



# WISCO ALL AIRBORNE REPORTER

PROUDLY DEDICATED TO JIM "MAGGIE" MEGELLAS THE 82ND AIRBORNE'S MOST DECORATED OFFICER

## Maggie leads Green Bay Greatest Generation Tribute

LTC James "Maggie" Megellas addressed a packed house of Vets at the Green Bay Rail Museum, May 4.

He drew applause for his contention that the men and women who answer America's call are all the greatest of their generations.

In the crowd of 1200 were 100s of WWII, Korean and Vietnam Veterans. They were joined by combat Vets from Iraq and Afghanistan. They seemed to appreciate Maggie's position that all combat veterans from all wars deserve the respect and admiration of their country.

WWII 82nd Vet 307th Medic Warren Skenadore was among those honored. He holds the Silver Star and made 3 combat jumps.

Seven 82nd Airborne Reenactors traveled from South Dakota and Minnesota to honor Maggie! More photos on pg. 7.



## Norb Studelska gets Wisconsin Vets Service Award!



Norb's daughter, Lainey Bohan, with our favorite 508th Coach!

### Inside:

Maggie's War	pg. 3
MOH letters	pg. 5
Greatest Generation	pg. 7
1st Cav ABN Conv.	pg. 9
Norb Studelska	pg. 10
Dakota City WWII	pg. 15
Ray Nelson, Hero	pg. 16
Lester Schwarm	pg. 25
Southern Wisco	pg. 28
All Airborne Picnic	pg. 34

## Who is Jim “Maggie” Megellas

“He was the bravest man I ever saw. 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 combat 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, 504 PIR Paratrooper, 89, St. Paul, MN on Jim Megellas. Bill was a squad leader in Maggie’s platoon. Bill is also a very good man.

“We were catching hell from a Panther when I saw someone charging the tank with a Thompson sub-machine gun! I asked myself ‘Who in the hell is that crazy sonuvabitch?!’ I saw him knock that tank out with a couple of grenades and found out later it was Maggie. He saved us all!” - Col. George Geib, Paratrooper 504 PIR, Special Forces Vietnam.

### Maggie’s Heroes

<http://www.jsonline.com/news/wisconsin/105005234.html?page=1>

## Wisco All Airborne Reporter

Honoring Jim “Maggie” Megellas and Wisconsin’s Airborne.

Editor: Tom Laney  
501st ABG 82nd Airborne Division  
E6304 866th Ave., Colfax WI  
tlaney1776@gmail.com  
715-962-4365  
651-492-9309

Airborne Level Head: Jim Romlein, President  
101st Airborne Old Abe Chapter, Watertown, WI

Airborne Recon: Major Sgt Howard Rennhack,  
325 PIR, 82nd Airborne, Humbird, WI

Scouts: Ed Barnes, USMC Jumper, Fond du Lac, WI; Bob Shrader, 82nd Airborne.

All American Photog Emeritus: Justin Connaher, 82nd Airborne.

## Wisco All Airborne Reporter

We are dedicated to honoring James “Maggie” Megellas, the most decorated officer in the 82nd Airborne’s proud history; and also to honor Wisconsin’s Airborne.

We aim to keep you up to speed on a great Wisconsin Airborne Warrior and the Medal of Honor Maggie so justly deserves; and all Airborne heroes and events in our beloved Wisconsin .

We will have more stories and pictures about Airborne activists and your stories and pictures if you will send them in.

We will update you with upcoming MOH appeals by Col. Ed Sims and any new Department of the Army, Congressional or Presidential action for this Medal of Honor. We want this medal for Maggie, for his platoon, for the 3/504 PIR, the 82nd Airborne Division and for Airborne Troopers everywhere.

“The 82nd Airborne Division was, and is, the best Airborne Division in the world, “ says our pal, 325 Glider Rider Les Schwarm who rode a WACO into Market/Garden and fought *All The Way* to Berlin.

These pages are open to 11th, 13th, 17th, 82nd, 101st, 173rd, 501st, 551st, Rangers, Special Forces, Delta Force, Chair Force, SEALs, USMC Force Recon, all Paratroopers and friends of the Airborne.

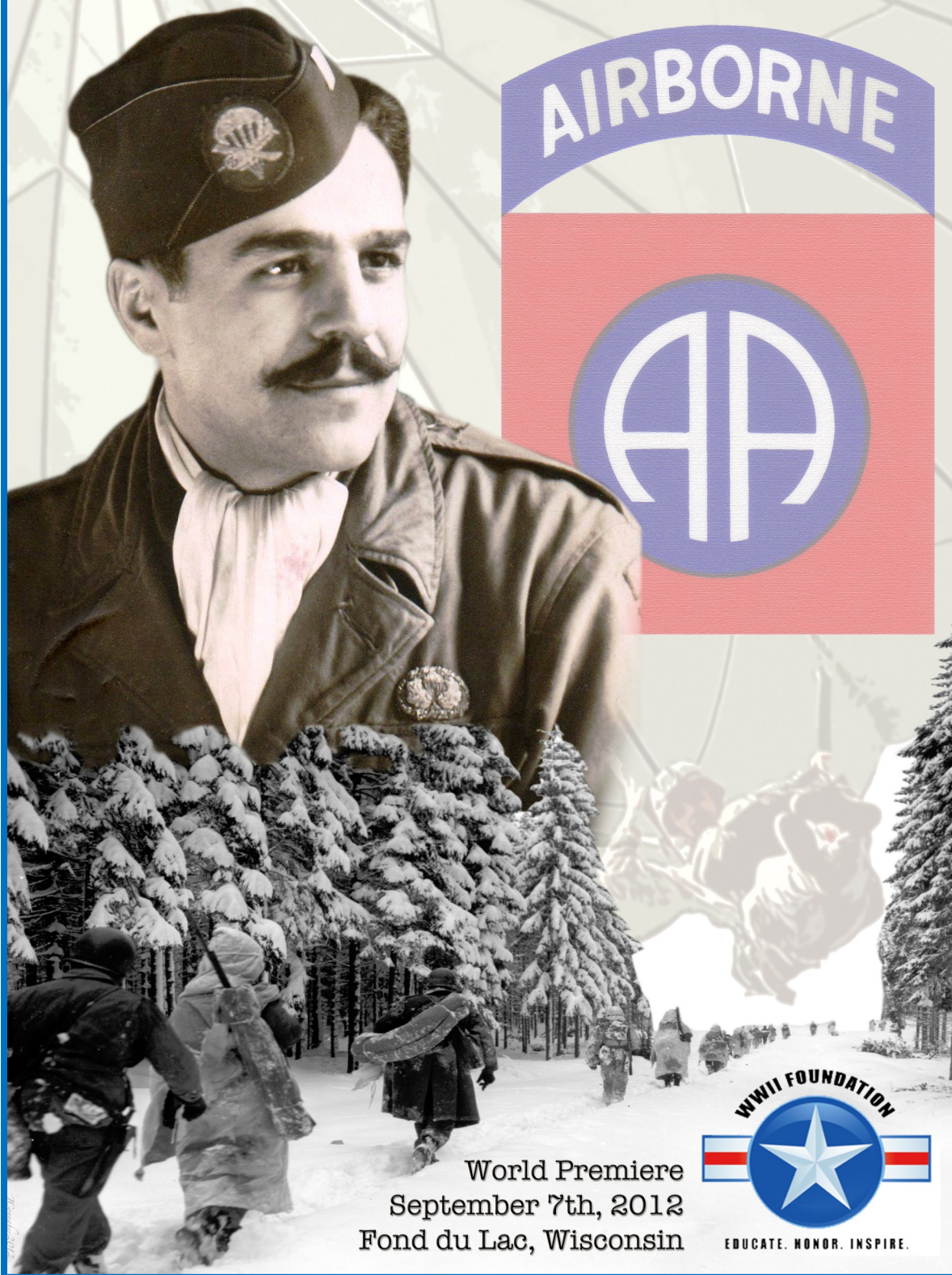
*All The Way!*

Tom Laney, Editor  
Cell 651-492-9309, Home 715-962-4365  
tlaney1776@gmail.com <https://sites.google.com/site/maggiemedalofhonor/home/sims-letters>



# MAGGIE'S WAR:

A True Story of Courage, Leadership and Valor in World War II



World Premiere  
September 7th, 2012  
Fond du Lac, Wisconsin



## Maggie's War

*Not to knock the 101st but those of us who wish Steve Ambrose had written "Band of Brothers" about the All Americans are about to take some 82nd Airborne pride in one of America's best combat story teller's work.*

[Tim Gray's coming documentary](#) Sept 7 premier in Fond du Lac, WI, on Wisconsin's great citizen warrior, Jim Megellas, leader of arguably WWII's best platoon, will finally give the 82nd Airborne Division the notice and credit it earned as the first-in, last-out Airborne Division of WWII.

**The Documentary Film "Maggie's War":** In mid-1943 James Megellas, born in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, and known as "Maggie" to his fellow paratroopers, joined H Co., 3rd Bn, 504 PIR, 82nd Airborne Division. His first taste of combat was in the rugged Apennine Mountains outside Naples in Italy. Soon Maggie's platoon was tapped to run some of the most star-crossed missions of World War II. From the Italian Mountains to the beach of Anzio to Field Marshall Montgomery's vainglorious Operation Market-Garden in Holland, The Battle of Herresbach and *All The Way* to Berlin. James Megellas is the most decorated officer in the history of the 82nd Airborne Division. After he was wounded and hospitalized at Anzio he returned to his unit and never missed another day of combat until May 8, 1945, the end of the war.




**Leadership:** The film will also focuses on leadership skills in combat and Maggie's ability to motivate, inspire and lead men when initial planning has broken down.

All these 82nd Airborne principles are still important today to those who lead and set the stage for others to succeed.

Leadership is a topic which Lt. Col. Megellas continues to lecture on all over the world.

**Today:** Megellas recently returned from spending Christmas in Afghanistan with his old outfit, the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, along the Pakistani border.

Now 95, Maggie led the May 4, Greatest Generation Tribute in Green Bay. He continues to travel and lecture around the world.

**MEDAL OF HONOR**

(You must hit ctrl click to use these links)

## Are you on the Sim's Team?



Maggie receiving DSC from Gen Gavin.

[Col. Edward J. Sims](#) was the XO who recommended Maggie for the MOH at Herresbach. Col. Sims earned two Silver Stars, one for crossing the Waal River at Nijmegen. Another in Korea with the 7th ID, for taking and holding a hill, which no one else could do.

*Sims understands courage, honor and above and beyond the call combat heroism. He continues, at age 92, to pursue justice and the upgrade of the Silver Star to the Medal of Honor for Maggie's heroic action at Herresbach. (See links below).*

*Col. Sims continues [his appeals](#) to President Obama, the 82nd Airborne Division and the 504 PIR. New Congressional Bills will be submitted this Fall/Winter to right this wrong.*

*If you agree with Col. Sims that Maggie, the 504 PIR and the 82nd should have been decorated with the Medal of Honor for Maggie's super-human battle at Herresbach, you are one of us.*

*You are on the Sims Team! ALL THE WAY!*



Maggie Pritzker  
Military Library

[INTERVIEW](#)





REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF:

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
HEADQUARTERS, 1st BRIGADE, 82D AIRBORNE DIVISION  
FORT BRAGG, NORTH CAROLINA 28307-5100

August 9, 2000

Commander, 504<sup>th</sup>  
Parachute Infantry Regiment

COL (Ret) Edward J. Sims  
35 Somerset Avenue  
PO box 881  
Bernardsville, NJ 08924

Dear COL (Ret) Sims:

I had the great pleasure of meeting MG (Ret) Mike Healy the other day. He informed me that we had not closed the loop with you regarding your quest to get Mr. Jim Megellas the Medal of Honor for his gallantry in action in January 1945. First let me apologize for not getting back to you sooner. Your efforts and your letter mean a lot to me personally as the Regimental Commander, and to our Regiment collectively. You are a great warrior-leader of the 504<sup>th</sup> PIR in your own right. We are truly indebted to you for your selfless service and sacrifice to our nation. The fact that you continue to pursue the Medal of Honor for a fellow comrade, never to be daunted by the bureaucracy required to take on such a task, reflects great credit upon you and exemplifies by your actions why the 504 was and continues to be a great Regiment. We do not know the words surrender, and we "Strike and Hold" any ground taken from the enemy at all costs.

