



# THE WISCO AIRBORNE REPORTER

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

## Ranger Jason Church Leads, Inspires Way Buss family organizes Vets Center Benefit

Losing his legs in Afghanistan August 12, 2012, only solidified the resolve and virtue of devout Christian and U.S. Ranger 2nd Lt. Jason Church.

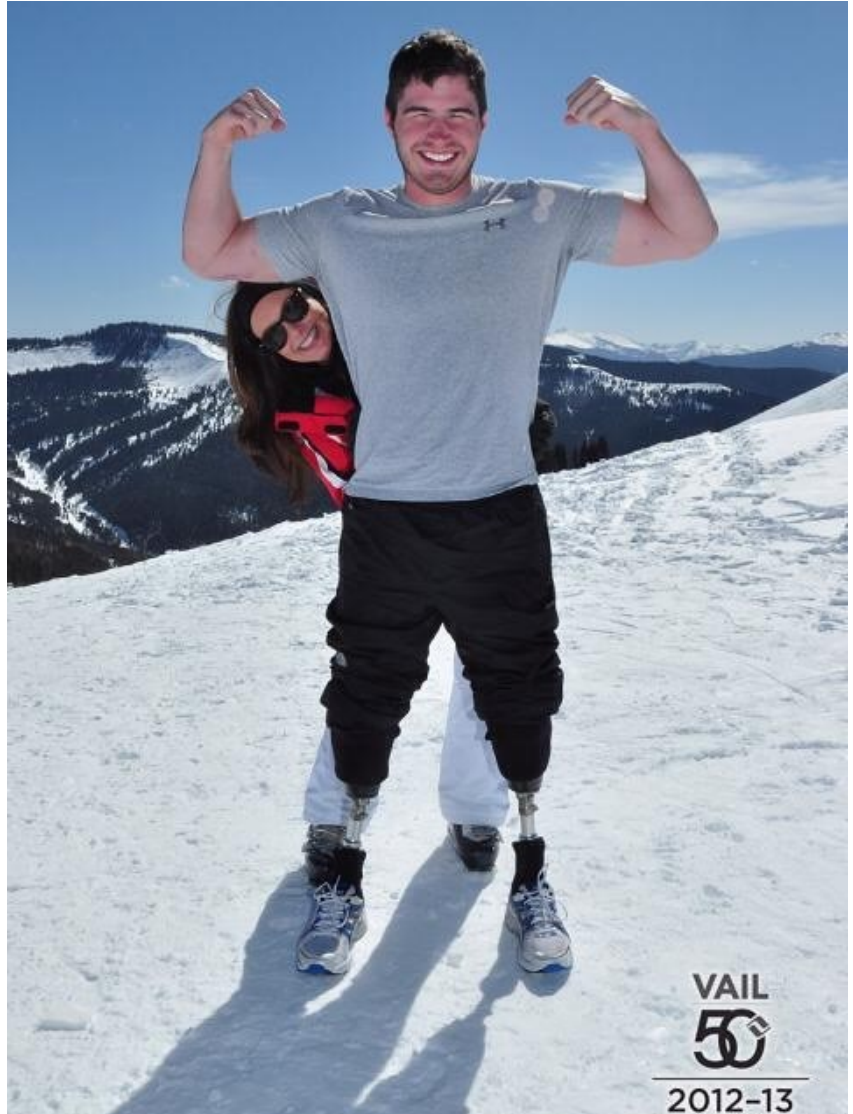
Rangers lead the Way they say, and so does this member of the Fellowship of Christian athletes.

Jason lost both legs to an IED attack in Afghanistan last August.

Jason's recovery is going well as you can see in the picture. Also going well is support from his family, the Menomonie and Lacrosse U and even the CIC. President Obama visited Jason last Fall in the new Walter Reed.

As important as the visit from the President of the United States was, the daily solidarity flowing from the hearts of the Wisconsin citizenry is tops.

An example was the Dec. Jason Church Benefit led by the Dave Buss family. (Cont. pg. 44)



## "Maggie's War" Features the perfect combat leader

"Maggie's War" premiered in Fond du Lac last September before friends, neighbors and veterans, admirers all of Wisconsin's greatest combat leader, LTC James "Maggie" Megellas.

"It's not Band of Brothers" says SSG Bill Hannigan who lived the combat scenes in Tim Gray's documentary on, America's preeminent combat leader.

But on a tiny budget Gray has

produced an emotional and true story of combat leadership at the platoon level.

82nd Airborne Historian and author of "The Sword of St. Michael", himself an 82nd, Ranger and Delta Force combat leader, LTC (Ret) Guy LoFaro says this of Maggie:

*"On the night of 28-29 January 1945, Lieutenant James Megellas of H Company, 3/504<sup>th</sup> Parachute Infantry (cont. pg. 3)*

### INSIDE MORE PHOTOS

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## Who is Jim "Maggie" Megellas?

**"Maggie 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 heroic 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."** - SSG Bill Hanigan, 504 PIR Paratrooper, 90, St. Paul, MN on Jim Megellas. Bill was a squad leader in Maggie's platoon. Bill is also a very good man and a member of the Badger Chapter, 82nd Airborne Division Association.



**"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 sonofabitch?!' 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 Heib, WWII Paratrooper H/504 PIR; Special Forces Vietnam.



### Maggie's Heroes

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

**Hit ctrl-click to use the links in this newsletter!**

### The Wisco Airborne Reporter

We are dedicated to honoring LTC (Ret) James "Maggie" Megellas, the most decorated officer in the 82nd Airborne's proud history; and also, to honoring all of 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 on MOH appeals by [Col. Ed Sims](#) and the Sim's Team on any new Department of the Army, Congressional or Presidential action for this long overdue Medal of Honor.

The Sims Team has been formed with the approval of Col. Edward J. Sims, 93. Col. Sims was, in 1945, 1st Lt. Sims, H/504, 82nd Airborne Division. Sims recommended Maggie for the Medal Of Honor after the battle of Herresbach. We want this medal for Maggie, for his platoon, for the 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." - 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!*

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<https://sites.google.com/site/maggiemedalofhonor/wisco-all-airborne-reporter>

### Wisco Airborne Reporter

Honoring Jim "Maggie" Megellas  
and Wisconsin's Airborne.

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Lac, WI; Bob Shrader, 82nd Airborne, Sim's  
Team.

All American Photog Emeritus: Justin  
Connaher, 505 PIR, 82nd Airborne, Alaska.





## The perfect battle led by the perfect combat leader.

(Cont. from pg. 1)

Regiment, 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division, led an attack on the town of Herresbach, Belgium that has been called, by those who witnessed it, "the perfect battle." Starting out in the dead of night from a hill overlooking the town, Megellas placed himself at the head of two platoons of paratroopers—paratroopers who were dead tired, having trudged through waist-deep snow for several hours already. Yet the sight of Maggie in the lead rallied them for one more effort so they stepped off, in skirmish formation, and followed Maggie off the hill and on to Herresbach.

"About 300 yards from town they encountered a German infantry battalion coming straight at them. Outnumbered and outgunned, the American paratroopers, with Megellas in the lead, waded into the German battalion, leaving 100 dead in their wake and taking another 180 prisoner while sustaining no casualties of their own. T

"Then, continuing into town, they encountered a German Panther tank. Undeterred, Megellas attacked the tank single-handedly, first rendering it inoperable with a Gammon grenade and then killing the crew with a fragmentation grenade.

"Finally, with the tank out of the way, Megellas rallied his troopers and, remaining in the lead, swept through the rest of Herresbach, capturing the town and another 100 German prisoners.

"It was, truly, the perfect battle, but it could only have been accomplished under the leadership of the perfect combat leader."

Thanks to Gray's true story, Jim Megellas, Wisconsin's great citizen warrior, leader of arguably WWII's best platoon, will finally give the 82nd Airborne Division a bit of the notice and credit it earned as the hard-fighting, audacious, PR-neglecting, first-in, last-out Airborne Division of WWII.

Not to knock the 101st but those of us who wish Steve Ambrose had written "Band of Brothers" about Maggie's H/504 platoon and the 82nd's All Americans can thank Tim Gray's work for crediting the All Americans.

Maggie's War is Gray's story of young men from farms and factories answering their country's call to fight Fas-



Maggie with SGT LeRoy Richmond after crossing the Waal and seizing the Nijmegen Bridge. (Photo from Maggie's book, *All The Way to Berlin*)

cism. It's early focus sharpens in Wisconsin's fields, streets of Fond du Lac and the Ripon College campus.

Maggie's War" moved the hearts of his Fond du Lac friends and caused some misty eyes in Texas.

The movie calls the uninitiated to the Medal Of Honor for Maggie crusade and membership in the Sims Team.

### **Background: 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.

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

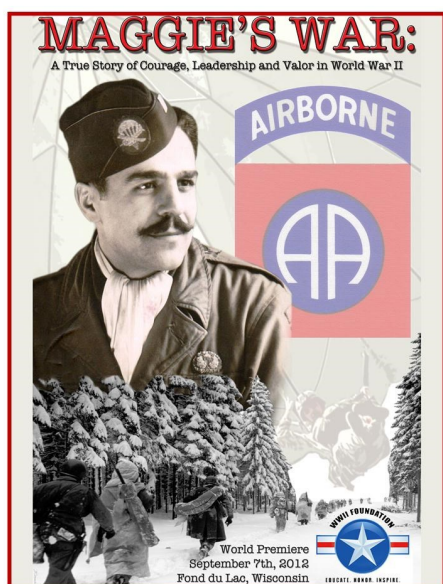
Leadership is a topic which Lt. Col. Megellas continues to lecture on all over the world.

**Today:** Megellas has now visited the troops in Iraq and Afghanistan four times, gifting over 5000 of his books to the troops.

Now 96, Maggie led the May 4, 2012 Greatest Generation Tribute in Green Bay. He continues to travel and lecture around the world. He will be a featured guest of the 82nd's Airborne's All American Week May 21—24 at Ft. Bragg before leaving for Holland.

## Maggie's War Fondy Premier: Movie loved by 600+ Citizens!

*Gov. proclaims Sept, 7,  
2012 Maggie Day in Wis-  
consin! Scocos names Maggie  
Building at King Vets Home!*



*A stirring documentary on Jim "Maggie" Megellas and his H/504 PIR platoon of the most aggressive and heroic WWII Division, the 82nd Airborne Division's All Americans. We thank Tim Gray Media, America's preeminent WWII Military Videographer for this historical masterpiece on America's First In—Last Out, world's finest Airborne Division.  
(Cover by Justin Conacher, All American)*

(Ctrl Click on the cover for program)



*Badger 82nd Trustee Bob Shrader presents Maggie with a 504 PIR, American-Made jacket. While wearing the jacket in a Texas restaurant, a family nearby his table checked out the name and unit on the jacket. When Maggie asked for the check he was told it had already been paid by the good folks who had checked him out and were already gone!*



*Col. John Scocos, 18th Airborne Corps Paratrooper and tireless Secretary of Wisconsin Veterans Affairs presented Maggie with the Governor's Proclamation making Sept. 7, 2012 James "Maggie" Megellas Day in the great state of Wisconsin! Scocos then announced that a building will be named after Maggie at the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King, Wisconsin. (Laney photos)*



*Tim Gray, CAPT (Ret) John Townsend, USN and longtime Legislator and Maggie supporter; and Mike Trepanier, Deputy Secretary, Wisconsin Veterans Affairs. CAPT Townsend was very active in getting members of the legislature to support the upgrade of Maggie's Herresbach Silver Star to the Medal Of Honor for which he was originally recommended. He continues to support the work of Col. Sims and is an important member of the Sims Team. Mike Trepanier is a 1st Cav Iraq Vet and a graduate of the University of Wisconsin Law School. Tim Gray is a Patriot's fan who calls us Cheeseheads.*



## More pics from Fond du Lac



Maggie with new jacket and 82nd Re-Enactors who follow him everywhere.



