Post 1018.

"We know that Soldiers do not decide where they go to war and that the bottom line is they fight for each other, and sometimes they die

for each other. So we honor what they do."

At a recent Welcome Home ceremony at the Baldwin Care Center, 14 Vets from WWII to Afghanistan were honored once the word got out.

"It started with a call to go down there on March 13th and honor four veterans which we were happy to do. By the time we put the program together, we were honoring 14 Veterans and we were more than happy to do it," Dave said.

And more than 100 teary-eyed attendees were happy for their Vets. Third Infantry Vets Tom Driscoll and Chuck Nelson came all the way from Prescott for the day. "We should do something like this in Prescott," they said. And Dave Green was ready to go now.

In the Welcome Home Ceremony, each Veteran receives a certificate of appreciation while a description of his Unit and service is read. The appreciation plaque is handed to each Vet by a man who then salutes them, a man who has undying loyalty and respect for them, 173rd Airborne Ranger Dave Green.

***Welcome Home Dave Green!***



## Welcome Home by the Numbers:



### Step One:

Any loved one or friend can request a military "Welcome Home" ceremony by contacting, VFW Post 10818. **Call Dave Green, Event Planner: 715-246-4052**

### Step Two:

Dave Green will make the arrangements.

[dave@vfwwelcomehome.com](mailto:dave@vfwwelcomehome.com)





## Correction!

*On occasion even the famed 82nd Airborne gets it wrong! Airborne is always capitalized and Lester "Murphy" is really our own Wisconsin Glider Rider and Airborne Historian Lester Schwarm of Wausau, 325 GIR, Market Garden and Battle of the Bulge Veteran. You can meet Lester and active duty Airborne Troopers at the Baraboo Air Show June 26, 27 at our Airborne Tent. Please join us as we honor the Troops!*

## Soldiers meet, learn from airborne predecessors

by Sgt. Susan Wilt

82nd Abn. Div. PAO

BARABOO, Wis. — Two 82nd Airborne Division paratroopers had the honor of representing this generations' paratrooper and helped bridge the gap with paratroopers of the past during the Baraboo Regional Air Show.

Richmond, Va. native, 2nd Lt. Andrew Malón, and Tampa, Fla. native, Sgt. Jeff Crooks, both members of Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 321st Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, spent the weekend of June 26 with the Baraboo, Wis., community and listening to stories from Soldiers of previous generations.

The air show had many sights for the visitors to see including aircraft aerial acrobatics, demonstration jumps, local community pilots, vendors and static



Courtesy photo

**Lester Murphy**, left, a former paratrooper of the 325th Glider Infantry Regiment, shows his awards and memorabilia to Sgt. Jeff Crooks during the Baraboo Regional Air Show in Wisconsin June 27.

displays. About 5,000 visitors showed up over the course of the weekend to check out the events.

"It's still amazing to experience the respect that the civilian populace has for the 82nd Airborne. I must have shaken a hundred hands," Malon said.

Malon and Crooks chatted with the locals about

the 4th BCT's upcoming deployment to Afghanistan and spoke with several local members of 82nd Airborne Association about their combat experience.

"It was extremely humbling to meet members of the Badger Chapter of the 82nd Airborne that were involved in Operation Market Garden, Bastogne and

the Battle of the Bulge," said Malon, the battery's executive officer.

"One member of the chapter, Lester Murphy, actually rode a glider into combat."

The 87-year-old still had his dress uniform set-up to standard and was beaming with pride at his accomplishments in the 325th Glider Infantry Regiment, Malon said of the conversation.

"I hope I'm that sharp when I'm 87," he added

The two paratroopers were in awe of the whole experience of the weekend.

"To hear their stories gives amazing perspective for how wartime conditions have changed over time. However, the pride and quality of troopers that the 82nd Airborne produces remains the same," said Malon.



## **Badger Chapter Wisconsin Airborne Veterans**

**E 6304 866th Ave.  
Colfax, WI 54730**

March 29, 2010

Marcia M. Anderson, Chair  
Wisconsin Board of Veterans Affairs  
P.O. Box 7843  
Madison, WI 53707-7843

To the Wisconsin Board of Veterans Affairs:

We are Wisconsin Veterans, Paratroopers and Glider Riders; Friends and Spouses of the United States Airborne Forces, asking you to reinstate Col. John Scocos to his position as Secretary of Wisconsin's Veterans Affairs. We understand that the Veterans Affairs Board of Directors charge against Sec. Scocos was a "lack of communication". Since Secretary Scocos was deployed to Iraq as a Soldier in the service of his country two out of the three years prior to his firing, we fail to understand how this charge and subsequent firing are not unjust on their face. The firing is an affront to all of our Troops whose service abroad naturally means a very long distance communication with home. All of our Troops should enjoy the right to return home, secure in the work they were forced to leave in order to serve in war-time.

We understand the Board fired Col. Scocos in secrecy. We ask for a specific accounting from the Board of Directors as to just what was not communicated to them by Secretary Scocos. The public should be afforded a review of the specific "lack of communication" charges brought by the Board, overlaid on Col. Scocos's deployment time frame. The Board should tell us exactly what he failed to communicate during this deployment period and exactly what was communicated to the Board by Col. Scocos's replacement on those issues of such concern to the Board that their disposition led to firing Col. Scocos.

We have read comments by the Board which trivialize Col Scocos's service. Col Scocos is a United States Paratrooper, a man who in every Airborne sense goes *All The Way* for his country and our Veterans. During his tenure as Secretary of Veterans Affairs we have always found him to be concerned and supportive of our Airborne efforts and a strong advocate for all Wisconsin Veterans. We appreciate John's hard work on Veterans education, jobs, medical needs, loans, Veterans Homes, Veterans Museums. We wonder why he was fired instead of congratulated?

Col. Scocos was deployed twice to the mid-east during his tenure as Secretary of Veterans Affairs. Firing him within two months of returning from his second tour of active duty is grossly unjust and downright un-patriotic.

The members of the Badger Chapter demand that the Wisconsin Veterans Board of Directors reinstate, and make whole, Col. John Scocos as Wisconsin's Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

Airborne!

Yours Truly,

Mike Haller, Chairman

Tom Laney, Secretary

Cc: Gov. Doyle  
Wisconsin Congressional Delegation  
Wisconsin VFW, American Legion, DAV, AmVets

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