I truly support your efforts. I have met Mr. Megellas, and find him to truly be a national treasure. In fact, the Regiment has recently created a new annual award, given to the Lieutenant in the Regiment that best exemplifies the courage, physical fitness, tactical skills and knowledge demonstrated by a World War II heroic combat junior officer. The name of the award is the "Jim Megellas Award".

Again, my sincere apologies for taking so long to get back to you. Thank you on behalf of all the officers, noncommissioned officers, and troopers of the 504<sup>th</sup> Parachute Infantry Regiment, not only for what you are trying to do, but also for what you did as a combat leader in this Regiment.

STRIKE HOLD!

LEO A. BROOKS, JR.  
Colonel, Infantry  
31<sup>st</sup> Colonel of the Regiment



UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND  
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER  
7115 SOUTH BOUNDARY BOULEVARD  
MACDILL AIR FORCE BASE, FLORIDA 33621-5101

19 January 2010

Mrs. Sandra Bassett  
TSDAR Americanism Chairman  
19 Paddington Way  
The Woodlands, Texas 77384

To the Daughters of the American Revolution,

It is my pleasure to recommend Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) James "Maggie" Megellas for the Daughters of the American Revolution Medal of Honor. Maggie is a living legend who absolutely embodies the principles—leadership, trustworthiness, patriotism, and service—for which this award stands.

LTC Megellas's leadership and heroism during some of the darkest days and toughest battles of World War II are well documented. He is, in fact, one of the most decorated officers in the history of the 82d Airborne Division—a tremendous feat, considering the history of that storied outfit. Those of us who have since served in the 82d Airborne inherited from LTC Megellas and others like him a tradition of courage and excellence that unites and strengthens us all. Maggie's courage and calm leadership under fire are indeed the stuff of legend—a legend that to this day continues to inspire and encourage the troopers of the 82d Airborne as they serve in the deserts of Iraq and the mountains of Afghanistan. It was a great honor to thank him, personally and publicly, for his heroism and personal example when we both spoke at last year's Eindhoven Freedom Lecture in the Netherlands.

Just as important as LTC Megellas's wartime heroism is his lifelong commitment to serving the public good. After the war's conclusion and leaving active duty, he continued to serve in uniform for another 16 years. He then provided leadership and expertise at the US Agency for International Development for 18 years, working in Yemen, Panama, South Vietnam, and Columbia. And, even at the age of 93, he still continues to spend time with our troopers overseas, passing on wisdom and encouragement from one of the finest heroes of America's Greatest Generation to those of its New Greatest Generation. Maggie has indeed lived a life of leadership, patriotism, and service, inspiring and encouraging countless younger leaders along the way.

I cannot recommend LTC Megellas too highly for the DAR Medal of Honor. He is entirely deserving of the honor and prestige this award would bestow. If you have any questions, please contact me at [david.petraeus@us.army.mil](mailto:david.petraeus@us.army.mil).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Petraeus".

David H. Petraeus  
General, United States Army  
Commanding

*“The men and women who answer their country's call are the greatest of their generation.” - James “Maggie” Megellas, Green Bay May 4, 2012*



Sioux Falls 82nd Reenactor Brian Pesce chats with Leonard Skenadore, 307th Medic who had three combat jumps with the 82nd. Note the Silver Star! (Laney Pics.)



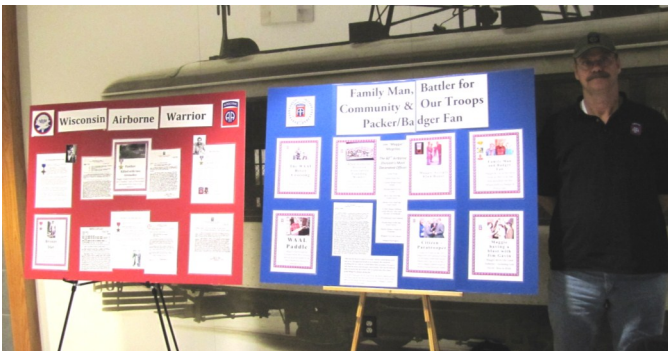
Iwo Survivor



Michael Telzrow, Director of Wisconsin's Military Museums. Mike's Dad flew the first (509th) Paratroopers into N. Africa. Mike has promised us a Glider Display at the new Vets Home in Chipewa Falls.



Maggie signs another book for Judy Durkee who has now provided a dozen or more for her family.



Bob Shrader, 82nd with his new Maggie Display.



Maggie pinned 82nd Reenactor Wings & congratulated Iraq Vet Kyle Tadd who came from St. Cloud, MN when he heard Maggie was speaking! In the background are Ben Lund and Chris Zarn H Co/504, 82nd Reenactors from Minnesota who also follow Maggie with their machine guns and BARs. The boys plan to be at the *Maggie's War* premier in Fond du Lac, Sept. 7th as well! (Laney Pic)



Maggie explains to *Pacific* creator Hugh Ambrose how the 504 did it.

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1929 Stearman Model 4E



1929 Travel Air 4-D



1929 Waco ATO



1929 Travel Air 4000



1931 Curtiss Wright Jr CW1



1937 Waco YKS-7



1941 New Standard D-25

**MIDWEST TOUR 2012 SCHEDULE ~ 4 STATES & 3 CITIES\***

August 9-11 <b>Fargo, ND</b> Fargo Air Museum KFAR August 12-14 <b>Brainerd, MN</b> Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport KBRD August 16-18 <b>Eau Claire, WI</b> Chippewa Valley Regional Airport KEAU	August 19-21 <b>Manitowoc, WI</b> Manitowoc County Airport KMTW August 23-26 <b>DeKalb, IL</b> DeKalb Taylor Municipal Airport KDKB * weather permitting
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## C 1st/12th Company Reunion in Green Bay, Wisconsin

The 4th bi-annual C Company Reunion will be held at the Radisson Hotel in Green Bay, WI, Monday, August 20th to Thursday, August 23rd, with check-out on Friday morning, August 24th.

Our banquet dinner will be held Thursday evening, August 23rd, from 7 PM to 9:30 PM. We expect our largest group ever this year, so make your reservations early.

### ***Any or all of the activities are optional.***

All information regarding the reunion is found on the 12th Cavalry Association website under [Reunions-12th Cavalry Regiment-Green Bay Wisconsin](#).

This reunion is open to anyone who has served with C Company, 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division from 1963 to 1972. Please contact the Radisson Hotel directly to make your reservations with your credit card. You are responsible for this payment. The telephone number is **1-920-494-7300**. Room rates are \$89 per night plus tax, which includes breakfast. Please mention that you are with the C Company Reunion to get this rate (prices are good for two days before and two days after the reunion dates at the hotel)

**Sunday**, August 19th - Hospitality Room will be open from 4 PM to 11 PM for registration.

**Monday**, August 20th - Registration continues in the Hospitality Room, open from 10 AM to 11 PM. A Free Snack Bar (vegetable trays, beef sticks and 1st Cavalry cake) will be provided (daily) in the Hospitality Room from 11:30 AM to 1 PM. Check in the Hospitality Room for information, brochures and discount coupons for local attractions and dining. No activities are scheduled for the day, so it's a great time to discover the local attractions in the Green Bay area, such as the Packers' Lambeau Field, Botanical Gardens, Bay Shore Park, Beach Wildlife Sanctuary and many others.

**Tuesday**, August 21st - Hospitality Room open from 10 AM to 11 PM. Free Snack Bar (daily) in the Hospitality Room from 11:30 AM to 1 PM (cheese trays, sausages and crackers). The day and the evening are open. There will be a Charlie Company (optional) dinner at Tony Roma's Restaurant near the Hotel at 7 PM.

**Wednesday**, August 22nd - Hospitality Room open from 10 AM to 11 PM. Free Snack Bar (daily) in the Hospitality Room. The Door County Bus Tour will depart the hotel at 8 AM. The cost is \$10 per person. The Tour will visit the Door County Coffee & Tea Company, Candleworks, the Fish Creek shopping area, the Jacksonport Craft Cottage, Renard's and Wienke's Market and Algoma for wine tasting and shopping. The bus will get back to the hotel about 5:30 PM. Those who don't go on the tour are invited to play golf at Thornberry Creek at Oneida. Times and rates will be posted in the Hospitality Room.

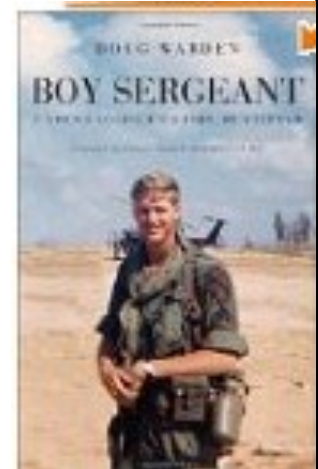
**Thursday**, August 22nd - Hospitality Room will be open from 10 AM to 5 PM. Free Snack Bar with Gallagher's Pizza will be provided from 11 AM to 1 PM. Group photos will be taken at 5:45 PM (place to be announced). A surprise ceremony will take place on the way to the banquet at 6:15 PM. The banquet begins at 7 PM in the Three Clans Ballroom. Hospitality Room opens again after the banquet. You should receive a registration form in the mail or via email. A copy of the registration form is also on the website at [www.12thcav.us](http://www.12thcav.us). Be sure that you mail the registration form, along with your check payable to **Cliff Pena, 4420 Bartleson Road, Sebastopol, CA 95472-6007**. There will be a bulletin board in the Hospitality Room with information posted on the casino, golfing, shopping, dining and other local attractions. 1st Cavalry and 12th Cavalry memorabilia and items from Ft. Hood, Texas, will be on sale in our PX daily, from 11:30 AM - 1 PM and from 6 PM - 9 PM.

Any questions can be directed to Bob Roeder at [raid-dar@hotmail.com](mailto:raid-dar@hotmail.com) or cell phone (920) 468-9766

## Doug Warden to speak at 1st Cav Airborne Reunion in Green Bay!

*Another Champion comes to Green Bay next month. Doug Warden, Combat Paratrooper, best Vietnam writer since Jim Webb, headlines a Trooper Dinner.*

*So who knew the 1st Cav was Airborne? Me for one because one of my favorite cops, Bill McKeown, Plover, fought with those Troopers in Vietnam. Bill's retired now, (thank God) but shared his service with me a few years ago. Then a few months ago Bill introduced me to Doug Warden by email. I called Doug then and found he is just a great guy. So I read his book. It reads like a machine gun. Down to earth. For those of us who were lucky enough to miss Vietnam, it gives a real feel to that war from a very real, and heroic grunt. I had several more conversations with Doug after finishing the book. He invited me to the Green Bay reunion. I promised to bring him a bottle of Jameson's if he would promise to keep it away from McKeown. (Just kidding Bill). I will be there! What an honor to be included with these heroic Troopers! - Tom*

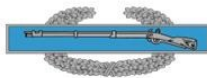


Read this book then stop by their Green Bay Re-Union to buy these Troopers some drinks. Also, Check out the two great reviews on Amazon by Vietnam Vets. Packers LB Coach & Paratrooper Kevin Greene has been invited to drop in.