Carole Megellas with grandson Trace, martial arts Champion!



Bob Shrader with George Heib.

Bill Hannigan was sexually harassed by movie stars. As usual.



Airborne Tailgate before 2nd showing of the movie where we coached up the nationals on how to cook brats, drink beer and smoke cigars. Some very serious Airborne Aficionados here!





Capt. Townsend and Bill Neill, Ripon College.



Trace, Capt. Palmersheim, Maggie and son Stephen Megellas.



Bob Shrader and Maggie.



COL (Ret) Tom Herre, 327th PIR, 101st Airborne Vietnam and former Fondy City Manager. Tom did a great job MCing the Dinner and the Premier.



Kevin Koep, Dylan Hauer, Me, Kyle Tadd; rear Bob Shrader, Frank Hazzard and Brian Pesce, some of the world's greatest guys an biggest Maggie supporters. Proud to say I know them!



At the end of things in Fondy, Bill Hannigan still has all the movie stars!



*82nd Airborne, American Airlines send a couple of Paratroopers to Dallas!*



82nd & American Airlines sent SSG Ian McClimon and SFC Jose Molina, 504 Brigade, with the 504's colors. (Laney Photo)



Maggie schmoozes with Capt. James Palmersheim, Director of Military Programs for American Airlines. AA does a LOT for Veterans and Jim Palmersheim leads the way. (Laney photos)



WWII Re-Enactor Tank Alford with Maggie. That's a picture of Jane Russell in the background. DC-3 in deep background is the polished, commercial version of the WWII C-47, an appropriate prop for the Dallas showing of Maggie's War. (Laney photos)



Ian and Jose engage USMC's Iwo Jima Vet, Don Graves in the time-less banter between Jarheads and Paratroopers. (Laney photo)



**THANK YOU!**



BIG Wisco thanks to 82nd Airborne CSM Knowles; 2/504 MSG Carmicle; 82nd Admin Asst. SSG Butler; Capt. Jim Palmersheim and American Airlines; for sending Paratroopers SFC Molina and SSG McClimon to Dallas with the 504 Colors!





Ssg Ian McClimon, 2/504, 82nd Airborne posted the 504 Colors.

We thank the 82nd Airborne and American Airlines for sending SSG McClimon and SFC Molina to this event! Special thanks to Div. CSM Knowles; 504 MSG Carmicle and SSG Butler, 82nd Administration Assistant!.



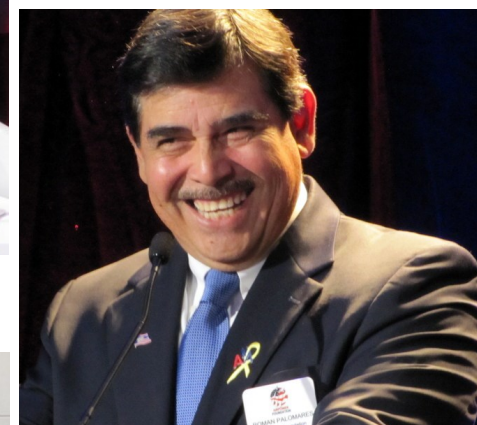
Bill Hannigan delivered the Missing Men prayer. (Laney pics)



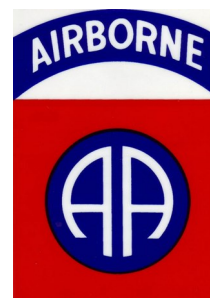
USMC's Ed Barnes, Fond du Lac, trying to talk this WWII Re-Enactor out of his Jeep. Ed has backed Maggie's upgrade for many, many years.



With his 504 PIR Regimental Colors backing him Maggie talked about war, professional killers, the Airborne Brotherhood, the commonality of all troops in all wars and combat troops becoming citizens again.



Welcome from Roman Palomares, Chairman Air Power Foundation.



After Dallas, CAPT (Ret) Dr. Bill Laney, 32nd ID Field Surgeon and SSGT (Ret) John Boetcher, 555th Arty, 24th ID Korea, introduce Maggie's War to more than 100 people in Mercedes, TX. Everyone loved the movie!



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Benefiting Local Organizations that support veterans and their families  
**IN HONOR OF ALL WHO HAVE SERVED AND SACRIFICED**

## Airborne Ranger Dave Green, New Richmond, Leads The Team Way!

(Editor's note: Dave Green is one of the most humble and helpful Troopers I have ever met. I met him at a Welcome Home Ceremony in New Richmond some years ago. The welcome was for a 101st Vietnam Vet. The tears proved it's never too late to welcome a Trooper home. Dave told me then he had a tough time when he first came home from Vietnam. He started the Welcomes. He's active in the 173rd Association. He helped every Vet he could. He went to LZ Lambeau. I watched him embrace a SF Troop the 173rd saved in Vietnam. He worked his ass off in the VFW. He got over it with a lot of help from his friends. Dave is a leader by example. He disowns credit. He gets a LOT of good things done. He is a great man! I am proud to call him friend and happy to see he is so appreciated!)

(By Jackie Grumish, New Richmond News)

VFW Post 10818 of New Richmond continues to pile up the hardware.

Just weeks after being honored as the top performing post in the state of Wisconsin, the local VFW organization picked up several national awards at the national convention in Reno, Nev.

Commander Dave Green received a letter of commendation on behalf of the local group, which was named an "All American" post for 2011-12. A total of 138 posts in the United States were named "All Americans" for 2011-12, but New Richmond was in the top 10. Green was presented a commander's red hat" signifying that New Richmond is one of the top 10 posts in the nation. Each local VFW member will soon be presented with an All American pin that they can proudly display on their uniforms.

"It's a bit overwhelming," Green said of the long list of recent honors. "We set our goals to becoming an All State post and we made All American. I'm pretty darned proud of our post."

A big part of the post's success can be attributed to the membership drive conducted over the past year by their veteran members. The post now boasts 289 members, with four more potential

applicants being considered presently.

The post started with 223 members in early 2011, with a goal of reaching 247 in 2012. The group far exceeded their initial expectations.

"There was no one person who could have done this on their own," Green said. "We worked together as a team. Many hands make a big job small."

Green said some of the credit belongs to former Post Commander Gory Berg, who set a high standard for future commanders and was named an All American commander in 1998-99.

"He pretty much set the pace," Green acknowledged. "I followed his work ethic and it's just blossomed since then."

VFW member Merlin Kosmosky attended the national convention along with Green to help celebrate the post's recent successes. The two also picked up an "Award of Excellence" for the post in honor of its recent "Suicide Prevention"



project, which was organized by VFW member Bob Aufderhar. The nationally-recognized program focused on mental health challenges for veterans who return from battle.

"Bob Aufderhar led the charge on the program," Green said.

Post 10818 isn't resting on its past success, now that they've achieved national stature, Green said. More new programs and membership efforts are planned to continue to keep the organization strong.

One thing that has definitely helped

the local VFW is its new home at the Community Commons complex. The



group meets regularly at 6 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month, but now they have a space that they can call their home on a permanent basis. Members can often be found at the VFW offices throughout any given week.

Community Education Director Cheryl Emerson said the VFW Post has become a valuable partner in the Community Commons facility in New Richmond. Not only are the members willing to help with maintenance items that come along at the Community Commons, they also support the efforts of other organizations housed in the community complex.

"I've learned a lot about the VFW since they joined us," Emerson explained. "They epitomize the meaning of community service. It's been a joy to have them here."

Green said the VFW members feel like everyone in the Community Commons is one big family.

"It gives you a warm and fuzzy feeling inside," he said. "They take care of us and we take care of them."

Emerson said that feeling of family carried over when the VFW started picking up the pile of state and national awards. "We're all very proud of them and all they've accomplished," she said.



# JUSTIN CONNAHER, 505 PIR/ 82ND AIRBORNE ALL AMERICAN PHOTOGRAPHER!



Justin with AF awards for Best Photographer and Best Media. I asked AF for details but of course, being AF they've sent me nothing yet.



Howinhell did he get this shot??



Justin practicing Airborne Audacity!



Justin's frosty field photos of my old outfit, the 501st, now attached to 25th ID in Ft. Richardson, AK. Yes. The 501st was once in the 82nd.

## PRICELESS!

Here's a report from Jess on the Connaher's Super Ranger Airborne Audacious Kid Steven. Doesn't have anything to do with the Awards but it's so great it had to be here:

The boys are talking about the 'Maggie's War' poster hanging downstairs. Logan (6) says: "Whoa! You guys got a new art. It's neat!"

Steven: "Actually, my DAD created that. It's for a movie about this really famous WWII hero. Me and my dad both know him. He was in the 82nd Airborne. We used to, like, go to events with him and Tom Laney all the time when we were in Wisconsin."

Logan: "Woow! Can I meet him?"

Steven: "Sure. They might be coming to Alaska some day. I'll introduce ya, buddy."



Justin chuting up with a few of his friends on the Pope Green Ramp.



## *Tee off for the Troops!*



Beautiful Indianhead Golf Course , Mosinee WI  
Sign In: 11:00—12:30 Saturday June 29 for free driving  
range, and putting green!



Sponsored by:

**Badger State Chapter  
82nd Airborne Division  
Association**

Contact Chairman Frank Morris:

[fmmorris65@gmail.com](mailto:fmmorris65@gmail.com)

715-693-6161

Free Driving Range and Putting Green between 11-12:30

Golf Cart!

18 Holes with Food Cart!

Beer & Beverage Cart!

\$200 Hole In One!

Raffles including 50-50 throughout the day!

Dinner!

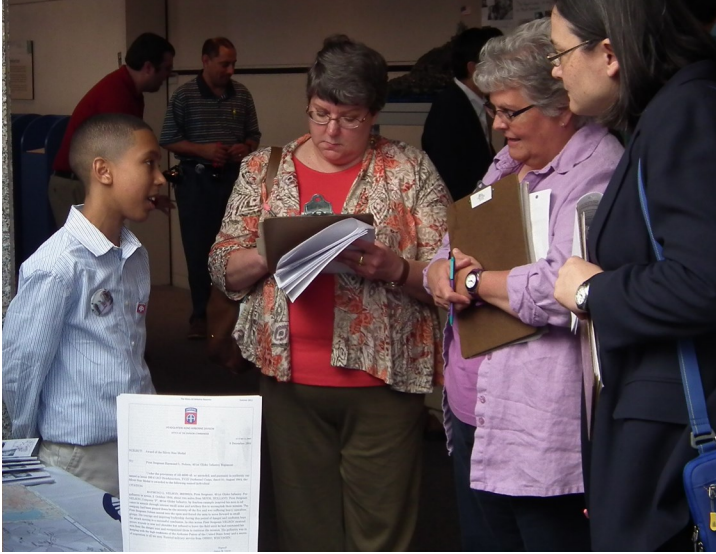
All for only \$90! Call Frank today to reserve your spot:

715-693-2013





**COMING NEXT ISSUE:**



**Nathan Castro**, 6th grader Cameron, NC won 1st Prize Military for his presentation on the 82nd at Normandy! Next month we'll let you know who he interviewed from Wisco and Minnie.