## Congratulations Norb Studelska on Receiving the Wisconsin Veterans Lifetime Service Award June 15, 2012

*Combat Paratrooper, Patriot, Citizen, Teacher, Coach, Catholic Leader, Man of Great Humor, we thank you for making America and Wisconsin great!*



**Norb Studelska, Grafton**, was born on a Canadian farm on August 4, 1925. His Dad died in 1930 and his Mom moved the five kids to Minnesota where Norb attended St. Casimir's Catholic Grade School. He excelled, in studies, chorus, theater, government and played football, basketball and track. Norb credits his Honor Student achievement to his Mother, who supported the family on a 6-days-a-week piece-work job in a chicken factory. A devout Catholic, her faith rubbed off on Norb who has been a model of Catholic Justice and action all his life.

Norb was drafted in 1943 and received his Paratrooper Wings on May 20, 1944. "We thought we were invincible. Not true as we later learned, we were very available cannon fodder", Norb says. He shipped to England in July 1944 where he was assigned to the 3rd Platoon, D Co., 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the famed 82nd Airborne Division. "We joined the 82nd Veterans of D-Day who welcomed us with open arms. They were great and we newcomers wanted to be just like them with combat experience under our belts," says Norb.

On Sept. 17, 1944, Norb jumped into Nijmegen with the 508th in Operation Market/Garden, the Allied invasion of Holland. "The replacements found out the inglorious acts of war for the line Infantry Soldier, and of the terrible destruction of civilian lives and property."

On Dec. 17, Norb marched into Belgium as the 508th and 82nd engaged Germany's Panzer Divisions in the Battle of the Bulge. The Airborne is the lightest of Infantry. But armed with the smallest of weapons Norb and his 82nd Brothers, fought tanks with grenades, small arms and Panzerfausts, stopped the Germans cold and saved the 101st Airborne at Bastogne.

In the smaller, more personal view, the 508th paid a dear price for their exemplary combat ability. "The misery of the foot soldier is inexpressible but we did our job and did it well" Norb says. Norb, like all the Paratroopers, were cold, exhausted and hungry. Later, he dwelled "...on the made-homeless, innocent children, women, many killed or wounded....some of my closest buddies dead in the snow." And so, Norb tried to keep the war out of his mind after he came home. He felt guilty about surviving the war while losing so many of his friends.

He marched in the Victory Parade, down 5th Avenue, NY, with the 82nd Airborne and then he came home to graduate from River Falls State College on the GI Bill and on his salesmanship pushing Chevys for Moody Chevrolet. After Norb retired from teaching he discovered the 508th and 82nd Associations. "I got hold of war reality again," he says. Norb led the Badger State Chapter of the 82nd Association through its best years and was President of the National 508th Airborne Association. For his outstanding civic service Norb was named "Grafton Man of the Year" in 2009.

Men like Norb Studelska gave their hearts and lives to my generation. He has endured the loss of the best friends of his life and while entitled to melancholy and rest; he has acted and given his considerable ability to raise us all up; to raise a wonderful family, to teach and to better his community and Church.

Norb Studelska made America a special place and if it needs repair in these times, we could simply look at the way this good man has lived his life and do our best to be like Norb.

- From the Norb Studelska nomination papers for the Wisconsin Veteran's Lifetime Service Award, Tom Laney, Submitter

# Thank you Vets Sec. and Board for honoring a Great American!



*Norb is congratulated by Al Richards, Wisconsin Veterans Affairs Board Chairman; is handed microphone by Wisconsin Veterans Affairs Secretary, Col. John Scocos, Paratrooper; and, Norb in typical 2-minute stemwinder thanking and giving credit to everyone but Norb. (Laney photos)*



Norb with his Grafton Legion friends and many friends from the Badger State Chapter, 82nd Airborne Association were on hand including Diane and Doc Stolp at left. (Laney Pics)



Norb was surrounded by a good section of his family. From left– Dustin Studelska, Norb Jr. (Nib), Carli Studelska, Mike Studelska, Elliott Leistikow, Norb Sr., Tori Studelska, Lainey Bohan, Chase Bohan, and Jeff Shinker. (Laney photo)



Norb, Doc Stolp and Ernie. Three 82nd WWII Vets to draw to...



Ernie Lamson, Dylan Hauer, Norb & Rick Holle look at 82nd history.

Ernie Lamson came ALL THE WAY from St. Paul to honor Norb on this day. Two days later he jumped out of an airplane at Baldwin's Airborne Days. Three days after that he played golf at the Minnesota Special Forces Tourney in Hastings. Typical 508th Trooper. Drive it on Ernie!



Norb's friends and family had a great lunch and time at the King's Table after the award. (Marge Morris photo)



# Howard Rennhack is always on the Go!

“Let’s Go!” said the original 325 GIR and Howard Rennhack, Humbird, caught the tail end of that Glider Regiment in the early 50s at Ft. Bragg. Howard was one of the last Troopers to go through both Glider and Paratroop School.

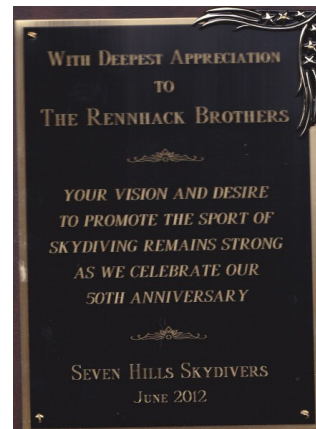
He loved jumping so much he and his brother Ralph, also an 82nd Vet, started the Seven Hills Skydive Club. Howard quit counting after 2000 jumps!

A successful small businessman and good law enforcement officer, Howard retired to a busier life helping others and honoring the 82nd and all our Troops every way he can. He’s a fixture at The Highground and there aren’t many central Wisconsin parades that miss Howard’s Jump Boots, Airborne Camo and the All American colors. Much of his time these days is spent caring for his wife Mary who is ill.

But Howard still found time to call me one day and invite me to lunch where he introduced me to WWII 502nd Vet Don Olson, a great, great man from Black River. Don, 91, died July 21. He was quite a guy and I was lucky to know him through Howard. That’s what Howard does—he brings the Troops together. And we had one hell of a time with Don!

Here are a few shots of Howard in action. We’ll have much more on Howard in coming editions. In the meantime: LET’S GO!

- Tom Laney



Howard writes and lives in CAPS: THE PICTURE IS SUE MESEBERGER A DIRECTOR OF THE SEVEN HILLS SKY DIVERS CLUB GIVING ME A PLAQUE FOR ME AND MY BROTHER RALPH WHO HAS PASSED AWAY. ON JUNE 16TH 2012. FOR STARTING THE CLUB 50 YEARS AGO. SOMETIMES WE HAVE TO WAIT A FEW YEARS TO RECIEVE AN AWARD. THIS ONE ONLY TOOK 50YEARS. I HAD A GREAT TIME. I AM REALLY GREATFUL. JUST THINK THIS ALL CAME FROM MY ABN TRAINING.

ABN ALL TH WAY.HOWARD. SEVEN HILLS SKYDIVERS 50TH ANNIVERSARY 2012.



Howard thanking Joyce Witt for her superb work at The Highground.



Howard and Don Olson on the 4th of July. Don died July 21. He loved Howard’s homemade wine.

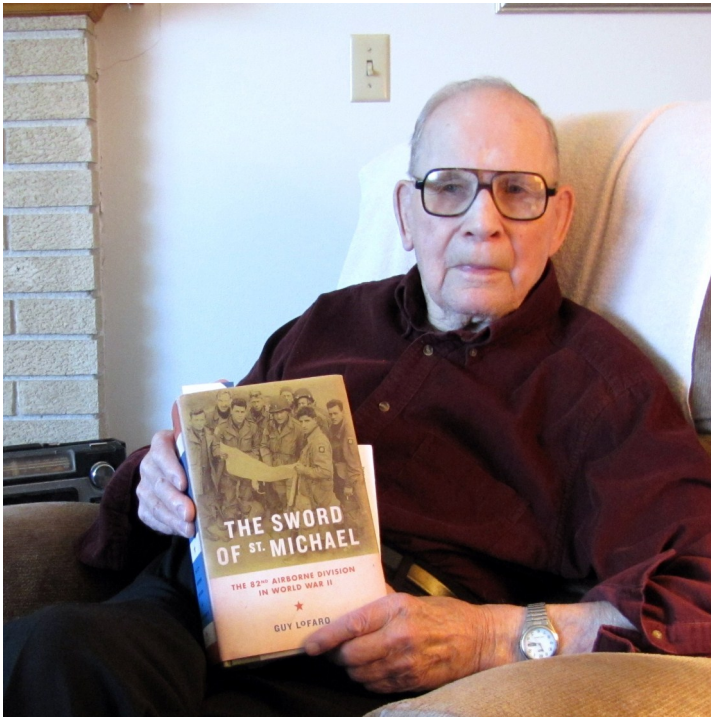


Howard and Bob Shrader at The Highground’s 2011 Chili Cook Off. We haven’t won yet. But we’ve had a great time! Now, with Bob in charge of presentation, we’re the 2012 favorites. (Laney photo)



Col. Scott Bolstad, aide to Sen. Johnson met with Howard and me a few weeks ago in Augusta to talk about getting the Senator on board with the MOH for Maggie. Scott backs it 100%! Let’s Go Sen. Johnson! (Laney photo)

# “A WILD RIDE WITH THE 82ND AIRBORNE!”



**Ray Nelson, Beloit, holds a great 82nd history.** “A man who this book is about” says author Ltc Guy LoFaro of Ray. Ray was F Co/401st GIR, 1st Sgt. During WWII. LoFaro has great praise for the 82nd’s Glider Riders. The 401st became the 3/325 GIR. The regiment saved the day at LaFiere and went on to become one of the greatest Regiments of WWII. LoFaro promised his book would prove that the 82nd saved the 101st at Bastogne. And so it does! (Laney photo)

## Book Review:

“As I close *The Sword of St. Michael*, I realize I have been on a wild ride with the 82nd Airborne.

“It all began with a handful of airmen before the war and grew to several divisions. I witnessed those first men's reactions when they were told they would be jumping from planes. I was there when they trained, in the plane when they first jumped, and on base when they waited for their first D-day. I read the diaries of those men with vision who did the planning and saw also their uncertainty. If you look closely at the cover and author insert on the flap, you may be struck with how similar the one is to the other.

“You're not reading a book by a detached history buff. Guy LoFaro is one of them, and his pride resounds throughout this narrative, in the respect with which he describes the generals and the humanity he reveals in each private or lieutenant through the use of his own words, collected carefully to reveal each man's memory of his war experience and, often, his humor.

“To me, this work is a long, echoing hallway of voices. At one moment, there is the Nazi officer, wondering what the vi-

sion of dropping chutes might portend for him. Then there is the Dutch townsman, who remembers his entire life three simple words that an exhausted trooper mutters to him in passing.

It is also a learning experience - learning the jargon the troopers used: "straight legs," "sticks," "pill boxes," and "dragon's teeth" and about gliders and their purpose in war, the pros and cons of using airborne troops, of battle fatigue and friendly fire, Moran's concept, and about ethos.

“What the author reveals throughout is the 82nd's sense of brotherhood fostered by a rather renegade, too-young general who prowls the woods behind enemy lines before trusting them for his men, who cares little for "chateau generals," and is always thinking of a better way but not afraid to risk because of the courage of his men. For him, it is all uncertain territory; he realizes, simply, that it has never been done before.

“The Sword is the story of hills and hedgerows and ridges and bridges, and sadly, of how many young men died attempting to reclaim them. They were hungry and cold and walked on corpses into blown-out towns, but they were also the victors who witnessed the surrender and were welcomed by throngs.

“At its conclusion, I am left with the sound of marching boots, so many marching boots. Don't you want to know whence they have returned?”

- Rebecca Platt, Amazon Books Review

[See the Glider Riders in action!](#)

(Click Ctrl to select.)