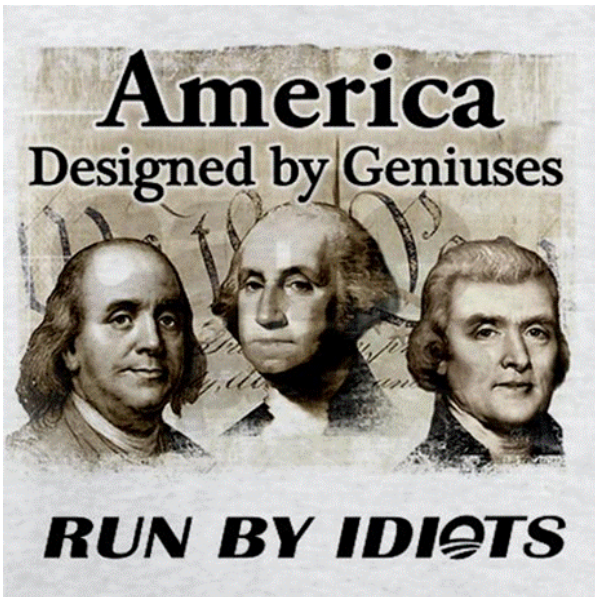


Who is this? Find out next issue!



1st SGT Ray Nelson, F/325; me; Herb Huebschen, 2/325. Ray will be at the 1st Annual Walt All Airborne Memorial in Stevens Point, June, 2. Herb will be in Leicester, England dedicating the Memorial to the 325. Read all about it next issue!

[325 WWII Memorial](#)



**BUT THAT'S NOT NEWS!**



MSG Sean Beaudette, Paratrooper, retires after 22 outstanding years of service to America. Story next month.



## 82ND BADGER CHAPTER MEETS MAY 18 IN MARSHFIELD

All Paratroopers and Glider Riders from All  
Divisions & Services Welcome  
The 82nd Airborne Division Association



504 Machine Gunner Perry Hurlburt with Les Schwarm, 326 Mortarman and active 82nd Troopers at recent meeting.



82nd Airborne All American Angels, Walt Pakulski and Les Schwarm in front of one of the WWII Glider panels on display at the Marshfield Airport. Two of eight WWII panels are devoted to the 82nd and 101st and six show the use of Wisconsin's wood and talent in WWII planes and ships. You can view this historic display before and after the BSC meeting which will be held in the Airport Conference Room.



Madison's Josh Brennan, 173rd Airborne, KIA 10/25/07 Afghanistan.

**Remembering Our Fallen  
Continuing the Airborne  
Brotherhood**



All American Lunch 12:00 PM  
Sunrise Family Restaurant  
511 N. Central Ave.  
Marshfield, WI  
715-384-7748

All American Badger Chapter Meeting 2PM  
Marshfield Airport Conference Room  
400 W. 29th St.  
715-387-2211

All American Drinks & Dinner 5PM  
VFW Post 1866 Steak Feed  
T-Bone \$15, Sirloin \$12  
215 W. Depot St.

All American Hotel  
Baymont Inn  
2107 N. Central Ave.  
715-384-5240  
Vets Rate \$70 + tax

*Lt. Verland Drake interviewed by C-47, Glider Expert Sara Witter Connor*

Lt. Verland Drake (ret.), b. 4/7/1922. Interview on October 31, 2012. Whitefish, Montana.

During the Great Depression, Verland Drake was a young boy, but he realized that "things were bad." Looking back on his family, he said, "My family was very poor. My father worked only part time. We had a big garden to make it through the winter."

Mr. Drake grew up in Loyal, Wisconsin. As a boy, he mowed lawns and split wood to earn money. During the winter, he was active in High School sports.

After graduating from High School, he attended the University of Wisconsin majoring in Chemical Engineering from 1940 - '41, 1941 -'42. He said, "It was a huge adjustment coming from such a small town. I was completely unprepared in the field of science. I am not sure it was the best choice for me because it was such a large school, but then war was declared."

Working his way through school, Verland Drake was a waiter at Terrence Hall, a men's dormitory at the University of Wisconsin. His job provided "room and board." On the morning of December 7, 1941, he was in the Dining Room and it was announced that Pearl Harbor had been bombed. He said,

*I had gone over to the dorm to wait on tables. Everyone was stunned as it was announced. There was no television. After breakfast, we gathered around the radio in the Commons to listen to the President. It was hard to believe that it had happened...It was a case of realizing the Draft would be after us.*

There was Navy personnel on Campus and life continued. The Navy eventually took over Terrence Hall. Mr. Drake did not notice an "exodus of boys from school." He said,

*There was a sense of Patriotism in signing up. Fred Lakosky and I signed up in June. I went back to the Marshfield area to wait for my Draft letter....We had thought originally, maybe of going to Pearl harbor and help with the reconstruction...but gave that up and decided to enlist in the Air Force...because we didn't want to be in Infantry and as far as the Navy, neither one of us could swim very well.*

The Recruiting Officers came to the University of Wisconsin from Chicago and then they would leave.

Waiting for his Draft Letter, Mr. Drake "took a part time job working on the Railroad for a couple of months. I was working on the engines with the boilers...I was very happy to

be accepted by the Air Force!"

In January of 1943, Fred Lakosky got his Draft Letter. Verland Drake received his letter in February, 1943, to report to the Palmer House in Chicago. After an overnight in Chicago, he was sent to Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas. He said, "It was not really 'Boot Camp,' but we took tests. Lakosky went into Pilot Training and I went into Navigator Training." Boot Camp came after San Antonio went Mr. Drake was sent to Ellington Field in Houston for six weeks.

After Boot Camp, Mr. Drake was sent to "Hondo, Texas, for navigation, aviation, and the stars and the whole works." He had done so well during training that he became an



*Instructor for six months. By the end of World War II, Hondo graduated a total of 14,158 graduates.*

The Navigation Training was: *about 8 weeks, in Squadrons of about 60 students. Some went to B-17s and B-24s. They had one class per day with 8 Instructors in a group. The typical day was dead reckoning, instruments, and celestial navigation. There was some flight training and on those days, there were no classes...*

Verland Drake said that there was so much free time, "It was quite a waste or personnel, we only worked a couple of hours per day."

After his assignment at Hondo, Texas, as an Instructor, Mr. Drake was re-assigned to Austin, Texas. He said, "I sat around there for

*three month before I was again re-assigned. That was when I met Ruth and I got married." As a newly married man, he would move again, this time to Indianapolis.*

In November, 1944, Verland Drake was sent to Indianapolis for "Special Training in dropping Paratroopers." In 1944, he was using Radar for the first time...we used a Loran so we could pinpoint where we were supposed to drop the Paratrooper." With the Special Training, Mr. Drake was sent to Bakersfield, California. "We were only in Bakersfield for three days and then we were gone. "The "day before Christmas, we were sent to Nadzab, New Guinea." His wife, Ruth, was from Wisconsin and went home to wait for his return.

The United States was beginning to return to some of islands that they had fought over before. Verland Drake said, "I spent 2-3 weeks flying things - getting used to flying over water. We flew to Sydney, Australia." He flew from New Guinea to Adelaide to re-fuel and on to Sydney. Mr. Drake would fly many missions over water.

In one combat mission, Mr. Drake said:

*As we were coming into Biak around 7-8PM, it was dark. The Tower informed us that we had a Zero on our tail. They could not understand why we did not get shot down.*

Verland Drake appreciated the flying characteristics of the C-47. He said it was a "great airplane." Flying the C-47 as a Navigator, Mr. Drake said:

*It wasn't bad navigating...It was when we realized the type of flying, not celestial and strictly 'seat-of-the-pants.' I became really adept at wind direction, wind speed, and watching the waves....I never had to dump it, Thank Goodness!*

Remember? That was why Mr. Drake had chosen the Air Force, because the Navy had been eliminated as a choice because of his swimming capabilities.

As a member of the 375<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Group, Verland Drake navigated mostly C-47s and some C-46s. The C-46s were "bigger and could carry jeeps." He said,

*We would get an order to pick up materiel and did a few flights carrying patients to the hospital and back to the U.S. fore treatment. Anything that needed to be hauled, we did it....Most of the materiel was loose. We carried lumber for Big Officers - Generals or Colonels for where they lived - we certainly did not see any of that where we lived. They would just load the plane....Very little was crated; I do not remember boxes or anything. We carried parts for jeep trailers, too.*



After spending three weeks in New Guinea, Mr. Drake was assigned to the 375<sup>th</sup> and spent a short time in Biak and Moratia, a small island. He would fly the islands to New Guinea.

After the Philippines, the United States had taken over Clark Field. Mr. Drake flew out of Clark Field. The War in Europe ended on VE-Day, August, 1945. Mr. Drake said, "Everyone was very excited and figured...we were gaining on the Japanese...it would help the troops out."

In reflecting about his Special Training dropping Paratroopers, Mr. Drake said, "Ironic as it was, we had one day of training dropping Paratroopers. Too, here it was to go through training in the Loran and I never saw it again in the Pacific." *The United States had invaded Okinawa.*

After Okinawa, Mr. Drake flew supplies from the Philippines to Okinawa. He said the "supplies were mostly airplane parts and utilities." *Ferrying around the islands would become more exciting.*

Mr. Drake said about flying in the mountains.

*We were flying barrels of gasoline from Lugyan Gulf that were shipped to Clark Field. We flew across the mountains. They did not seem that high, less than 8,000 feet. We were flying gasoline for the B-24s. There were no pipelines. We were loading 15-20 barrels that held 55 gallons of gasoline.*

*We only flew in good weather and three*

*flights per day. There was no resistance.*

Mr. Drake continued:

*The Japanese would come into the camps at night and steal stuff...they were starving to death and needed food.*

Resistance did come from Japanese hiding in the Mountains.

*"We had one day of training to drop paratroopers."*

The biggest problem for the U.S. troops were the Mosquitos and the Rats.. Mr. Drake said:

*We lived in tents in the Philippines'. We had cots covered with Mosquito netting and I woke up one morning with a big hole in the netting. The rats were hungry, too.*

Conditions were not ideal.

After flying gasoline, Verland Drake moved to Okinawa to fly supplies and injured personnel. He said, *It was not long before the war ended. We heard about the Surrender on the Camp Radio. It was a very Happy Day in our Life." The war was over.*

Mr. Drake had also heard about the Atomic Bomb after it happened. He said,

*Within a few days, we were flying jeeps and other office equipment into Japan.*

*We landed in Tachakawa, just outside of Tokyo.*

*We would go back and forth from Okinawa, but not for long. After Japan signed the Surrender, we were moving into Japan. The rest of my service was in Japan from August, 1945 until February, 1946.*

*We got into Tokyo, they accepted us, there was no animosity. They were as 'nice as they could be.' The war dam-*

age was extensive. In a first hand account, Mr. Drake said,

*There was nothing left except the Imperial Palace and the Imperial Hotel, which we ate at. Everything else was burned out.... We were happy to have the darned thing over with.*

Verland Drake was assigned to fly Japanese Officials from one island to another so that they could comply with the peaceful transition. In response to a question about the A-Bomb and the fallout, Mr. Drake said,

*In flying the Japanese Officials, we didn't land at Hiroshima, but we saw the ruins and landed in Nagasaki... we were told not to go to the area where the bomb was dropped.*

Mr. Drake did fly officials to other cities.

Verland Drake spent 7 months in Japan. His housing was a former Veterinarian Clinic and "the showers were horse stalls. There was no hot water. It was cold in the winter."

One lighter experience, Mr. Drake said:

*One time, and my first exposure to golf, I went with a friend to play at a Japanese golf course. There were still bomb holes. Women were Caddies. We played with three clubs. One hole, the green was over a hill. My friend hit the Danish Ambassador in the back of the head with a golf ball!*

While Verland Drake was in the Air Force, his brother was a paratrooper. Mr. Drake's overall impression of the military was: *Headquarters didn't care about us...we were like experimental animals...there is no doubt that the Marines and the Infantry took the brunt... at least in the Air Force, if you were going to die, you were going to die in an airplane.*

It was a frank assessment of his experience. Of his flying experience, Mr. Drake continued:

*The Personnel changed so often, I didn't often fly with the same flight crew. In addition, I never knew which airplane we were flying either. There was no continuity.*

Verland Drake was shipped from Okinawa to Tacoma, Washington. He said, "It was like a dream to get home...I never met another person from Wisconsin during the war....I met my wife in Fort Wayne, Indiana and then went to Altoona, Wisconsin. When we came back to Wisconsin, we were on our own."

Mr. Drake's war experience was "we knew we were it in for the duration." He had begun his career as an Aviation Cadet or the equivalent of a Private, but graduated to a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant after Navigation School. He became a 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant in Japan in the summer of 1945.

## The Battling Boys of Benghazi

*We're the Battling Boys of Benghazi,  
no fame, no glory, no paparazzi.  
Just a fiery death in a blazing hell,  
defending the country we loved so well.*

*It wasn't our job, but we answered the call,  
fought to the consulate, and scaled the wall.  
We pulled twenty countrymen from the jaws of fate,  
led them to safety, and stood at the gate.*

*Just the two of us, and foes by the score,  
but we stood fast to bar the door.*

*Three calls for reinforcement, but all were denied,  
so we fought and we fought, and we fought till we died.*

*We gave our all for our Uncle Sam,  
but Barack Obama didn't give a damn.  
Just two dead SEALs, who carried the load,  
no thanks to us -- we were just "bumps in the road."*

# WWII WEEKEND

## ARMED FORCES DAY

# MAY 21 & 22, 2011

DEMOS FROM 10AM TO 3PM SATURDAY & SUNDAY

HANGER DANCE WITH A FREE DANCE LESSON 7PM SATURDAY NIGHT

AT

## DAKOTA CITY HERITAGE VILLAGE

LOCATED NEXT TO THE DAKOTA COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS  
4008 220TH STREET W., FARMINGTON, MN



WWII Living History, Soldier Camps,

Weapons Demonstrations,

WWII & Modern Military Vehicles,

War Time Tractors, European Theater Battle,

Authentic Military Displays,

Army National Guard Rock Climbing Wall,

Authors, Veterans & Vendors,

Food & Drinks Available

## Fun for the Whole Family!

Ages 5 & Under Free, 6-12 \$3.00, 13 & Above \$5.00, Cars \$10.00

All Proceeds go to Dakota City <http://www.dakotacity.org/>

Check out the Event Website

<http://www.12thssmn.com/dakotacityww2>



## Jumping Ernie Lamson, pride of the 508th, headlines Dakota City!



*Ctrl—Click on pic of Ernie Lamson, St. Paul, jumping in at Baldwin Airborne Days last year. The link will take you to the Dakota City WWII Re-Enactment site. Ernie is the ultimate jumper and served in the WWII 508th, 82nd Airborne Division Paratroopers. He's also a buddy of Norb Studelska's, Wisconsin's 2012 recipient of the Veterans Lifetime Service Award. Norb is a former President of the 508th Association and lives in Grafton WI. Dakota City WWII is really worth seeing. You can meet Ernie and Bill Hannigan and some of the best Airborne ReEnactors and military historians in America!*



### **DAKOTA CITY WWII RE-ENACTMENT 2013 ROSEMOUNT. MN MAY 17, 18, 19, 2013**

Above left, Ernie Lamson, 508th introduces Bill Hannigan, 504 to 82nd ReEnactor Brian Pesce; R, H/504 ReEnactors with Ernie & Bill and L, Ben Lund 82nd/101st ReEnactor, great guy who got me into all this Airborne history! These troopers put on quite a show. "Close combat. This what it's like ....without all the blood," said Bill Hannigan who knows everything about close combat. Bonus: This year they're showing Maggie's War! I highly recommend this weekend! (Laney pics)



*Why is this picture here?*



*Because I love this picture! It says everything about coming home! This is the 325's Thomas and Brenda Quintana. Thomas had just come back from Afghanistan. This terrific photo was posted on Facebook by the 325's PR people. 82nd Troopers gave me the names. God bless the Quintana's and the 82nd Airborne!*



Scene from the movie "Maggie's War", Bernard Cheney, Bill Hannigan, Maggie at Margraten Cemetery where many of their friends are buried. Thank you Catherine

### Are you on the Sim's Team?

[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 93, 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. The newly-formed Sims Team will continue to support Col. Sim's work. New Congressional Bills will be submitted soon 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're already are on the Sims Team! ALL THE WAY!

See Page 19 and email Sims Coordinator Jim Neumann!



CSM Norb Strasser and the Plover [VFW Post 10262](#) Honor Guard will lead the way June 2, 11:00 AM for the [Korean War Memorial](#) in Plover, WI. This outstanding Honor Guard will also present the Colors at the Stevens Point Airborne Bridge Memorial at 2PM June 2. See page 9.





MEDAL OF HONOR

(You must hit ctrl click to use these links)



Maggie Pritzker  
Military Library

[INTERVIEW](#)

(ctrl-click)





## Jim Neumann builds The Sims Team into a national Maggie crusade

Formed at the Fondy Maggie's War premier, The Sim's Team will carry on the MOH for Maggie work of Col. Edward Sims led by one hell of a professional organizer in Jim Neumann.

Jim pulled together a smashing, emotional showing of "Maggie's War" last Fall, covering all the bases to make sure the movie opening was a home run.

And it was. More than 600 people watched the movie in Fondy, giving it standing Os at each showing. But, after all that work Jim and wife Rosie missed the actual premier on Sept. 7 because of a long-scheduled, well-earned vacation. Same thing happened in Dallas and Jim and Rosie were there this time, meeting new friends and encouraging all to get on the Sims Team.

1957 Milwaukee Braves fan, Jim Neumann is one of those rare, remaining, hard-working, honest, community-serving small businessmen. And now, Neumann's ballsy Airborne spirit and business acumen, drives a national crusade for Maggie's MOH. (Jim's really a Leg but he has that Airborne audacity & drive soul. We need to make him an Honorary Paratrooper!)

"I read Maggie's book. Then I wondered why this upgrade has not happened," Neumann says. "I then met Maggie and began connecting and talking with his supporters from Wisconsin to Texas to Rhode Island and New Jersey. I believe the Sims Team can organize and get this upgrade done," says Neumann. Jim has convinced Congressmen and Senators to re-submit bills to upgrade Maggie's Herresbach Silver Star to the MOH. At his urging, 69 Wisconsin legislators have signed a letter to president Obama and Congress calling for the upgrade.

The MedalforMaggie site he is building should be up in a few weeks. "The site will have a petition. I checked the White House site and their largest petition has 300,000 signatures. I think we can get more than a million for Maggie. That would be hard for the White House to ignore I think." No kidding!

Neumann then turned to building the Sims Team. The difference between Neutron Bomb energy and Jim Neumann's is Jim's gets expended in inspiration

Jim is in for the drive duration to finally persuade Congress that Maggie's

Herresbach heroism is more than enough for the Medal Of Honor.

We formed "The Sims Team" at the Sept. Maggie's War showing to carry on the work of Col. Ed Sims to convince the government that the Silver Star Maggie was awarded for Herresbach should be upgraded to the MOH. Sims was H/504 XO in 1945 and recommended Maggie then for the MOH. Sims is now 93 and in ill health and has approved the formation of The Sims

Team and provided us records of his 15-year fight to get the upgrade.

The requirement for Sims Team membership is just one:

That you believe Maggie earned the MOH at Herresbach.

Neumann has volunteered to coordinate the Sims Team MOH drive and is doing one hell of an All American job on it. He has jumped into the fight setting up email lists, a data base, a web page, connecting with Col. Sims, state legislators, Congressmen and Senators, news reporters and keeping us all abreast of every-



Sims Teamers Rosie Neumann, Chip Hannigan, Jim Neumann, beneath the wings of a DC-3 (WWII's C-47) at the Dallas Premier of Maggie's War. (Laney photo)

thing he and Sims supporters are doing.

Jim Neumann is some kind of organizer and just the kind of dedicated guy we need to head up and pursue Col. Sims's work.

"I read Maggie's book and was astounded at what he did throughout the

### JOIN THE SIMS TEAM!

Please send an email with your zip code to Jim Neumann:  
jimneumann@rbroyal.com

### Brian Pesce on as MedalforMaggie website consultant

Nationally recognized Airborne Historian/ReEnactor, Brian Pesce, Sioux Fall Falls, SD, has signed on as a consultant to the medalformaggie website now being constructed by Sims Team Coordinator Jim Neumann.

"I would be honored to help out in anyway that I can. Let me know what I can do and if I can, I will do it," Brian replied to Sims Team Coordinator Jim Neumann's request for his help with emails to the site.

"We're delighted to have an Airborne expert like Brian on board", says Neumann. "We expect Brian will answer all the tough historical questions on the WWII 82nd, and 504PIR."

Sims Team Sec. Tom Laney, 501st/82nd Vet is also delighted. "I'm happy Brian agreed to help us out. First time I saw him he extended immense respect for WWII 504 Squad Leader Bill Hannigan. That got me right there. We are lucky, lucky to have this Airborne history pro and advisor on The Team. Brian's forgotten more 82nd history than I ever knew. Plus, he's one of the best men I know. Brian looks more like my 1st SSGT than my 1st SSGt and Brian even shares his cigars!"



Brian & Maggie

# MEDAL OF HONOR POLITICS

## MARK V PANTHER TANK

*(Note: The DOA claims it's awards system is free from politics and favoritism. In fact, poor Pentagon politics from MacArthur to Pat Tillman, have influenced all sorts of squirrely awards. Like the ones below reported by Thomas Ricks. No wonder the Pentagon says they don't compare actions and awards!)*

“Supporting Larabee’s interpretation (of FDR’s useful idiot view of MacArthur) is the fact that after MacArthur was ordered to leave the Philippines, Marshall pushed to give him the Medal of Honor, in part to obscure the fact that the general, willingly or not, had left behind his besieged troops. The documentation for the award itself was composed by Marshall and polished by Eisenhower—who, even as he edited, argued against bestowing the medal. The awarding of the nation’s highest honor to MacArthur may have been one of Marshall’s most calculated acts, and it came close to sheer cynicism. ‘I wanted to do anything I could to prevent them from saying anything about his leaving Corregidor with his troops all out there in this perilous position’, he



***The Mark V Panther was the main WWII German battle tank. It was feared by most, for the best of survival reasons. One was killed on foot, by one gallant, lightly-armed Paratrooper who risked his life to save his men. The DOA tells Col. Sims this was no big deal. Such a small deal in fact, as to warrant no mention in a Silver Star citation. Would a Pentagon desk jockey rush one of these things armed only with a Thompson & two grenades?***



**Hole in the ground**

revealed years later. ‘I thought a Medal of Honor would be helpful....I drafted the citation.’”

“MacArthur himself understood well the political uses of medals, In June 1942 giving the

Silver Star to Lyndon Johnson, then a visiting Congressman, for riding in a malfunctioning aircraft that had come under Japanese attack. ‘No other crew member, not even the pilot who landed the crippled plane, received a decoration,’ noted historian and Army officer H. R. McMaster.”