## God Bless Airborne Brother Don Olson

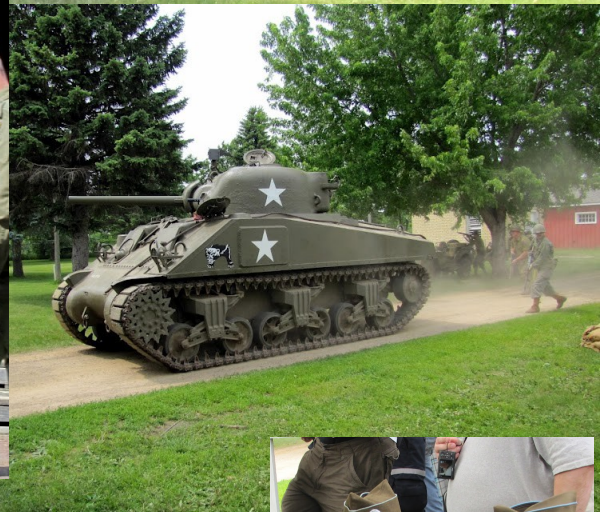


**Don Olson, 91, died 7/21 in Black River Falls. He fought with the 502nd PIR, 101st Airborne.**

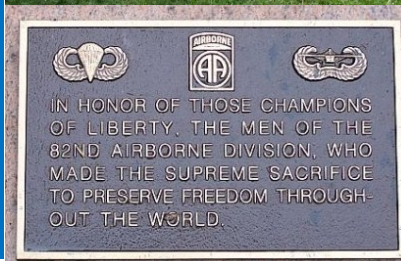
*Don made D-Day, Market Garden, The Bulge and fought ALL THE WAY to the end of WWII. Shot twice in Holland. Silver Star in The Bulge. Don was a great friend. Heck of a deer hunter too!*

*Above with buddy Howard Rennhack at our 90th birthday party for Don. Full story next issue. (Laney photos)*

# 2012 Dakota City: Good Guys win again!



The Wisco All Airborne Reporter promises to do our best to get Maggie to this superb event honoring our WWII Heroes in 2013. Our *ALL THE WAY* thanks to these terrific re-enactors who do so much to honor the best of the best!



## 2013 Dakota City WWII Re-Enactment



Real CSM Harold Roy, 82nd Vet, Farmington, MN, in Jeep as passenger, will be there with the rest of these guys. May 17, 18, 19 2013. Be there for the action and Airborne History by the world's best re-enactors who keep Airborne History alive! (Dakota City photo, other photos by Laney)

# Ray Nelson, WWII Glider Rider, All American





# Bullets filled the air as 82nd 1st Sgt. Ray Nelson led his men hellfire !

## LAFIERE, NORMANDY JUNE 8, 1944 D-DAY + 2

By Tom Laney

1st Sgt. Ray Nelson and F Company Commander, Capt. James M. Harney were leading their men into the hellfire of what some say was the most fiercely intense and costly small unit battle in United States military history.



Ray Nelson  
All American

In the balance was the Bridge at LaFiere, the avenue to Utah Beach the enemy needed to push the now-landing Army's VII Corp back into the sea, stopping the Allied invasion of Europe.

Some may disagree but it is Ray's memory that F Co's 1st platoon led the charge.

German tanks and artillery, heavy and light machine guns, Panzerfausts, anti-tank guns and mortars rattled and decimated the outgunned and much smaller force of Glider Riders and Paratroopers of the famed 82nd Airborne Division.

LaFiere was a fierce place. The 82nd was outnumbered surrounded again. But The Division was no underdog. Aptly-named, the "All Americans" were led by audacious men from its fire teams to its Generals— Men like Wisconsin's Ray Nelson.

"The Merderet River was flooded by the Germans. Our attack was confined to the bridge causeway which was just above water. The Germans needed the bridge to stop the invasion. We needed that bridge too to save our men. We had to attack down that causeway that was about 20' to 30' wide. They were dug in. We were completely exposed. We were trying to move forward in the ditches, anywhere we could move ahead. The air was so full of fire you felt like you could reach up and just pluck the bullets out of the air. There were knocked out German tanks and all sorts of equipment in the

way. There were dead and wounded lying everywhere and we had to walk across them. We were struggling across the bodies of our dead and wounded because there was no other place to go," remembers Ray Nelson, now 95, still feisty and sharp in Beloit, WI.

"How anyone survived I don't know. Survival is one of the great mysteries of war."

In the 82nd Airborne Division, a 1st Sgt is just about a half-inch below God. And when men like Capt. James M. Harney and 1st Sgt. Ray Nelson, led their men into hell, they followed or got a boot in the butt.

*It is said that the four day battle at La Fiere was "The costliest small-unit action in the history of the US Army", and much has been written about the Paratroopers who took part. However, it is the men of the 2nd Battalion 401<sup>st</sup> Glider Infantry, who have been consistently overlooked by historians. They were to become the 3rd battalion of the 325th Regiment of the 82nd Airborne. But on D-Day they were very much the new boys, the outsiders of a now half-remembered unit." - Paul Woodage.*

"Capt. Harney was a good man, a man who led from the front," says Ray. "You moved forward or else. But there at the beginning of the attack, were the 82nd Generals! Ridgeway and General Gavin! They were right there in front of us. The 82nd Commanding General (MG Matt Ridgeway) and the Assistant Commander (BG Jim Gavin). They were right there, can you imagine that?! The small arms fire was kicking up dirt around their feet."

So with the Generals, Harney and Ray urging them on, 1st Platoon, F Co of the 2nd Battalion, 401st Glider Infantry Regiment moved onto the blasted obstacle course of LaFiere causeway. Men moved ahead with the lightest of Airborne arms into the screaming, scorching fire. Another column of wounded staggered back to aid stations manned by sleepless, exhausted medics and under-equipped

battle surgeons. Chaplains and buddies blessed the best friends of their young lives.

In order for Ray's men to take the bridge and causeway, they had to move 650 yards in the open. Ray was a champion sprinter but it was slow-going this day.

"There was no running for us. It was just too cluttered. We picked our way along. It was chaos. The Germans were dug in and we were in the wide open. We went right through the small arms and machine gun fire, the mortars and the artillery they had leveled right at us. We lost a lot of good men but we saved the Paratroopers who had been fighting there for three days. We took that bridge and road and kept right on going. We had a job to do and we got it done," Ray says.

"The Paratroopers were not too fond of us. We rode into combat in Gliders. They jumped out of planes. I guess that made them think they were better than us but we showed them how it's done at LaFiere. We saved a lot of Paratroopers that day," Ray says.

The LaFiere Bridge



The LaFiere Causeway



*Imagine the fields flooded. In white, the LaFiere Causeway, 650 yards into German tanks, machine gun, artillery and mortar fire.—U. S. Army photos.*

The 82nd Airborne copied Ranger training in the states. The Paratroopers and Glider Riders were physically fit. There was also a streak of independence and self-reliance in the 82nd's men which set them apart from regular Infantry. . They were expected to organize themselves and fight alone or in small groups. They were expected to win. And they did win because of superb leadership from top to bottom, even down to the Army of one. (Before LaFiere, an 82nd Trooper was found with 15 dead Germans to his front. He still gripped his empty M-1, empty M-1 clips and ammo bandoliers all around him.)

While the Paratroopers were often scattered by mis-drops; the Glider Riders were a ready-to-rock, squad force (2 squads in a Horsa - if they survived the landing.) So the 401st (3/325) came to LaFiere pretty much intact.

I tracked down Ray's friend and fellow combatant Lee Travelstead, 401st 1st Lt at LaFiere. Lee, peppy and feisty at 91, was at work in his Florida law office. He had led the HQ Co .50 Cal. Heavy Machine Gun Platoon at LaFiere. He told me he would later take over F Co in Holland and found that Ray Nelson was a genius 1st Sgt. Lee passed along a copy of a letter he received from Capt. Harney and a picture of Ray. Harney had congratulated Lee on his promotion to F Co. Captain and suggested that Ray had helped him get it.

"I never saw a man who did that 1st Sgt. job as well as Ray," says Travelstead. "I guess he didn't know many 1st Sgts," laughs Ray.

Here's Lee's view of LaFiere:

.....our (401st) battalion was to sprint across the causeway squad by squad and platoon by platoon, company following company until we reached the other side. Failure had preceded us. It sounded like suicide, a Kamikaze charge if there ever was one, since the causeway was only some 20 to 30 feet wide and some 750 yards long. Since we were sort of an orphan outfit, having been taken from our own battalion and attached to the 82nd's 325, we thought we always got the dirty work, and it looked like this time we were going to go through a meat grinder so the rest could follow more safely.

The rifle companies charged across

## Ray looks over F Co/401st ammo for D-Day



Men of the 325th Glider Infantry Regiment uncrating ammunition at Camp March Hare, Leicestershire, England, May 1944. (National Archives)

This photo was scanned from the book, *Glidermen of Neptune* by Charles J. Masters. The book is an excellent history of the D-Day Glider Riders with many good photos. Ray Nelson is standing to the right. You can clearly see the Glider Patch on his cap and 1st Sgt. Stripes on his sleeve. Note the 401st Troopers are wearing leggings. Following their heroic performance at the Battle for the LaFiere Bridge, they were awarded the full 82nd Airborne uniform with Corcoran Jump Boots and Airborne Trooper pay of an additional \$50 per month.

the causeway. Of course, it was not one fast sprint. The dead and wounded littered the way. Some made it some did not.

...two Paratroopers stepped beside me in the center of the road, as if to be bodyguards; and as one, we were blown into a ditch...I dug myself out from between the two dead Paratroopers ...who had saved my life.

I could not, and cannot, forget the two Paratroopers who in a matter of a second, almost as angels, had stepped to my side, taken the explosion and shrapnel from me, and died instantly.—Lee Travelstead, *No Better Place to Die* - Robert M. Murphy, 505 PIR, 82nd Airborne.

Ray says, "It wasn't easy. Before we moved on I saw a detail stacking the bodies like cordwood. There was one pile of dead Germans. One American. But we took that bridge and saved a lot of lives. We saved the Paratroopers who had been cut off near LaFiere (in Timme's Orchard) and those landing on the (Utah) beach. "

Back in Beloit and even among 82nd Airborne historians, few know much about the bombs and bullets aimed at Ray's men that day at LaFiere. The 82nd's Glidermen were treated as second-class Soldiers by the 82nd's Paratroopers. Until LaFiere.

We can thank LTC Guy LoFaro, a former 325 Commander, for crediting the Glidermen:

*Incredible courage was common that day at LaFiere. The mere effort to propel oneself into the maelstrom of fire that defined the bridge and causeway was, in itself, an act of heroism. Nevertheless, accounts of the battle are replete with acts of extraordinary valor that, when taken together, form the only coherent explanation for the success of the mad assault.....The medics, too, were everywhere, ignoring cover and 'running up and down the causeway bandaging the wounded as rapidly as they could get to them.'...And in the midst of the bloody*

chaos, as much exposed to danger and imminent death as any man that day, were the two most recognizable figures in the division—Ridgeway and Gavin.”

“No one has ever counted the cost of the LaFiere causeway. The only reliable figures are from the 2/401st, which lost 40 troopers killed and another 180 wounded. German figures have been forever lost, although it is certain that the fight destroyed the 1057th Regiment, which ceased to exist as a cohesive fighting force. Yet even absent the numbers the ferocity of the battle made a lasting impression. Ridgeway called it ‘as hot a single battle as any U.S. troops had, at any time, during the war in Europe.’ Gavin opined that ‘the shock of battle never has been greater than it was....in the causeway crossing,’ adding, ‘Probably the only thing that compared with it in raw courage was the crossing of the Waal River at Nijmegen [Holland].’ The fight also changed his perception about glider troopers. ‘From then on,’ he wrote, ‘the 325th became one of the great regiments of the war.’”- LTC Guy LoFaro, The Sword of St. Michael

And more:

When they reached the other side...Harney pushed through the jumbled GIs there, moving straight ahead toward



325 GIR, 82nd Airborne Division troopers loading up a Horsa for the Normandy invasion.

The Horsa was British-made and although bigger, carrying 28 men as opposed to the U.S. WACO's 15, it was made out of plywood and was even more fragile than the WACO. Ray's load did not have a jeep. But, if the load included a jeep, the fast way to unload the jeep was to blow the tail off. When the combat guys complained the door was too tight to get a jeep out quickly while under fire, the Horsa engineers fitted a line of cordite around the tail connection which was then bolted on. The combat troopers had a choice of removing six bolts and sliding the trail out of the way; or, blowing it off. The 325/401st GIR troopers were widow-makers and dynamiters. Guess which choice they made? (National Archives photo)

Le Motey....Moving forward, the Glidermen and Paratroopers had to fight for every field, sometimes in gruesome, hand-to-hand struggles, while runners trotted back and forth to the western end

of the causeway, begging ammunition. It was a completely de-centralized fight with very little direction from above. Instead, individual soldiers and small teams fought to hack out a bridgehead for the massive VII Corps advance.— Ed Ruggero, The First Men In.