“But MacArthur’s Medal of Honor stuck in the craw of some others. Lt. Gen. Robert Eichelberger remembered being told by Eisenhower, after the war, that his friend Ike had refused a Medal of Honor for the North Africa campaign, ‘because he knew of a man who had received one for sitting in a hole in the ground – meaning MacArthur.’ MacArthur’s receipt of the medal became especially galling because during the war he had thwarted efforts to bestow the Medal of Honor on Eichelberger and another subordinate, Maj. Gen. Jonathan Wainwright, who, after the surrender of U. S. Forces in the Philippines, had become the highest-ranking American prisoner of the war.” *From: The Generals* by Thomas E. Ricks (Pages 99-100)



# Wisco Texas Connection, Harlingen's Iwo Jima Memorial Museum



Vietnam Vet Gary Pool, Tabor IA, with wife Donna and Iwo Jima Museum Volunteer Rick Gartley. Proceeds from Gary's book on 'Nam, "Xuc May" (Never Happen) go to Wounded Warrior. Great people!  
[Check out Gary's site here.](#)  
(ctrl click)



*Ms. Gloria Boling, Director of the Iwo Jima Museum and Gift Shop and Ms. Gracie Galarza, Assistant Director, are at the heart of the Semper Fi spirit memorialized in Harlingen, TX. The Marines lost more than 6000 KIA on Iwo Jima. The story is all here. The Parade Grounds of the Marine Military Academy just outside the Muesum's door are hallowed by the placement of the original Iwo Jima Monument. It is a mystical place quieted by the famous and imposing flag-raising sculpture, the stone markers, snapped a bit by the wind on the giant flag. There's a lot to learn here. How many people know the Iwo Jima casualty cost? Maybe you didn't know that three of the flag-raisers were Paratroopers. Gloria and Gracie know it all and will be happy to answer your questions when you visit this place. My brother married Marcia DeLong from Birchwood. Her Dad, Gunny Earl DeLong got the Silver Star on Tarawa and was almost left for dead on Iwo. Earl was saved by a miracle and just died a few years ago. I liked Earl a bunch and he introduced me to this place 12 years ago. So I when in Texas, I volunteer here once a week as a good way to remember him. Gloria and Gracie teach me a lot. They sell 82nd stuff here too! The Gift Shop and Bookstore is better than the 82nd's at Bragg. And when I told Gloria about Maggie's book she went to her desktop and ordered it! Been working on the 82nd Museum to sell Maggie's and LoFaro's books for some time now. No luck. I think I'll suggest at the 82nd Convention this year that our 82nd historians come here and listen to Gloria and Gracie on how to run a Museum and historical bookstore. Maybe get Nathan Castro on them too. Great ladies! Semper Fi ALL THE WAY!*



When you edit a big-time news-letter like Wisco, favoritism isn't all bad. My granddaughter Maeve Funk with friend Alana, St. Paul, getting some Iwo Jima history in Harlingen.

## THE SIMS TEAM WANTS YOU!

Watch for the Sims Team website, medalformaggie, coming soon.

Very soon.





# Walt Pakulski All Airborne Memorial



82nd buries 1st Sgt. Mark Nagan, WWII 325 GIR.



Sgt. Josh Brennan KIA



R.I.P. Ranger

Airborne Displays open at Noon!

Program 2PM June 2, 2013

Airborne Forces Bridge

Downtown Stevens Point, WI

(Follows 11:00Am Korean Memorial in Plover, all invited!)

4PM After Action Cheer & Food

VFW Post 10262 Plover



**MC: MSG John "Trapper" Schultz**

5th Special Forces, Organizer 1st Annual Walt Pakulski All Airborne Memorial, 7th District VFW Commander Invocation & Colors Presented

Greetings:

**Jerry Moore, President,**  
Stevens Point Common Council

**Col. John Scocos**

18th Airborne Corps Paratrooper,  
Sec. Wisconsin Veterans Affairs

Introduction of Combat Vets &  
The All Airborne WWII Honor Guard

Re-Enactors

Speakers:

**Officer Mike Brennan, Madison**

Father of Sgt. Josh Brennan,  
173rd Airborne, KIA in Afghanistan

**Jill Stephenson, Rosemount, MN**

Gold Star Mother of Ranger CPL Ben  
Kopp, KIA in Afghanistan

**CSM Jim Yenchesky**

Vice Chair, Badger Chapter  
82nd Airborne Association

**Jim Romlein**

President Old Abe Chapter  
101st Airborne Association.



Remembering Our Heroes  
Living the Airborne Brotherhood  
More info: [tlaney1776@gmail.com](mailto:tlaney1776@gmail.com)  
715-704-0409



# SEND JUDY TO BELGIUM 82ND TOUR 2014

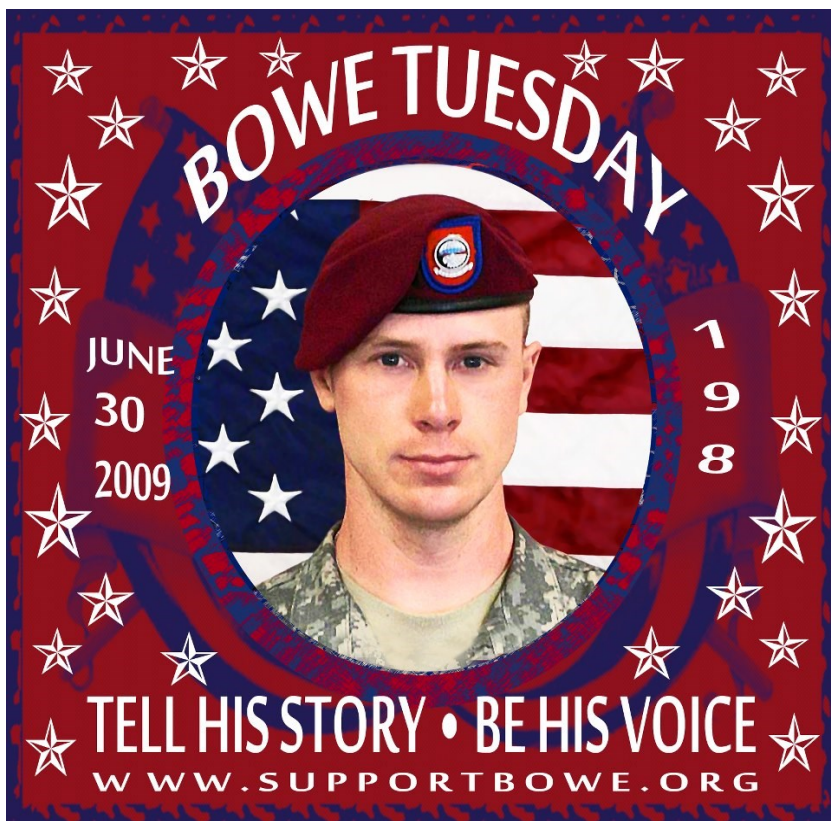
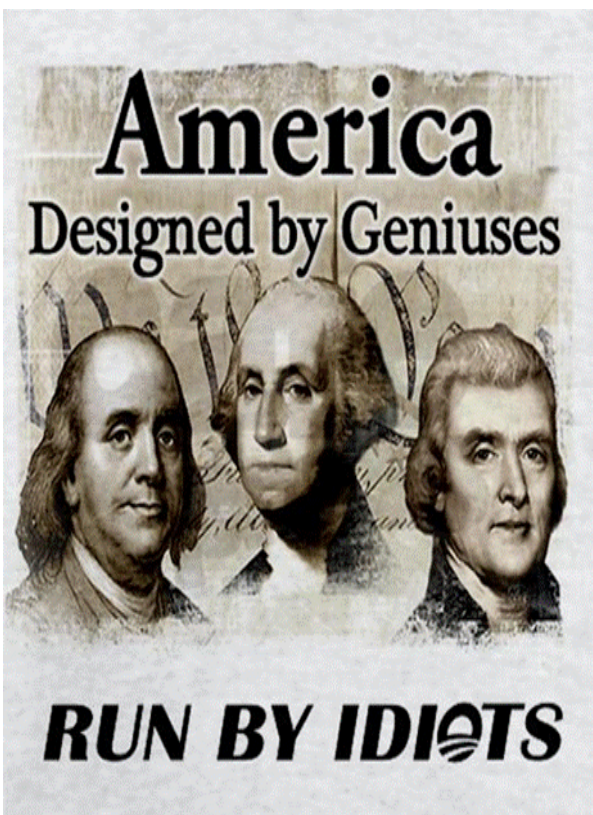


Glenn Ward, 508th PIR, 82nd in Ireland with some of his platoon mates. Glenn was from Rhinelander. He was seriously wounded at Normandy, missed Market/Garden then went AWOL from the hospital to catch up with his friends in The Bulge. Glenn was killed in action in Belgium when Judy was three years old. Judy has spent much of her adult life supporting and honoring our troops. She is an Honorary Member of the Badger Chapter, 82nd Airborne Association. She has



done a lot for all of us and now we're going to do something for her. We will be working with the Rhinelander VFW to raise donations for Judy's airfare so she can visit Belgium and the place where her dad died. We'll have more info at the June 2 Memorial in Stevens Point and in the next Wisco.

Vietnam was the most costly war the U.S. Marine Corps has ever fought: five times as many dead as World War I, three times as many dead as in Korea, and more total killed and wounded than in all of World War II.—James Webb





## VETERANS WAR MEMORIAL OF TEXAS

Some dreams take longer than others, but not for the Veterans and Community of the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas. They are placing the finishing touches to the Veterans War Memorial of Texas, McAllen, Texas. This 5 acre Memorial is being built adjacent to McAllen's new 53 million dollar convention center.

Designed as an Educational and Historical Memorial, it honors and remembers the 1.5 million American military men and women killed in all the wars and conflicts of the United States.

A beautiful 105' foot high black granite landmark the "American Spire of Honor" has just been completed and is located in the center of the War Memorial Complex. It reflects, for all time, the spirit, courage and sacrifices of America's honored dead.

Surrounding this majestic Spire are over three hundred 7' foot tall black granite panels, pathways, trees, shrubberies, statues, flag poles, pedestals, plaques and other historical objects in the Memorial.

For the WWII buffs there are four – eight foot high bronze statues: Wac, Wave, Marine and Coast Guard women. Their contributions to war are etched on adjacent granite panels. Information and photographs of the Red Cross, pilots and Rosie the Riveter women are also etched on the walls. One other award winning statue, the "Warrior", depicts a soldier throwing a hand grenade and destroying an enemy machine gun, thus saving the lives of his remaining squad members. He is shown falling to the ground mortally wounded.

One of the highlights of the Vietnam War site is the engraved names of 2,100 of the 3,420 Texans, killed in Vietnam. The remaining names will be added as donations are received for this project. Other etched panels within the Vietnam site reflect histori-

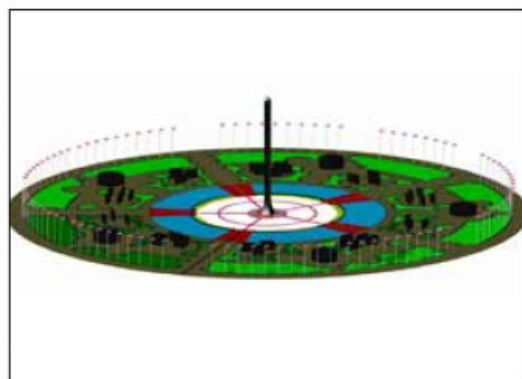
cal moments of that war.

In the Korean War site, nine bronze relief plaques are attached to nine granite panels depicting the Korean War. The weapons used and the actions of the soldiers are depicted on the plaques. Information concerning the Korean War is etched on the panels with the plaques. Stepping out from one of the bronze plaques is a soldier, in the attack. These plaques and panels are a photographer's bonanza and is a "must see" for all visitors.

In the "All Wars" site there are a mixture of US wars and conflicts. Twenty four engraved granite panels provide a colorful history of words and pictures and the growth of the United States of America. Next to this, in a secluded area, 15 granite panels have been engraved with the photos and citations of 35 Rio Grande soldiers killed in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. The sacrifices of these soldiers will be remembered, for all time, by a grateful nation. Throughout the pathways of the complex, there are many other special historical sites of information designed for American children, our nations future leaders.

Today, the American people have only to look at the many nations around the world involved in fighting and dying to regain lost freedoms. Liberty once lost is difficult to ever regain. The Veterans War Memorial of Texas is designed for America's future leaders, our children.

The public is encouraged to visit this beautiful and remarkable Memorial and become one of its guardians, for all of time. For further information please contact Col. Frank S. Plummer, USA, (ret.), 8609 N. Ware Rd., McAllen, TX 78504. Email: [plummerf@att.net](mailto:plummerf@att.net) Telephone: 956-631-2511 or web site: [www.mcallen.net/veterans](http://www.mcallen.net/veterans)





## McAllen War Memorial Must See for Wisconsin Winter Texans

I figured Col. Frank Plummer to be a fairly young guy (I'm 71) from the way he sounded on the phone. And sure enough, when he showed up—after his morning workout— at the Texas Veterans War Memorial, he looked to be in his 70s. But he claims to be 93! He's pretty well preserved after serving in WWII, Korea and Vietnam and he brings high energy and devotion to the Memorial.

Frank took the time to show me around the Memorial's 5 acres. It is something that you'd expect to see in Washington, DC. A teacher could bring her class here and the kids would have the appreciation for the way soldiers fight for their friends.

173rd's Al Rascon is here! I met Al at a MOH gathering at Lambeau Field and witnessed a heartwarming reunion between Al and Special Forces vet Richard Eiberger, Green Bay who had thought Al died in Vietnam!



Col. Frank Plummer, still looking like a Sky Soldier at 93, was in the Pacific in WWII, Korea in 1952 and Vietnam with the 173rd ARCT which he helped train and fight. Now his labor of love is the outstanding Texas War Memorial which YOU need to visit! One thing the memorial lacks is a stand-alone panel on the 82nd Airborne Division. I know The Division is busy trying to fund and build it's own projects but somewhere along the line, it would be great if the 82nd Association would organize a Convention here. Presently there is no longer an 82nd Chapter in McAllen. But we can fix that.!



Patrick Chuippis, Faribault, MN, whose great uncle, LTC "Silent Steve" Chuippis commanded the 502 PIR, 101st Airborne in WWII, visited the Memorial in February and thought it "amazing". Bronze details, like the 187 ARCT jumping in Korea, are exquisite! (Laney photos)





Senator Jack Reed  
728 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

February 13, 2013



*Maggie & Sims  
The Bulge*

Dear Senator Reed,

I am writing to ask your help in correcting a longstanding injustice to one of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne's and America's greatest heroes.

During WWII, then 1st Lt. James "Maggie" Megellas, now LTC (Ret.) Megellas, was recommended by then 1st Lt. Edward Sims, now Col. (Ret.) then Executive Officer of H/504 Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, for the Medal of Honor for his extraordinary, "above and beyond" heroism at Herresbach, Belgium on January 28, 1945 in the Battle of The Bulge.

In 1999, Sims discovered that his Medal of Honor recommendation had been reduced to the Silver Star. The Army failed to honor 1<sup>st</sup> Megellas for single-handedly - and at the risk of his own life - attacking and killing a tank that was firing on his platoon. 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Megellas, reacting immediately with the appearance of the Mark V and exposing himself to heavy enemy small arms and machine gun fire, raced to the tank armed only with his Thompson and two grenades. He disabled the tank with a Gammon grenade, then climbed on top of the tank to drop a fragmentation grenade into the turret. Not a single man in Maggie's platoon was wounded or killed. His outstanding leadership and courage saved every one of his men that day.

In his appeals to the Army to upgrade the Silver Star to the Medal of Honor, Col. Sims has provided substantive new information, including eyewitness statements from the real experts, the H/504 men who fought with and for Maggie that day.

The Army then compounded its 1945 mistake by refusing to reasonably weigh new evidence provided by Col. Sims in 1999. The Army has been unreasonable and unjust in its arguments against Col. Sims' subsequent appeals to Presidents which get simply kicked back to the Army and there dismissed by the Army's faulty initial dismissal. (Sim's appeal to President Obama enclosed.)

Col. Sims, earned a Silver Star for his Waal Crossing leadership. He earned another with the 7<sup>th</sup> ID for leading his Airborne re-trained company in attacking and holding a Korean hill. He is an expert on combat and combat decorations. He knows the difference between the Silver Star and the Medal of Honor!

Please consider the total action of January 28, 1945:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Megellas led his platoon through miles of knee-deep snow to a place near Herresbach. Tired and hungry, they were making evening chow when 504 PIR C.O. Reuben Tucker ordered: "Greek, (Maggie) take those two 'cans' (tank destroyers) and get into that town."
- 1st Lt. Megellas, encountering a numerically superior (by at least 10:1) battalion-sized enemy force, immediately led his platoon, with weapons ablaze, into their midst. "We had them surrounded from the inside", Maggie says. His platoon killed at least 100 enemy and captured another 180 with 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Megellas personally killing 26 of the enemy. (Col. Sims believes the numbers to be much higher, such as 250 killed and 250 captured.)
- When a Mark V tank appeared and began firing on his men, Maggie's tank destroyers were placed elsewhere. 1st Lt. Megellas immediately, and at the risk of his own life, charged the tank. Exposed to deadly enemy small arms and machine gun fire, and at the risk of his own life, Maggie raced to the tank armed only with his Thompson and two grenades. He disabled the tank with a gammon grenade and then climbed onto the tank dropping a fragmentation grenade into the turret hatch, destroying the tank and killing its crew.
- Having neutralized the infantry and armored threat, 1st Lt. Megellas re-formed his platoon and led them into Herresbach, killing another six of the enemy himself as they cleared the town and captured additional prisoners.
- 1st Lt. Megellas then positioned his men to defend against a counter-attack and repelled that attack, holding Herresbach for the Division's Jump Off point to attack the Siegfried Line.
- 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Megellas' leadership, gallantry, and devotion to his men resulted in a major victory in which not a single one of his men were killed or wounded that day. Herresbach became the 82<sup>nd</sup>'s jump-off point to attack the Siegfried Line.

The major point of contention Col. Sims raises with the Army, is the Army's refusal to appreciate how the tank action, when added to the total action, clearly merits the Medal of Honor. The Army failed to even mention the *Panther* tank destruction - even though that action saved every one of Maggie's men - in the Silver Star citation. Initially the Army discredited eyewitness proof of the tank knockout provided by Col. Sims. The Army later concedes the tank action as fact to Col. Sims but tells him he has not proven that the tank action was not reviewed in the 1945 awards recommendation process! LTC (Ret.) Gerard Devlin, who like-



ly knows more about MG. James Gavin than anyone alive, tells me Gen. Gavin would demand such heroism as Maggie displayed at Herresbach be cited. But the Army continues to say, even considering the tank action as part of the total action, the appropriate award is the Silver Star. The Army continues to stonewall Col. Sims, refusing to reason their position with him.

Since Col. Sims has exhausted his remedies to overcome the Army's stonewalling, it is necessary for Congress to see its duty to right this wrong. We ask that you help initiate and pass Bills in the House and Senate to upgrade this Silver Star to the Medal of Honor, Sir.

Col. Sims did not rest with the Army's dismissal of his upgrade appeals. He hopes the 504PIR and 82<sup>nd</sup> will re-issue his recommendation. We have formed the Sims Team to assist him and carry on his work. Col. Sims has carefully documented the Herresbach action. He has refuted all of the Army's arguments against this upgrade. We can provide you that documentation.

Sims included this closing statement in a 2007 letter to Rep. Tom Petri: "One observation each reviewer should read and keep in mind and think about: *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of World Tanks and Fighting Vehicles* by C.F. Foss states the U.S. Army reckoned that it took 5 (five) U.S. Sherman Tanks to knock out one Mark V Panther tank. I never realized that Megellas was equivalent to 5 U.S. Sherman Tanks!"

The Medal of Honor definition, longstanding Army precedent and recent Medal of Honor awards and upgrades, say 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Megellas' actions at Herresbach warrant the Medal of Honor. Justice and Army process demand that Megellas' action be properly recognized and decorated. It is important to Col. Sims, LTC Megellas, his platoon, the 504 PIR and the famed (and highly under-decorated) 82nd Airborne Division's *All Americans*.

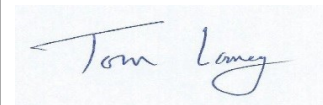
Representative Tom Petri and Senator John Cornyn introduced bills in past years to upgrade Megellas' Herresbach Silver Star to the Medal of Honor. Those bills went nowhere for lack of a crusade. This time around, we are organizing a campaign. We hope you will take the point in recruiting supporters in Congress for these bills. We have been told that private bills are rare and challenging. Perceptions of favoritism, preferential treatment, and prejudicial discrimination can damage its chances. We have been cautioned that Sims' efforts could be interpreted as undermining the regulations already in place, in this case, the Army's process of awarding medals.

We argue the opposite. We do not seek preference or favoritism but consistency and equality with Medal of Honor awards in similar situations. The Army has failed its own processes. It has failed to treat Megellas' action in accordance with guidelines for the Medal of Honor; failed to properly process the award recommendation in 1945; failed to properly consider Col. Sim's appeal for the upgrade that included new evidence; and failed to be Just within Army Awards precedence. Sims gave the Army a second chance to do its duty. The Army failed to view his argument reasonably and failed its duty to properly honor one of WWII's most gallant and selfless acts. So, the essence of the proposed legislation will be to correct a longstanding Army mistake and injustice. This not only benefits Col. Sims and Maggie but his platoon, the 504 PIR, the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division's All Americans and our country. Righting this wrong benefits everyone.

Please help us. The Sims Team stands ready to assist you and your staff in every way possible. We await your reply as time is running short for all our WWII veterans. Please have your staff contact us at their earliest.

Thank you for your service Sir as an All American leader of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne, history's greatest Airborne Division!

All The Way Sir,



Tom Laney, Editor, *The Wisco Airborne Reporter*  
Secretary, Sim's Team; Badger Chapter, 82nd Airborne Division Association

CC: Sims Team Coordinator: Jim Neumann (920) 907-4426 Cell: (920) 517-2953 jimneumann@rbroyal.com

**Encl: Col. Sims to President Obama**

***Feel free to use this letter or any part of it to convince politicians that we expect them to right this injustice to one of America's greatest heroes! Support the Troops means to see that they are properly decorated too!***

JACK REED  
RHODE ISLAND  
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WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3903

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(202) 224-4642

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Cranston, RI 02920-3074  
(401) 943-3100

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<http://reed.senate.gov>

March 27, 2013

Mr. Tom Laney  
Editor  
*The Wisco Airborne Reporter*  
E6304 866<sup>th</sup> Ave  
Colfax, WI 54730

Dear Mr. Laney:

I appreciate your bringing to my attention the situation involving Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) James "Maggie" Megellas. I am always proud to hear the inspiring and heroic history of members of the U. S. Army's 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division.

Knowing your interest, my office took a thorough look into the details of LTC Megellas' Silver Star, as it pertained to the possibility of upgrading that medal to the Congressional Medal of Honor, as well as reviewing the bills introduced by Representative Petri in 2007 and Senator Cornyn in 2008. I have also contacted the Secretary of the Army, John McHugh, to ask him to review this matter along with the U. S. Army's awards directorate.

However, at this time, it does not appear that the Army would recommend an upgrade of LTC Megellas' Silver Star to the Congressional Medal of Honor. While I do not think it would be appropriate for a Senator from outside Mr. Megellas' home-state to introduce legislation to authorize and request the President of the United States to award the Medal of Honor to LTC Megellas, I would encourage you and all those concerned with LTC Megellas' case to contact Members of Congress and Senators from Mr. Megellas' home-state as they may wish to take the lead on his behalf.

The great generation of Americans, of which LTC Megellas is a proud and honorable member, demonstrated tremendous valor and sacrificed at a level not since matched. I am truly grateful for his service.