Ray Nelson is an athletic, brave, calm, disciplined and orderly man; a natural leader, trained in the common sense and hard work of Wisconsin farming. Independence, audacity and organized recklessness are the salient ingredients of the Airborne however. Ray picked those traits up long before joining the 82nd. He was a National Champion ski jumper, ace baseball pitcher and sprint winner before he ever saw a glider.

As a kid with eight brothers and four sisters Ray was either working hard or playing hard. To help the family during the Depression Ray left school after the eighth grade. He earned a Phd in the school of hard knocks, fast balls and 300' ski jump landings. The Nelson Squad built their own ski jump and baseball field. We can imagine the Nelson family blues during those days when it was too cold for baseball but not snowy enough for ski-



Lester Schwarm, Wausau, 2/325 and Ray share their glider combat stories with Paratrooper Santiago Tijerina at the 2010 National Glider Symposium in Madison. Santiago is the Executive Secretary of the 82nd Airborne Division Association. (Laney photo)



Ray recently received the French Legion of Honor Medal. It looks nice next to his Silver Star. (Laney Pic)

jumping!

When he packed his bags for WWII, Ray took along his baseball glove, cap and spikes. "You never know when you might get a chance to play baseball," Ray says. Or, curve a grenade around a hedgerow.

Ray was 27 years old at LaFiere. He is 95 now, talking from the comfy home he built with the help of his father-in-law. There is a small bridge nearby, a crossing of the scenic Rock River which flows through Beloit Packerland. You think the Airborne Legacy people should get a plaque up there in Ray's honor of the WWII Airborne Troops. The 82nd's stock-in-trade was battling behind enemy lines with profound audacity; always surrounded but fighting for bridges vital to troop movements. But Ray does not want any personal honors other than the medals he won. "We were just doing our job," he says.

Entering the Army as an older, more mature, highly-competitive ski-jumper and baseball bender from Osseo, WI, Ray moved quickly through the ranks of the 82nd Infantry Division's All Americans. At Camp Claiborne, he was on an Honor Guard for the Division's most famous soldier, WWI Medal of Honor winner Sgt. Alvin York. When the 82nd Infantry became America's first Airborne Division, Ray went into the gliders.

He was assigned to the 101st Airborne Division, 2/401st Glider Infantry Regiment in England. When the Airborne

Divisions were reformed before Normandy the 1/401st stayed with the 101st and the 2/401st was assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division. The 2/401st became the 3rd Battalion of the 325 Glider Infantry Regiment. (In most of the literature it was still referred to as the 2/401st).

"I didn't necessarily want to leave the 101st. But when the 82nd offered me a job of 1st Sgt. I took it. I had some Sgts. who thought they had to get down on people. I wasn't like that. I thought I could get the job done without disrespecting the men. So I took the job."

Ray prepared F Co. well and in the early hours of June 7, 1944, D+1, the 401st's Mission Hackensack formed up. In 82nd tradition, Ray Nelson would have a steak and eggs breakfast with his glider Troopers. Then they marched quietly to their Horsa glider at Uptottery.

"It was quiet. Everyone was pretty quiet. They were praying I suppose. When we got to the glider, they made me the co-pilot after 45 minutes of training! I was sure hoping nothing happened to the pilot!"

And then they glided into Normandy and history.

"We went over Utah Beach and land-



Brother Wally, a genius WWII 3rd Armored mechanic and Ray with Mark Finnegan, who does so much for the Vets, visited the WWII memorial in Washington, DC last year. (Photo from Ray)

ed about seven miles from the coast. I was on a British Glider, a plywood glider called the Horsa. And of course the Germans were expecting the gliders to come in so they put out a lot of obstacles on landing fields. They put up poles (Rommel's Asparagus) in the open fields and they flooded some areas. The area I landed in happened to be flooded. The pilot pancaked the Horsa into the water.

The plywood was like a barrel with cracks in it and the water came in like someone turned a hose on."

Ray, urged his men to get into the fight. Loaded down with his M-1, ammo filed pack and company records he got out of the Horsa door as fast as he could.

"We were under fire right away. Small arms fire and mortars hit all around us. When my feet finally hit the ground, the water was up to my chin."

"We had to walk 300 to 400 yards to higher ground through the water. We were under more and more fire. I was carrying the Co F records over my head. I managed to keep it all dry. I made out the morning reports even when we were in combat."

A day later, Ray and F Co. entered the fray at LaFiere.

After LaFiere, the 82nd Airborne connected with infantry elements coming up from Utah Beach and expanded the foothold. Then they went on to cut the Cotentin Peninsula in half.

How important was the 82nd to the success of D-Day? They saved the men landing on Utah Beach.

*When the American invasion force landed on Utah Beach on 6 June at 6:30 A.M., there was no significant opposition to confront them, other than a few long-range artillery shells. The men had moved inland rapidly, seizing ground and working to link up with their airborne comrades, who had blocked the enemy from the beaches and were still locked in combat with them. Among the entire Utah seaborne invasion force there were 197 casualties, 60 of whom were killed in the Channel when their boats were sunk. The events of D-Day at Omaha Beach, where no Glidermen or*

*Paratroopers were sent in behind enemy lines, were disastrous. American soldiers were killed in the water or were pinned down on the beach and against the cliffs by enemy crossfire.... The D-Day casualty list for "Bloody Omaha" totaled 2,374 men killed, wounded, or missing in action. —Charles Masters, Glidermen of Neptune.*

Ray and the 82nd fought for 33 days

before returning to England. They never gave up ground won but paid a terrible price. The All Americans suffered 5,245 troopers killed, wounded, or missing.

*The 82nd Airborne Division...after 33 days in action became the stuff of instant legend. Its record in Normandy may well be the most remarkable of any division in Army history. It had been poorly dropped and instantly surrounded and threatened with annihilation. It had held a determined and far larger enemy at bay for 36 desperate hours without tanks and little or no artillery and with very little ammunition. It had attacked west, forcing a bloody crossing of the Merderet River, opening the way to cut the peninsula. Still without respite, it gained a bridgehead south of the lower Douve, then regrouped and joined the general attack to cut the Cotentin, outrunning the fresh and fully manned 9th and 90th divisions....achieving all its objectives with remarkable speed.*

*In truth, the 82nd emerged from Normandy with the reputation of being— in Col. Eaton's (Ike's aide) phrase—"a pack of jackals; the toughest, most resourceful and bloodthirsty infantry in the ETO."*

- Clay Blair, Ridgeway's Paratroopers. The American Airborne in WWII.

Back in England, the 401st and 82nd had to rebuild.

"The Airborne Divisions were much smaller than regular infantry divisions," says Ray. "The 82nd was usually a little more than half of what a regular division was of maybe 14,000. We had around 8000 Troopers. Maybe 180 to a company when we were at full strength. But after Normandy we had companies that were down to 50 men. Or less. F Co went back to England with less than 50 Troopers."

Refitted, replaced and retrained, the 82nd dropped into Holland in September 17 in history's greatest Airborne invasion, Operation Market/Garden.

F Co and the 325 GIR didn't go in until Sept. 23 because of weather. "We were in WACO's this time not those crazy Horsas. We landed in the Groesbeek area. And we saw heavy fighting in the Kiekberg Woods," Ray recalls.

As F Co moved into the Kiekberg jungle and up a hill, the company was attacked by artillery tree bursts. "Tree bursts are terrible. You get the shrapnel and the blasted trees falling on you. My



**LTC Guy LoFaro**, (Retired) author of *The Sword of St. Michael*, chats with Ray Nelson's daughter Pam Woodard and Ray at the 2010 National Glider Symposium in Madison. LoFaro's new book gives the All Americans of the 82nd Airborne all the credit they deserve. LoFaro is a former commander of the 325, Ranger School Commander and Delta Force leader. (Laney pic)

good friend Sfc Herb Ursthel, who had taken over my 1st platoon when I moved on to 1st Sgt, was killed in front of me. The Signal man who was stringing wire behind me was decapitated. I think almost everyone around me was killed. That was a hard day for me," Ray said.

Kiekberg was the end of the war for the intrepid Capt. Harney who was shot through the thigh. Minus the fearless Harney, Ray Nelson's brave leadership became even more vital to F Co.

Writing on the internet, in the 325 GIR, *82nd Airborne Memories* page, T/Sgt Russell Sunbury recalls moving out from the Mook Plains, "...we were headed in the wrong direction. Fortunately Ray Nelson, the 1st Sgt. noticed the error....A few words were exchanged with the (now-commanding) Lt....1st Sgt Nelson knew what was going on and I'm sure the Company Commander depended on him as much as he would any of his officers."

Unfortunately the new company Commander, who had replaced Capt. Harney was incompetent.

"We got a Lt. in place of Harney. The Lt. had a commission because his father was a politician in S. Carolina and pulled strings for his commission. Not just anyone can lead men in combat. This Lt. did

not know what he was doing. We walked out in the fog. It was very hard to see anything and he was leading us in the wrong direction. And when the fog cleared we found we were all out in the open. We were pinned down by machine gun fire for a long time. I finally said we were going to move ahead and pour everything at the machine guns and we finally got out of it," Ray says. (See Silver Star Citation)

"After we had time, I wrote a letter to our Bn commander, Major Leahy, asking that the Lt. be removed. "This guy was going to get us all killed. I didn't think they would do anything but they removed him! And then we got Lt. Travelstead and he was good. But he looked like a kid out of high school when he arrived from Hdqtrs Co. You know, those Hdqtrs guys are not in the front as we were. But Lee worked out and was promoted to Captain."

Lee Travelstead has a letter from Harney which credits Ray's recommendation for Travelstead's promotion.

Ray was seriously wounded during the Mook Plains battle but he shunned any treatment and moved onto the next battle. He laughed when I asked if he went to the aid station?

After Holland the 82nd went to France to rest, replace and refit. Ray was



**Gene Strutzenberg**, *Brodhead, WWII 504 PIR Silver Star Vet with Ray. I had hoped to buy Ray lunch for our meeting but he insisted we come to his home for lunch. He told me to bring Gene and his wife Donna along. Great people in a small, friendly setting. Doesn't get much better than that! (Laney Pic)*

furloughed to the states.

Then the Germans opened their Ardennes offensive. The 82nd went to St. Vith where they again surmounted insurmountable odds against Panzer Divisions.

Ray polished his ski-jumping skills before returning to the ETO and meeting the Russians who he says, were weird" Even then. Rays feels a little guilty about missing the Battle of the Bulge. But Ray paid his dues...several times over!

As the war wound down, there was time for baseball. Ray pitched for F Company and beat several Major leaguers including an E Co. member, Cooley I think, who had pitched for the Phillies.

"Beat him more than once," Ray beams.

Ray attended the first convention of the 82nd Airborne Association in Chicago, with his friends, including Captain Harney and Travelstead.

Back on the Osseo farm, he stretched the full 90 days he had to return to his pre-war job at Beloit's Fairbanks Morse.

In 1949 Ray won the National Ski Jump Championship at Steamboat Springs, CO.

He was married that year and that

was the end of the ski jumping. He and his wife Marge raised four children, Pam, Marilyn Seidl, Nancy Wuthrich and Rick Nelson.