Sincerely,



Jack Reed  
United States Senator

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER



# 2ND ANNUAL GOLF OUTING FUND RAISER TO BENEFIT WOUNDED WARRIORS



**Remember. All gave some - Some Gave All**  
ARMY • NAVY • AIR FORCE • MARINES • NATIONAL GUARD • COAST GUARD

## Bristol Oaks Country Club June 17th 2013

**Registration 11:00 AM**

**Shotgun Start 12:00 Noon**

**Lunch at the turn**

**Buffet dinner 5:00 PM**

**Rain or Shine**

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**\$100 Per Golfer**  
(Foursome required)  
Includes 18 holes of golf,  
green fees, cart,  
lunch at the turn, dinner  
and prizes.  
Dinner only is \$30 per person

*All proceeds go to the  
Wounded Warrior Program*

**Bristol Oaks Country Club  
Bristol, Wi. 53104  
Ph 262-857-2302**

www.BristolOaks.com  
Bristol Oaks is located west of Hwy 94 approximately 3 miles  
on the south side of Hwy 50  
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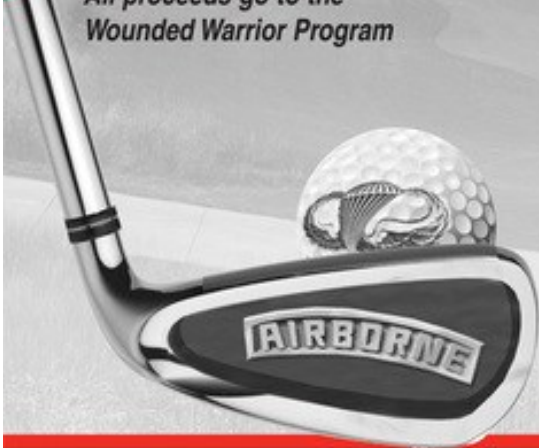
#### Questions Contact

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or Ph: 847-361-9168

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See more at: [www.82ndswaac.com](http://www.82ndswaac.com)



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**Bristol Oaks Country Club**  
 16801 - 75th Street • Bristol, WI 53104  
 Ph. 262-857-2302  
 www.BristolOaks.com

**DIRECTIONS**

*Bristol Oaks Country Club is located in Kenosha County just north of the Wisconsin/Illinois state line. Take 94/41 to the Hwy. 50 exit and go west for 3 miles. The golf course is directly accessed from Hwy. 50 on the south side.*

**QUESTIONS?**

Contact SWAAC  
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 warriorgolf@wi.rr.com or  
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**HELP US HONOR OUR Wounded Warriors**

Our charitable mission has always been to give aid and comfort to our men and women serving in the United States military. Twelve years ago we sharpened the focus of our giving by helping those who returned from the service of their country hurt and maimed – as Wounded Warriors. There is no restriction on race, creed, gender, color, religion, state of residence, nor branch of service. Each



identified wounded warrior receives a check for the minimum amount of \$1,000. Since starting this initiative in 2001, the Southern Wisconsin All Airborne Chapter has raised and given to our heroes, well over \$200,000 and counting.

Our first golf outing last year added \$8,000 to the Wounded Warrior Fund. The need has not gone away. Please join us to help make our second year an even bigger success. Again, ALL money raised goes directly toward helping those young men and women who have sacrificed for us, our Wounded Warriors.

**Thank you for your support!**

**SOUTHERN WISCONSIN ALL AIRBORNE CHAPTER**  
 82nd Airborne Division Association, Inc.  
 www.82ndswaac.com

**SUPPORT THE WOUNDED WARRIOR**  
 Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard  
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 TO PROTECT OUR FREEDOM

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**Friday, June 7, 2013**

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**Golf, Raffles, Prizes  
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**EVENT DETAILS**

**When:** Friday, June 7, 2013

**Where:** Bristol Oaks Country Club  
 16801 - 75th Street, Bristol, WI  
 Ph. 262-857-2302  
 www.BristolOaks.com

**Format:** 18 hole, 4-person scramble  
 11:00 am Registration  
 12 noon Shotgun Start  
 Lunch at the turn  
 5:00 pm Dinner/Awards

**Cost:** \$100 - golf, cart, lunch & dinner  
 \$30 - dinner only

**SPONSOR OPPORTUNITIES**

- Event - \$1,000 (includes foursome)
- Corporate - \$500
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- Hole-in-One Contest - \$250
- Tee - \$100
- Auction item donations
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**GOLFER INFORMATION | \$100 each**

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_____ Golfer Name	_____ Email	_____ Phone
_____ Golfer Name	_____ Email	_____ Phone
_____ Golfer Name	_____ Email	_____ Phone

**DINNER ONLY INFORMATION | \$30 each**

_____ Name	_____ Email	_____ Phone
_____ Name	_____ Email	_____ Phone

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Total amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_. Please mail registration and payment by May 29th to:  
 S.W.A.A.C., c/o Gary Ladousa, 5313 Springbrook Road, Pleasant Prairie, WI 53158.

*\*Please submit your logo or print details for your sponsorship sign to warriorgolf@wi.rr.com. If you cannot submit electronically, please include print details for sign below.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
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 \_\_\_\_\_



## The Sim's Team

E6304 866th Ave.  
Colfax, Wi 54730  
tlaney1776@gmail.com  
715-962-4365



Maggie and Sims , Left, with H Co Troopers in The Bulge.

10/19/2012

To Wisconsin College and University ROTC Leaders:

My name is Tom Laney. I am the (Temp.) Secretary of The Sim's Team and an 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Veteran.

The Sim's Team supports Col. Edward J. Sims in his efforts to upgrade the Silver Star James Megellas (originally from Fond du Lac) was awarded for heroism in The Bulge, 1945, to the Medal of Honor. That was Col. Sim's original recommendation.

The Sim's Team is further defined in the attached letter we recently sent to the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division's Association's leaders.

We are looking for ROTC cadets who can help us with a website and communications. We can provide the cadets with historical information; introduce them to James Megellas and other WWII 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Paratroopers and Glidermen. We can encourage them to Go Airborne!

Please let us know if you can help. We will send you the new documentary "Maggie's War" that we're sure will be well-received in your classes.

All the Way,

Tom Laney, Secretary  
Sim's Team  
Member, 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division Assoc.

*If you are in ROTC or  
know someone who is,  
please get this letter to the  
ROTC Commander in your  
school!*

## This terrific group of kids gets it and asks President Obama to do the same!



February 19, 2013

Dear President Obama,

I am a history teacher in a Catholic Middle School. I teach 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade.

I am writing about a great American hero named Jim Megellas. He was a paratrooper in the 82<sup>nd</sup> airborne during World War 2. Many of us who know about his heroic actions during the war feel that he should receive the Congressional Medal of Honor. He was put in for one in January, 1945, but his paperwork was lost.

More recent attempts to get him the medal have been turned down by the army, but, we feel, due to errant information about his action.

Jim not only stopped an attack by the SS Nazi troopers, but he single handedly took out a Nazi tank. He killed or wounded over 25 SS soldiers and didn't lose a single one of his own men. He stopped the Nazi attack in its tracks!

Please look over his record, and I feel you will agree with us.

This letter is signed by myself and by all of my students. We feel that he should get the highest medal that our country can offer.

Thank you very much.

Alan Muller



# Marine CVSO battles for Paratrooper Gene Strutzenberg

*With revived medals in hand, WWII vet recalls his service*

*Tuesday, July 17, 2012 Brodhead  
By Monroe Times Reporter Teri Dunlap*

MONROE - Eugene Strutzenberg, a World War II veteran living in Brodhead, has stories to tell - a lot of stories - of heroism, bravery and survival. And he has the medals to back them up - a lot of medals.

On Monday, Clayton Ruegsegger, the Green County Veterans Service officer, presented Strutzenberg with a set of nine U. S. military medals and awards to replace his original ones, which have become faded and worn over the past 67 years. Among them are the Silver Star, "For Gallantry in Action," and the Bronze Star Medal for "Heroic or Meritorious Achievement."

With a twinkle in his eyes and a quick grin, Strutzenberg at age 89 describes his youthful bravery as "being foolish."

"The good Lord had a purpose for me", Strutzenberg said, "to tell others about Him."

His wife, Donna, believes her husband owes his bravery and survival to being light-hearted and having no fear.

Strutzenberg served in the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 82nd Airborne Division, which was involved in some of the heaviest fighting during the war and received some of the heaviest casualties.

"I was the only one in my outfit that got promoted from private to NCO," he said. That achievement was accomplished, he said, because he was a volunteer soldier. He enlisted, and he volunteered for a lot of dangerous duty, including leading more patrols than anyone else in his unit. "I loved the excitement," he said.

Strutzenberg was both a squad leader and a scout for his company, when in early February of 1945 they were given the assignment to break through The Siegfried Line, a German defense system of "pillbox" bunkers and tank traps stretching about 400 miles along the western edge of Germany. They marched five miles at night, slept in a forest and woke up under two feet of snow. They marched another five miles before stopping for breakfast near Nuehof, Germany. Then Strutzenberg, on a 30-minute scouting patrol with his captain, spotted the pillboxes with no one around them. "I thought something was fishy," he said. He suspected a trap, and they would have to cross a minefield to get to the pillboxes. They returned a short time later with the rest of the company. When Strutzenberg heard the command to move out, he said he didn't hesitate. And thanks to the heavy snowfall the night before, the mines didn't detonate. "I was the front man across the mine field," he said. He rushed across the snowy

field to one of the pillboxes and lay against it. Looking back toward his company, he realized he was the only one who advanced. He pulled a percussion grenade from his pocket and shoved it through a slit in the bunker. It blew the door off the pillbox and killed two of the enemy. About 14 more Germans emerged, stunned, Strutzenberg said. His action allowed the rest of the troops to advance across the mine field, and for 48 hours they took one pillbox after another, clearing a path through the Siegfried Line before being relieved by the 29th Division.

On this day, Feb. 2, 1945, for his actions under heavy fire, Strutzenberg was awarded the Silver Star. Strutzenberg was told that his captain, Captain Campanaugh, had also wanted to see to it that Strutzenberg got a Congressional Medal of Honor for the deed. But Com-



82nd Badger Chapter Chair Frank Morris, Amber Michelle, King Vets Liaison, Gene and Gerry Deimel at meeting of the Badger Chapter, 82nd Airborne Division at King Vets Home. Gene is very active in the 82nd Association. (Laney photo)

"I was a natural for flying," he said. But the Air Force rejected him; he was color-blind.

He became a jump master and left the service as a Staff Sergeant in 1945, with 19 jumps and 54 days behind enemy lines.

Under four Allied Armies in Europe, Strutzenberg suffered many injuries during the war. He endured gangrene from frozen feet and suffered two broken feet from a fall after his parachute became damaged while in the air. His most exciting jump, "a beautiful jump" over Holland, ended with his arm pulled from its socket. His front teeth got knocked out from being hit by a machine gun, and a U.S. shell exploding just four feet from him put overwhelming pressure on his eardrums. But he was not wounded by enemy fire, which would have rounded out his medals with a Purple Heart. Only four war

buddies and a chaplain are left with Strutzenberg to tell the stories of their company.

"I've seen a lot," Strutzenberg said Monday, with his eyes welling up.

Indeed, he has seen enough, and he has the medals to prove it.



325's Les Schwarm, Packers LB Coach Kevin Greene and Gene. "You're the real heroes," Paratrooper Green said. (Laney photo)

pany E took on heavy casualties. Only one lieutenant, one sergeant and Strutzenberg survived. No one was left to nominate him for the Congressional Medal.

In his youth, Strutzenberg had taken flying lessons and passed his test, so he thought he should join the Air Force. But, as his second choice, Strutzenberg opted for the Army's Parachute Infantry, an airborne infantry regiment first formed in 1942 as part of the 82nd Airborne Division.

Thank you Veteran Teri Dunlap and the Times for reprint permission and to Clayton Ruegsegger for the respect shown to one of Wisconsin's most heroic WWII Paratroopers!