At Fairbanks-Morse he worked on some of the world's biggest engines with work-partner Charlie Goldsmith.

"Ray was a real good man to work with," Charlie says. "We got along real well and always did a good job. We were both ski jumpers. Ray was a Senior Jumper and I was a Junior Jumper. Ray was pretty good! He always got the job done whatever he was doing."

Ray could have been a plant manager. Or, - Ray's a Yankees fan going back to The Babe and Mantle - maybe the Yankees manager in a mold opposite Billy Martin. Ray could have been a Harvard lawyer. But he was happy just being Ray. Ray's an organiza-

tional genius with a good heart. He could have done anything.

"They offered me a foreman job several times but I turned them down. I had enough time as the 1st Sgt," Ray says.

Ray has been "retired" now for 30 years now. In Ray's case, retirement means going to work for his neighbors and friends, mostly elderly, shoveling their walks in Winter and mowing their lawns and growing veggies for them in the Summer. He grew a big garden and shared the harvest with family/friends and neighbors. It took him back to his roots at that beautiful Nelson farm seven miles south of Osseo down winding, hilly, rustic County Highway O.

He walked two miles on the golf course every morning. He picked up an exercise bike and road it in the evenings while watching sports. He reported the odometer readings each day; years later hanging up the bike after recording two trips around the world! His nature of accomplishing goals showed up here. When he made it as many miles as it is "around the world" he noted that in his log.

In 2010 daughter Pam Woodard drove Ray to the 2010 National Glider Symposium in Madison. I had the honor of meeting him there for the first time. His good humor and friendliness made my day! Ray shared his many war experiences with Glider Riders and Pilots from all over America. He was competence and trust personified.

Last year Ray and Brother Wally made



**Ray Nelson** and friends at the first 82nd Airborne Convention in Chicago. L-R, front, ? Conley, Harnley and ? Rear, Ray, ?, ?, Travelstead and Don Maginski is behind Lee. (Photo from Ray)



**Ray, R,** with the world's longest skis! "Was ski jumping sort of like jumping out an air-plane without a chute?" Ray: "It wasn't quite that bad." (Photo by Lars Knutson)

the Honor Flight trip to the WWII Memorial in Washington.

"Growing up, he didn't want us to know the tough things he saw," says daughter Pam. "Only in the recent years have we learned of some of the truly horrifying things he experienced."

"I know growing up we heard a lot about his time in the service- but not the bad things- the good things like finding preserves in the basement of an abandoned farm house and how delicious they were. Getting to see his brothers on a furlough, coming home for even a few days and getting to see his mother, father and family. His time in the Riviera on a furlough. That he could compete with people with more 'elite backgrounds'. His time in training and running and winning races. He loved that he had a chance to play baseball in Europe right after the war and before he returned home with major league players."

"Our Dad was always treated well when he was in the service, and it is where he built his confidence. He views his service in the 82nd and to his country as an honor. He is truly an American- humbled by his opportunity to serve. He

didn't think he did anything his buddies wouldn't have done. He is proud of his service," says Pam. "He has read the Bible through. He feels very fortunate to have survived and been able to return to the states after WWII and marry, raise a family and live out his faith.

"He isn't quite sure how he ever survived, given many of the battles he found himself in. He is a man who truly lives the 'country, family and faith' as his core principles," says Pam.

In the winters for many years, from November through January, Ray helped on a tree farm...helping people find Christmas trees, cutting them down, and carrying them to cars.

"He watches all the sports he can- likes his football (Packers for sure). He is a 'good' coach from the chair sidelines. Other sports to watch are car races and golf, maybe a little wrestling. He tries to get to church as often as possible."

"For the past several years, Ray has become the chief cook and bottle washer at home as my mom's physical condition has

made it impossible for her to do this. He has always done the grocery shopping, so he continues to do this and run the household. He does read the papers (local daily and Chicago Tribune, his hometown weekly paper- the Trempeleau County News). He loves to read the paper, and he watches news - news as in political shows. He visits his brother Wally every week and they sit and have coffee. He loved being able to be outside after years of work in a factory. He enjoys physical activity. He also has kept his mind very active by reading and staying current on what's happening in the country...especially with governance," Pam says.

Herb Huebschen is another WWII 325 GIR hero from Beloit. From Herb:

"I first met Ray while shopping for

groceries. He saw my 82nd AB patch on my jacket and introduced himself to me. Aside from telling me that he also served in the 82nd, not a word about his service— typically modest Ray.

"His Company was ordered to take the Causeway at La Fiere at all costs, one of the bloodiest battles in Normandy, on June 9th, 1944. Ray has told me that one could literally walk across the Causeway on the bodies of the dead and wounded. The mission was accomplished.

"Mr. Nelson is a stalwart veteran of the 82nd Airborne, WWII. I am going to pickup the phone and thank him for his illustrious service. I believe he is 95 years young, and recently he received honors from the French Government. Until doctor's orders to stop, Ray used to compete

in ski jumping.....truly a brave and outstanding man."

Is it stranged that we revere our Packers but know so little of the real heroes who fought Fascism for us?

The Ray Nelsons of America are humble to a fault. They do not tell us much about what they did.

Coming home

from war, most of them say nothing of what they endured. It is usually much later in life that they open up a bit and let us know more of the most monumental events in their lives.

Ray Nelson thinks F Co took about 30 minutes to take that bridge and causeway. It is no doubt a half-hour he has kept within himself almost all his life.

America desperately needs heroes these days. We are lucky that some of them are still right next door. I am lucky to know Ray Nelson, a great All American!

Gavin's methods required men who were capable, aggressive, and tough and who would show the initiative to accomplish the mission despite changed circumstances. There was an Airborne ethos infused in the ranks and that set the 82nd apart, even from the 101st. —LoFaro.

The 82nd Airborne had many leaders of this ethos and Ray Nelson, 1st Sergeant of F/401st Glider Infantry Regiment was one of them. Where do we find such men? From the families and communities that raise kids to be honest, friendly, loyal and to appreciate work and the Common Good. That's All American ALL THE WAY! Watch for more on Ray and Wisco's Glider Riders in an upcoming pamphlet. - Tom Laney

Special thanks to Pam Woodard, Lauren Kelly, Herb Huebschen and Lee Travelstead and the web for all your help on this story!



## HEADQUARTERS 82ND AIRBORNE DIVISION

OFFICE OF THE DIVISION COMMANDER

A.P.O 469 U.S. ARMY

8 December 1944

SUBJECT: Award of the Silver Star Medal

TO: First Sergeant Raymond L. Nelson, 401st Glider Infantry Regiment

Under the provisions of AR 6000-45, as amended, and pursuant to authority contained in letter 200.6 (AG) Headquarters, XVIII (Airborne) Corps, dated 31, August 1944, the Silver Star Medal is awarded to the following named individual:

## CITATION:

RAYMOND L. NELSON, 36220524, First Sergeant, 401st Glider Infantry. For gallantry in action, 2 October 1944, about two miles from MOOK, HOLLAND. First Sergeant NELSON, Company "F", 401st Glider Infantry, by fearless example inspired his men to advance in assault through intense small arms and artillery fire to accomplish their mission. The company had been pinned down by the severity of the fire and was suffering heavy casualties. First Sergeant Nelson moved into the open and forced the men to move forward in small groups. His courage and inspiring leadership during this period of danger and confusion kept the attack moving to a successful conclusion. In this action First Sergeant NELSON received severe wounds in arm and shoulder but refused to leave the field until he had extricated his men from the danger zone and reorganized them to continue the mission. His gallantry was in keeping with the high traditions of the Airborne Forces of the United State Army and a source of inspiration to all his men. Entered military service from OSSEO, WISCONSIN.

(Signed)

James M. Gavin  
Major General, U. S. Army,  
Commanding

(Reproduction)



# We will remember Les who did so much for the 82nd Airborne and all of America!

*Ed Note: The Mauldin cartoon is here because Les sent it to me along with other Mauldin cartoons. Les, like all Infantrymen, loved Bill Mauldin! You can see the Troopers welcoming Les home here. I sent this thank you to Les, who was my teacher on all things Airborne: Thanks Les, I just read a couple of books on Mauldin, His book and another about him which was really great! Last year, Howard Rennhack sent me the photo of Bill in his jeep. Howard thought he was wearing jump boots in that picture. I read that the 509th sent Mauldin a pair of Jump Boots and he loved them! Mauldin, Ernie Pyle, Andy Rooney, that reporter who never went to Jump School but did the 82nd combat jumps anyway, that guy who wrote one of the first books on Lombardi who also covered the WWII Dog Faces, (their names escape me now) they were a special breed, great, great writers and cartoonists in Mauldin's case, because they were inspired by the Infantry troops they loved so much. Guys like you 325 guys. Thanks for sending this Les! ATW, Tom*

*This essay I excerpted from Les, is the best way I know how to show what a lovely man he was his entire life:*

The parallel of two soldiers: Dallas Griffin, Rockford, IL, and; Lester Schwarm, Wausau, WI.

In Dec. 1942 we arrived at Ft. Bragg, NC as replacements for the 326 GIR, 82nd Airborne Division for Basic Training. After Basic we were assigned to HQ & HQ Co. Heavy Weapons, 2/326. You were in the heavy, water-cooled, .30 cal. Machine guns. I was in the heavy .81mm mortar platoon.

Feb. 12, 1943, the 326 GIR was removed from the 82nd and replaced by the 505 PIR. Reason: The gliders were not advanced enough and the 82nd was going to N. Africa.

We arrived in Alliance, Nebraska in March 1943. There was 12" of snow as we got off the train moving to Alliance Air Base. We formed the 1st Airborne Brigade—the 326 GIR, 507th PIR and 88th GIR. We played lots of baseball and football. In October we returned to Ft. Bragg to complete the 13th Airborne Division. Jan. 1944 we marched with full field pack, over 50 miles from Ft. Bragg to Camp Mackall through the rain. Then we volunteered for Pathfinder School and overseas duty.

April 1944, we started Jump School.

Mike Koops THE DENVER POST 2003



**And here comes Les!** Les sent me this cartoon last Fall. I just change the words to "Here's Les. Stand up and salute!" So long my All American Friend!

Because Paratroopers disliked Glidermen that made the training twice as tough for us. We double-timed nine miles and did a half hour of calisthenics before breakfast each morning. We were the only two to qualify from our company. But while waiting for the parachute training, the call came for overseas duty.

June, 1944, we arrived in Liverpool, England. I lost track of you there. As the 82nd Troopers came back from Normandy, I was assigned to the 325th GIR. I started Jump School again and who should I find there but you, Dallas Griffin, also in the 2/325, E Co. We were in the same Battalion! Before we could finish Parachute Training we were sent back to the Unit for Market/Garden.

The Airborne Invasion of Holland started Sept. 17, 1944. The weather turned so bad, the 325 did not go in until Sept. 23. In Holland, Groesbeek, we got to see each other about four or five times. Each time we would pat each other on the back and say, "We made it this far!" After the battle at Mook, I did not get to see you.

Nov. 13, We were relieved by the Canadians and sent to Sissone, France. Here I got to see you again. This is probably the first time I realized the camaraderie that we have built up for one another.

In Sissone we trained for an Airborne Invasion of the Templehoff Airfield in Berlin.

Dec. 16, 1944, Hitler changed our plans with the Battle of the Bulge. The 82nd was first ordered to Bastogne, Bel-

gium; then, the Northern Flanks. The 325 was on line at Werbomont, from Dec. 18 through Jan. 12th 1945. We were relieved by the 75th ID and sent to Pepinster, Belgium for a much-needed rest.

The 2/325 was housed in a cotton mill and here I saw you for the first time since Sissone. I think we each had a tear in our eyes, hugged one another and said our usual words. Remember the night that Buzz Bomb came and landed next to the cotton mill? What a noise that was! Good thing it did not explode for none of us would be around!

Feb 1st the 325 hit the Siegfried Line. Easy Co. was coming back from penetrating the Siegfried Line, through where we had our 81s set up. I see a Trooper carrying a light machine gun on his shoulders like you always did. I look closer and see he is your second gunner. He spotted me about the same time. His eyes caught my eyes. I motion, where you were?

He shook his head and said nothing. He did not have to for I knew what he was saying.

As one General once said, "In Heaven there has to be a special place for all Airborne Troops." I hope to see you there Dallas.

At the High Grounds today as we place this Battle of the Bulge Memorial Stone, I can't help but think of the Camaraderie we built up between us from Dec. 1942 to Jan. 1945.

REST IN PEACE DALLAS.

[325 WWII Memorial](#)

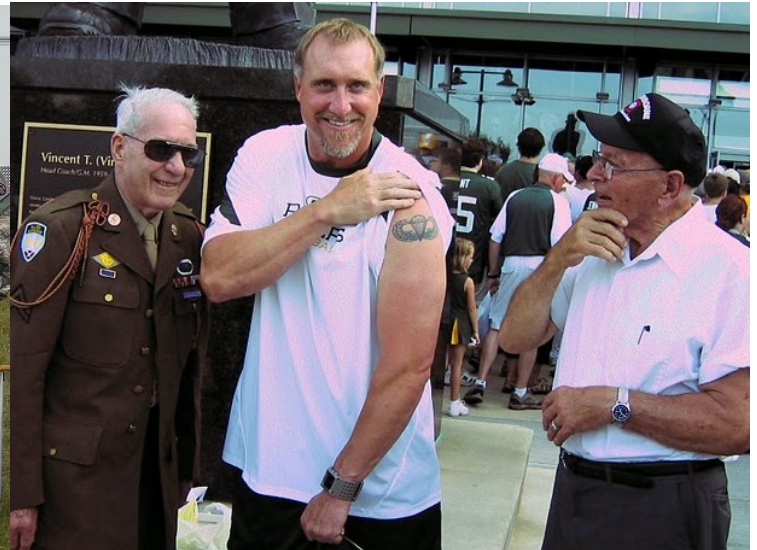
# Lester Schwarm: The 82nd Airborne Loses an All American Champion



Greeting Lt. Gen Caldwell



With Faye and body guard at Iron Mountain WACO.



At the Baraboo Air Show with 82nd Sgt. Jeff Crooks; at Lambeau with Packers LB Coach Kevin Greene and 504 Vet Gene Struzenberg; at Eau Claire BSC meeting and at our last Christmas lunch with Rick Holle and Sid Cohen; the Last time I saw my Airborne Teacher, Lester. (Laney Pics)

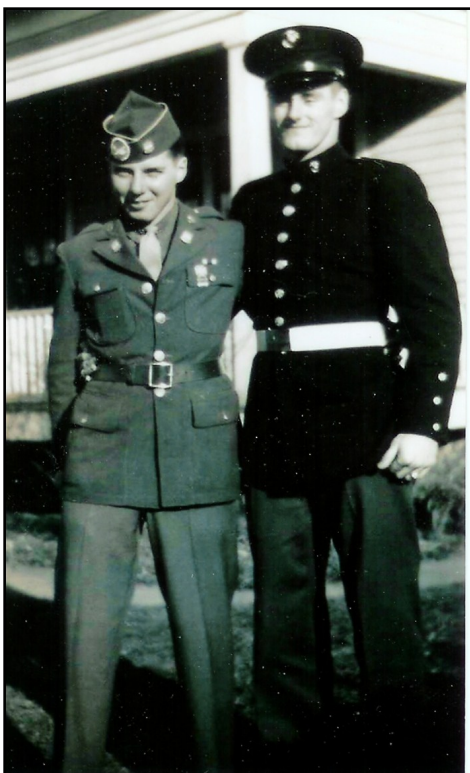




Making a Tribute to Maggie at Ripon College. (Justin Connaher Pic)



Telling the 82nd story on Eau Claire TV with Judy Durkee and USMCs Bob Burgess.



With High School buddy Elroy "Crazy Legs" Hirsch.



At the Bulge Memorial he worked so hard to place in downtown Wausau.



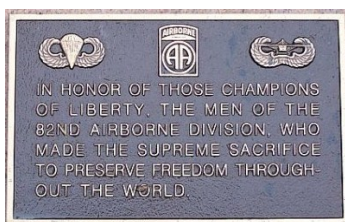
With 325's Herb Huebschen.



81 mm Mortarman Les



With pal Walt Pakulski in front of Sara Witter Connor's glider display. (Laney pic)



## Southern Wisconsin 82nd Chapter Leads the way for our wounded!

The Southern Wisconsin All Airborne Chapter is one of 99 chapters in the 82nd Airborne Division Association. The association and chapter are made up of Glider Men and Paratroopers, foreign and domestic.

The Southern Wisconsin All Airborne Chapter started helping our service men and women about ten years ago by sending checks to active military families in need. Then we started helping our troop's right after 9/11. We sent care packages overseas.

When our local guard came back from Iraq our chapter gave the families a complete Christmas dinner, turkey, pies, and all the trimmings plus a \$100.00 gift certificate for Christmas.

Since so much was being done for the troops overseas by so many one of our members, Tom Hacker suggested we start helping our wounded coming back from the Iraq war. We began to do this 9 years ago by helping a local marine who lost two limbs. We did a car show in mid- October when many car owners had put their classics away for the winter. However it was a success and we were able to raise over \$7,000.00 for him.

Since then we have conducted an annual car show every year and gave all the money to our wounded. In 2009 we held a special fund raiser for a triple amputee whose wife left him in the middle of the night, taking their children and all their money. We were able to raise over \$18,000.00 for him.

During the years following our first wounded warrior car show we have also conducted raffles, dances, pig roasts, dinners and donation requests. All funds raised have gone to our wounded warriors and their families.

Without the help of our great sponsors and generous donors none of this would be a success. Lenny Palmer and staff of Wlip, Nasser, owner of Our Kenosha tap, Fec's Place, The Boat House, TG's, Andy's Drive-in, Studio 22 Hair Salon, Brat Stop and the Parkway Chateau, Kenosha Military Surplus and Supply, Mike Schumacher owner, Spiegelhoff's Super Value, Carl Bogar of Historical Military Impressions, The New Chevelles, Gary and Noreen Jeffson, Paul Kern, Hans-

mann Printing, Tremper's Travel Club, The Warrior Watch Riders, Kenosha Firefighters and Pulera Collision Auto Car Center are just a few of our chapter's sponsors.

In 2010 our chapter sent out eight-teen checks in the sum of \$1,000.00 each. When we send a check to a wounded warrior the minimum amount is \$1,000.00. We send to any wounded warrior from any branch of the service both women and men.

This year 2011 our chapter sent four

**"AS LONG AS WE ARE IN WARS OUR CHAPTER WILL CONTINUE TO RAISE MONEY FOR OUR WOUNDED."**

**- NICK PULERA**

checks to four wounded warriors one of which is a female. She is the third female we have helped who lost a limb. All the wounded we have helped have lost a limb or limbs.

Many have asked how we find these wounded warriors. The government does not release the names of them. We are fortunate to have a member who lives near Fort Sam Houston Texas, Paul Supko.

This is where they send the most severely wounded. When we need names to send checks to; Paul and his wife Gracie go to the hospital and meet these severely wounded. He tells them what our chapter is doing and asks them if it would be ok to send them a check. When we get their names along with their injury history we send the checks directly to them not a middle man or organization. There are no strings attached to this check.

We are not limited to just helping those from Wisconsin. We help all from all states, branches of service and both women and men.

At the time of this writing our chapter has been conducting fund raisers for a wounded marine, Sgt. John Peck, from Antioch, IL. He lost both of his legs and arm. We started raising money for him and to date we have raised and sent to him over \$24,000.00.

As long as we are in wars our chapter will continue to raise money for our wounded.

Thank you for your support.

Nick Pulera – Chairman  
Southern Chapter  
82nd Airborne Division Assoc.

### Gun control? It means they're in the racks.



Doug Rasmussen, R., 82nd Vet, Phillips, WI, with just a few items of his weapons display. We hope to have this display for an Air Show next year. (Photo from Doug)

# 9th ANNUAL CAR SHOW

## To Benefit Our Wounded Veterans



**SEPT. 2th. 2012,  
SIMMONS ISLAND,  
KENOSHA, WI.  
8:00AM TO 4:00 PM**

*100% of all funds raised  
go to our wounded warriors.*

**Show Entry \$10.00  
Spectators Free**

**No Judging  
or Classes -  
Choice Awards**

**Dash Plaques &  
Goodie Bags  
to first 250 cars**

All Cars, Motorcycles, Military Vehicles, Trucks, Welcome

**Food, Drinks & Family Activities**

**50-50 Raffle, Door Prizes, Personal Military Displays,  
Military Vehicles, Face Painting, Raffle Items, Music, Dunk Tank**

For Information Call:

Nick Pulera, Kenosha (262) 656-1193 npulera@wi.rr.com

Steve Pulera (262) 620-1613

Tom Hacker (414) 747-1944 Milwaukee



**When the world needed them, they were the first to jump!**

**REMEMBER - ALL GAVE SOME - SOME GAVE ALL**

Army, Navy, Air force, Marine Corp, Coast Guard, Merchant Marine, National Guard, Reserve Units  
Honor Those Who Served For Us • Noon ceremony to honor troops

**Directions**

Take Hwy 158 east into Kenosha all the way to the lake. Turn left and go to the first set of lights. Make a right turn, go over the bridge. The show will be immediately in front of you.

We are accepting donations of used unbroken toys, books, puzzles, and games, for children

**SPONSORED BY:  
The Southern  
Wisconsin All  
Airborne Chapter**



## RANGER LEADS THE WAY FOR NEW RICHMOND VFW HONORS

By Jeff Holmquist, New Richmond News - 07/03/2012

VFW Post 10818 in New Richmond is Wisconsin's top rated post in the state.

The local veterans' organization attended the state VFW convention June 13-15 in Green Bay and came home with a long list of honors. The post was awarded the "Red Carpet Award" in February. The honor recognizes posts that achieve state goals for new members or retains current members. Post 10818 started in 2011 with 223 members and set a goal to reach 247 by 2012. They hit 287.

On the heels of that award, VFW Post 10818 Commander Dave Green said his members were optimistic about their chances to collect a few more awards at the June convention. Sure enough, the post took the "All State Team" award, which recognizes the top post in the state. VFW officials select the winning post annually, based on successful activities ranging from fundraising to community service projects to youth development efforts.

"It was a goal to get to this point," Green said. "It took a lot of hard work and everybody had to play a role." "It was a team effort right from the beginning of the year," Quartermaster Ron Ebert added. VFW member Merlin Kosmosky said it's quite an accomplishment for the small local post to take top honors among 300+ posts across Wisconsin. "To accomplish this goal, you have to be very active," he said. "It's non-stop activity. We went beyond the call of duty."

In recognition for his individual effort, Green was presented with the "Captain-All-State" award, which goes to the commander deemed to have the most outstanding record for the year. "It's the highest award the state of Wisconsin gives to a commander," Kosmosky explained.

The honors didn't stop with the state awards. Post 10818 also picked up several national awards to boot. The local VFW was given the "National Recognition" award (2011-2012) due to its "outstanding contributions to America through sponsorship and promotion of local community program activities."

The group also picked up a "Community Service special project" cita-

tion in recognition of the post's Purple Heart ceremony held April 1 for (USMC) Sgt. Aaron Fuller. Fuller received a battle field injury in late 2005. In January 2012, Fuller's dad received his son's purple heart in the mail. The Post was asked to right this wrong and conducted a Purple Heart ceremony. The post also accepted a certificate of appreciation from the United States Marine Corps, Wounded Warrior Battalion, West, for the Purple Heart ceremony.

An "Award of Merit" was presented May 16 for the Post's "Welcome Home Veteran Program." This is an on-going program for the post. The program began four years ago. The program mission is to "welcome home" all veterans from WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan and all other conflicts around the world. The goal and pledge is to provide honor and integrity to each veteran from a grateful nation for their service.

An "Award of Excellence" was given to the post and auxiliary for their seminar on "Suicide Prevention". Post 10818 member Bob Aufderhar developed and organized the program.

Commander Dave Green was named a National Aide-de-camp. The award is given to an individual who has performed in an outstanding way within the VFW. Green will be asked to help the national commander in various state and national

needs. And a "15 C-I-C Citation" was also given to Green for exceeding the Post's recruitment goal for 2011-12. The goal was to sign up 15 new members during a six-month period but they beat that goal.

Green said the entire convention was a blur and all the good news didn't sink in until post members returned home. "I thought, 'holy man, look what we did,'" he said with a smile. "We busted records in the state. Everybody was pretty impressed with what we did."

Green said he gives a lot of credit to the advisory team he appointed when he took over as Post 10818 commander. The team consisted of five former commanders, who offered suggestions on how to recruit new members and how to ramp up the group's community efforts.

"They led me in the right direction," he said. Another thing that's helped the local VFW is the organization's move to new post space in the Community Commons. "This gave us a place to call home," Green said. "That has helped an awful lot."

The VFW meets at 6 p.m. on the third Thursday of every month. The entrance to their office space is on the west side of the Community Commons building.

*Editor's Note: David Green moved from the 82nd and fought in Vietnam with the 75th Rangers/173rd Airborne. He holds the Silver Star and Purple Heart among other decorations. He is one great man!*

### Paratrooper Justin Connaher All American Photographer



[Justin Connaher](#), is the best military photojournalist we know. Justin contributed the photo and art work on the Maggier's War poster on pg. 3! He is presently in Alaska working for the Air Force at Elemendorf Air Base. He also covers the 501st Airborne Brigade. Click on his name, ctrl/click to visit his photo website. You will be amazed *ALL THE WAY!*

# WACO built in Minnesota shipped to Granite Falls Museum

From the St. Paul Pioneer Press

By Nick Ferraro

nferraro2@pioneerpress.com

On Wednesday, June 6, a CG-4A glider made from restored and fabricated parts was shown off at an open house at Eagan-based Villaume Industries, marking the end of a four-year effort led by several local retirees. On Thursday, the glider will be loaded onto a flatbed truck and driven to its new home at the Fagen Fighters World War II Museum in Granite Falls, Minn. "I hate to see it go, because it's been a labor of love," said project volunteer [Jim Johns](#), adding that the aircraft is one of just 11 CG-4A gliders in the world.

During the war, Villaume Industries, then located in St. Paul, produced the custom precision wooden wings, control surfaces and floors for 1,509 of the nearly 14,000 gliders manufactured in the U.S. It served as a subcontractor for St. Paul-based Northwestern Aeronautical Corp., which became the second-largest manufacturer of gliders, behind Ford Motor Co. In 2007, Johns and fellow restorer Ingemar Holm approached the company to gauge its interest in helping build a CG-4A glider from the ground up.

"They asked me if we had any plans and if we had any parts," recalled compa-

ny president Nick Linsmayer, whose great-grandfather Eugene started Villaume Box & Lumber Co. in 1882 on St. Paul's West Side. "I said, 'Well, no ... we moved from St. Paul to Eagan 40 years ago.'"

But Linsmayer did offer space in a company warehouse for volunteers to work on the project, which started in March 2008.

"A year turned to two years and so on," said Johns, a retired Army aviation captain from Bloomington.

"Then (Linsmayer) started to see us bringing in parts and it taking shape. In the end, he said, 'You guys got a home here.' "The glider has 72,000 parts, more than half of them wood. Volunteers collected some vintage parts from training planes that the National World War II Glider Pilots Association had salvaged for its museum in Lubbock, Texas. They found original instrument panels, infantry seats and landing gear.

"One of the tires still has the World War II air in it," Johns said. They also found a long, narrow case that stored "barf bags" for the troops who succumbed to the plane's bumpy ride. "Before the bags,



**Charlie Nelson, 3rd ID Vet from Prescott, WI, talks with Nick Linsmayer who provided space for the WACO build and hosted the Open House. (Laney photo)**

the pilots told them to barf in their helmets," Johns said.

Volunteers raised much of the estimated \$14,000 it cost to pay for parts and supplies. It took more than 30,000 hours to complete the project. Master woodworker and glider pilot Dale Johnson created many of the parts. Joe Messacar, a former aeronautical engineer, was adept at reading the old, faded blueprints and making sure the parts were to exact specification. "I'd like to see this stay around here locally, but we really have nowhere to put it," said Johnson, who was on hand for Wednesday's open house.

Nick Ferraro can be reached at 651-228-2173. Follow him at [twitter.com/NFerraroPiPress](https://twitter.com/NFerraroPiPress).



**3rd Infantry Vets Tom Driscoll, and Charlie Nelson Prescott, with Wisconsin's Glider Joan of Arc, Sara Witter Connor. Sara has spearheaded the dissemination of Wisconsin's Glider history and honored Glider Pilots and Riders. (Laney Pic)**

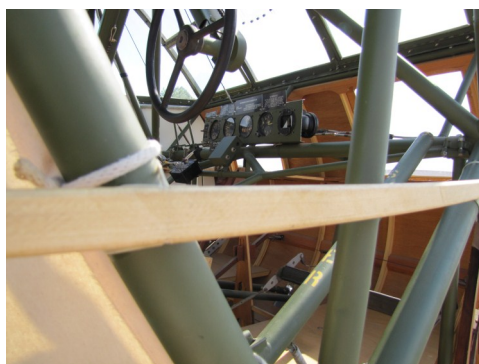


# 30,000 hours of labor went into this WACO!



**Rick Holle, Hammond, with Ray Nagl, WWII 101st Airborne Artillery Glider Rider. Rick's dad, Leon Holle was a WWII Glider Rider with the 80th AA, 82nd Airborne Division. (Laney Pics)**

*Ray Nagl shares his combat stories with Tom and Charlie. "We supported E Co/506th but were never mentioned in 'Band of Brothers'. We killed more of the enemy than E Co ever dreamed of killing."*



The craftsmanship is superb! It was a great idea to leave a side off so all the parts are visible without climbing into the glider. (Surprising that Viqueens fans would think of something like that!) Basic instruments. Tie downs behind the seats were used to secure Jeeps, Pack Howitzers and mortars and small bulldozers. The quality stamp on the tail part at left shows it came from Marshfield. (Laney Pics)



The good old days at Villaume.



Reporter Nick Ferraro interviews Col. Don Patton, military historian.





# AIRBORNE HOOK UPS



**BADGER CHAPTER, 82ND ASSOC.**

**FRANK MORRIS, CHAIR**



**OLD ABE CHAPTER, 101ST ASSOC.**

**JIM ROMLEIN, PRESIDENT**



**SOUTHERN WISCONSIN, 82ND ASSOC.**

**NICK PULERA, CHAIR**



**12TH CAV AIRBORNE**



**173RD AIRBORNE**

**LEW "SMITTY" SMITH, RTO**



**MIDWEST ALL AIRBORNE ALLIANCE**

**ALL MAAA TROOPERS ARE LEADERS.**

You must hit ctrl/click to make the links work.  
Don't ask me why.  
2nd link is email.



**YES!** That is Trooper Reuben Clark, Madison, Treasurer of the 82nd BSC, at left, calmly watching the Badgers get robbed on a last minute shot against the Spartans. Look at Reuben. Then look at Bo! I called Reuben when I saw this picture. He said it was a good call so I felt a little better. But look at Bo!! (Milwaukee Journal photo)



Viking fan Brett Esse & Mike Haller at 82nd Airborne Display, WWII Museum, downtown Portage. (Laney photo)

Brett Esse may be a Brett Favre fans (still) but he knows Airborne.

[The WWII Museum in Portage](#) features lots of Airborne memorabilia and artifacts. The Badger State Chapter of the 82nd Airborne Division has contributed an interesting display. Visit the Museum soon. Bring the kids. And tell Brett to get on the Aaron Rodgers bandwagon! Thank you.

# ALL AIRBORNE DAYS

Hosted by **Midwest**

**All-Airborne Alliance**



**Saturday  
August 11, 2012**  
**Pig Roast/Picnic**  
**MN Air National Guard**  
**"Contact Club"**  
 Fort Snelling, MN  
 Noon to 6:00 PM  
 \$15.00 per person  
**Post Colors at 12:00**



**Bill Hannigan**, 504 PIR, St. Paul, Waal River Crossing Trooper will be there. **YOU** should be too! Wisco Troopers welcome!

If you fail to make early registration just call/email one of the organizers and let them know you're dropping in!

- Ranger Tom Eckoff

**The Midwest All-Airborne Picnic 2012**  
 Food served at 13:00 hrs.  
 Many additional buffet items!  
 Air Guard Museum open!  
 Vintage street rods on display!  
 Raffle items, Airborne memorabilia,  
 Airborne Camaraderie, and much more.  
**Seventeenth Annual**

**Reservations required by August 6, 2012**  
 Make checks payable to:  
**Midwest All-Airborne Alliance**  
 Send to:  
 Midwest All-Airborne Alliance  
 P.O. Box 583131  
 Minneapolis, MN 55458-3131  
 Contact:  
 Hal Roed 612 889-9063  
 Jack Running 651 498-4227  
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Join us for the SEVENTEENTH All-Airborne Days!



-----Please cut on dotted line-----

**YES, I'LL ATTEND THE MIDWEST ALL AIRBORNE DAYS**

PLEASE PRINT  
 Name \_\_\_\_\_  
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 City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 GUESTS: \_\_\_\_\_

August 11th	Total
Pig Roast/Picnic "Contact Club" @ \$15.00 per person	
\$ _____	\$ _____



*"Show me a man who will jump out of an airplane (or ride a glider) and I'll show you a man who will fight for his country." Gen. Jim Gavin*



E6304 866th Ave.  
Colfax, WI 54730

Phone: 715-962-4365  
Cell: 651-492-9309  
E-mail: tlaney1776@gmail.com



**Airborne**



Thank you Mr. hard-boiled Paratrooper Bert Schmitz, 505 PIB National Association Secretary for the terrifically designed 82nd BSC challenge coins below!

A fundraiser for Wounded Warrior, these coins can be had for only \$12 bucks! (Plus postage)  
Contact Reuben Clark, Treasurer, 82nd Badger Chapter, 5318 Greenbriar LN, Madison, WI  
Email: lnclark@aol.com  
608-222-4833



## 82nd Re-Enactors travel a long way to honor Vets!



### How do we thank these guys?!

These 82nd re-enactors come from Minnesota and S. Dakota to honor Maggie and all Vets.

Above, Maggie talks with Lt. Ben Lund, H Co/504, Mpls. Right, 1st Sgt. Brian Pesce, 508th Pathfinders, presents Wisco Vets Sec. Col. John Scofos with 18th Abn corps WWII jacket. Below, the boys are united with Judy Durkee and her mom Evelyn, Rhinelander, whose Dad/Husband, Glenn Ward, 508th was KIA 1/30/45 in Belgium.

This was the 3rd trip to Wisco in the last year by some of these guys.

They attended the WWII Tribute in Fond du Lac

last Fall, the Greatest Generation Tribute in Green Bay May 4 and Dylan and Brian came all the way back to King to honor Norb Studelska as he received the Wisconsin Veterans' Lifetime Service Award.

Seven of them are committed to the Maggie's War premier in Fond du Lac Sept 6 & 7.

Why are they so devoted to the 82nd?

"We do this to honor all of you," Dylan told the WWII heroes. Well, they are doing one hell of a great job of it. They travel to Wisconsin to support the MOH for Maggie and travel to 504 and 508th reunions plus do reenactments all over. All on their own nickel. Great Troopers all! (Laney Pics)