## James Webb on the War In Vietnam

The rapidly disappearing cohort of Americans that endured the Great Depression and then fought World War II is receiving quite a send-off from the leading lights of the so-called 60s generation. Tom Brokaw has published two oral histories of "The Greatest Generation" that feature ordinary people doing their duty and suggest that such conduct was historically unique.

Chris Matthews of "Hardball" is fond of writing columns praising the Navy service of his father while castigating his own baby boomer generation for its alleged softness and lack of struggle. William Bennett gave a startling condescending speech at the Naval Academy a few years ago comparing the heroism of the "D-Day Generation" to the drugs-and-sex nihilism of the "Woodstock Generation." And Steven Spielberg, in promoting his film "Saving Private Ryan," was careful to justify his portrayals of soldiers in action based on the supposedly unique nature of World War II.

An irony is at work here. Lest we forget, the World War II generation now being lionized also brought us the Vietnam War, a conflict which today's most conspicuous voices by and large opposed, and in which few of them served. The "best and brightest" of the Vietnam age group once made headlines by castigating their parents for bringing about the war in which they would not fight, which has become the war they refuse to remember.

Pundits back then invented a term for this animus: the "generation gap." Long, plaintive articles and even books were written examining its manifestations. Campus leaders, who claimed precocious wisdom through the magical process of reading a few controversial books, urged fellow baby boomers not to trust anyone over 30. Their elders who had survived the Depression and fought the largest war in history were looked down upon as shallow, materialistic and out of touch.

Those of us who grew up, on the other side of the picket line from that era's counter-culture can't help but feel a little leery of this sudden gush of appreciation for our elders from the leading lights of the old counter-culture. Then and now, the national conversation has proceeded from the dubious assumption that those who came of age during Vietnam are a unified generation in the same sense as their parents were and thus are capable of being spoken for through these fickle elites.

In truth, the "Vietnam generation" is a misnomer. Those who came of age during that war are permanently divided by different reactions to a whole range of counter-cultural agendas and nothing divides them more deeply than the personal ramifications of the war itself. The sizable portion of the Vietnam age group who declined to support the counter-cultural agenda, and especially the men and women who opted to serve in the military during the Vietnam War, are quite different



*James Webb, Annapolis, USMC Vietnam, Navy Cross, Silver Star, U.S. Senate, etc. Vacated Republican Party because it stopped making sense. Vacated the Senate & Democratic Party for the same reason. Webb was Born Fighting. I hope he never stops!*

from their peers who for decades have claimed to speak for them. In fact, they are much like the World War II generation itself. For them, Woodstock was a side show, college protestors were spoiled brats who would have benefited from having to work a few jobs in order to pay their tuition, and Vietnam represented not an intellectual exercise in draft avoidance, or protest marches but a battlefield that was just as brutal as those their fathers faced in World War II and Korea.

Few who served during Vietnam ever complained of a generation gap. The men who fought World War II were their heroes and role models. They honored their father's service by emulating it, and largely agreed with their father's wisdom in attempting to stop Communism's reach in Southeast Asia.

The most accurate poll of their attitudes (Harris, 1980) showed that 91 percent were glad they'd served their country, 74 percent enjoyed their time in the service, and 89 percent agreed with the statement that "our troops were asked to fight in a war which our political leaders in Washington would not let them win." And most importantly, the castigation they received upon returning home was not from the World War II generation, but from the very elites in their age group who supposedly spoke for them.

Nine million men served in the military during Vietnam War, three million of whom went to the Vietnam Theater. Contrary to popular mythology, two-thirds of these were volunteers, and 73 percent of those who died were volunteers.

While some attention has been paid recently to the plight of our prisoners of war, most of whom were pilots; there has been little recognition of how brutal the war was for those who fought it on the ground.





*Medal Of Honor Recipient, Gary Wetzel, Milwaukee, who fought heroically to save his brothers in Vietnam with Skip Sparks, Abbottsford L; and Ron Worthy, Wausau both Special Forces Vietnam, at the Medal Of Honor Monument dedication at King last Dec. Gary travels America honoring his brothers. Skip & Ron are regulars at The Highground and do a Christmas steak dinner for homeless Vets at King. Magnificent men! (Laney photo)*

Dropped onto the enemy's terrain 12,000 miles away from home, America's citizen-soldiers performed with a tenacity and quality that may never be truly understood. Those who believe the war was fought incompletely on a tactical level should consider Hanoi's recent admission that 1.4 million of its soldiers died on the battlefield, compared to 58,000 total U.S. dead.

Those who believe that it was a "dirty little war" where the bombs did all the work might contemplate that it was the most costly war the U.S. Marine Corps has ever fought: five times as many dead as World War I, three times as many dead as in Korea, and more total killed and wounded than in all of World War II.

Significantly, these sacrifices were being made at a time the United States was deeply divided over our effort in Vietnam. The baby-boom generation had cracked apart along class lines as America's young men were making difficult, life-or-death choices about serving. The better academic institutions became focal points for vitriolic protest against the war, with few of their graduates going into the military. Harvard College, which had lost 691 alumni in World War II, lost a total of 12 men in Vietnam from the classes of 1962 through 1972 combined. Those classes at Princeton lost six, at MIT two. The media turned ever more hostile. And frequently the reward for a young man's having gone through the trauma of combat was to be greeted by his peers with studied indifference or outright hostility.

What is a hero? My heroes are the young men who faced the issues of war and possible death, and then weighed those concerns against obligations to their country. Citizen-soldiers who interrupted their personal and professional lives at their most formative stage, in the timeless phrase of the Confederate Memorial in Arlington National Cemetery, "not for fame of reward, not for place or for rank, but in

simple obedience to duty, as they understood it." Who suffered loneliness, disease, and wounds with an often-contagious élan. And who deserve a far better place in history than that now offered them by the so-called spokesmen of our so-called generation.

Mr. Brokaw, Mr. Matthews, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Spielberg, meet my Marines. 1969 was an odd year to be in Vietnam. Second only to 1968 in terms of American casualties, it was the year made famous by Hamburger Hill, as well as the gut-wrenching Life cover story showing pictures of 242 Americans who had been killed in one average week of fighting. Back home, it was the year of Woodstock, and of numerous anti-war rallies that culminated in the Moratorium march on Washington. The My Lai massacre hit the papers and was seized upon the anti-war movement as the emblematic moment of the war.

Lyndon Johnson left Washington in utter humiliation. Richard Nixon entered the scene, destined for an even worse fate. In the An Hoa Basin southwest of Danang, the Fifth Marine Regiment was in its third year of continuous combat operations. Combat is an unpredictable and inexact environment, but we were well led. As a rifle platoon and company commander, I served under a succession of three regimental commanders who had cut their teeth in World War II, and four different battalion commanders, three of whom had seen combat in Korea. The company commanders were typically captains on their second combat tour in Vietnam, or young first lieutenants like myself who were given companies after many months of "bush time" as platoon commanders in the Basin's tough and unforgiving environs.

The Basin was one of the most heavily contested areas in Vietnam, its torn, cratered earth offering every sort of wartime possibility. In the mountains just to the west, not far from the Ho Chi Minh Trail, the North Vietnamese Army operated an infantry division from

*It would be redundant to say that I would trust my life to these men. Because I already have.....James Webb, Born Fighting!*

an area called Base Area 112. In the valleys of the Basin, main-force Viet Cong battalions whose ranks were 80 percent North Vietnamese Army regulars moved against the Americans every day. Local Viet Cong units sniped and harassed. Ridgelines and paddy dikes were laced with sophisticated booby traps of every size, from a hand grenade to a 250-pound bomb. The villages sat in the rice paddies and tree lines like individual fortresses, crisscrossed with the trenches and spider holes, their homes sporting bunkers capable of surviving direct hits from large-caliber artillery shells. The Viet Cong infrastructure was intricate and permeating. Except for the old and the very young, villagers who did not side with the Communists had either been killed or driven out to the government controlled enclaves near Danang.

In the rifle companies, we spent the endless months patrolling ridgelines and villages and mountains, far away from any notion of tents, barbed wire hot food, or electricity. Luxuries were limited to what would fit inside one's pack, which after a few "humps" usually boiled down to letter-writing material, towel, soap, toothbrush, poncho liner, and a small transistor radio.

We moved through the boiling heat with 60 pounds of weapons and gear, causing a typical Marine to drop 20 percent of his body weight while in the bush. When we stopped we dug chest-deep fighting holes and slit trenches for toilets. We slept on the ground under make-shift poncho hootches, and when it rained we usually took our hootches down because wet ponchos shined under illumination flares, making great targets. Sleep itself was fitful, never more than an hour or two at a stretch for months at a time as we mixed daytime patrolling with night-time ambushes, listening posts, foxhole duty, and radio watches. Ringworm, hookworm, malaria, and dysentery were common, as was trench foot when the monsoons came. Respite was rotating back to the mud-filled regimental combat base at An Hoa for four or five days, where rocket and mortar attacks were frequent and our troops manned defensive bunkers at night. Which makes it kind of hard to get excited about tales of Woodstock, or camping at the Vineyard during summer break.

We had been told while training that Marine officers in the rifle companies had an 85 percent probability of being killed or wounded, and the experience of "Dying Delta," as our company was known, bore that out. Of the officers in the bush when I arrived, our company commander was wounded, the weapons platoon commander wounded, the first platoon commander was killed, the second platoon commander was wounded twice, and I, commanding the third platoons fared no better. Two of my original three-squad leaders were killed, and the third shot in the stomach. My platoon sergeant was severely wounded, as was my right guide. By the time I left, my platoon I had gone through six radio operators, five of them casualties.

These figures were hardly unique; in fact, they were typical. Many other units; for instance, those who fought the hill battles around Khe Sanh, or were with the famed Walking Dead of the Ninth Marine Regiment, or were in the battle of Hue City or at Dai Do, had it far worse.

When I remember those days and the very young men who spent them with me, I am continually amazed, for these were mostly recent civilians barely out of high school, called up from the cities and the farms to do their year in hell and return. Visions haunt me every day, not of the nightmares of war but of the steady consistency with which my Marines faced their responsibilities, and of how uncomplaining most of them were in the face of constant danger. The salty, battle-



hardened 20-year-olds teaching green 19-year-olds the intricate lessons of the hostile battlefield. The unerring skill of the young squad leaders as we moved through unfamiliar villages and weed-choked trails in the black of night. The quick certainty when a fellow Marine was wounded and needed help. Their willingness to risk their lives to save other Marines in peril. To this day it stuns me that their own countrymen have so completely missed the story of their service, lost in the bitter confusion of the war itself.

Like every military unit throughout history we had occasional laggards, cowards, and complainers. But in the aggregate, these Marines were the finest people I have ever been around. It has been my privilege to keep up with many of them over the years since we all came home. One finds in them very little bitterness about the war in which they fought. The most common regret, almost to a man, is that they were not able to do more for each other and for the people they came to help.

It would be redundant to say that I would trust my life to these men. Because I already have, in more ways than I can ever recount. I am alive today because of their quiet, unaffected heroism. Such valor epitomizes the conduct of Americans at war from the first days of our existence. That the boomer elites can canonize this sort of conduct in our fathers' generation while ignoring it in our own is more than simple oversight. It is a conscious, continuing travesty.



# 1st Cav Paratroopers Vietnam

Tom; As you can see, we got it done for "Doc" Holder!", an error of omission from the Vietnam War has been corrected. Although he lives in N.C. and is from N.J., he is after all an AIRBORNE soldier so I thought the association might be interested. I'm out of town, please feel free to email either me or Doug Warden for future details.

Thanks for your encouragement.  
All the Way, Bill McKeown

----- Forwarded Message -----

**From:** Doug Warden

[<dougwarden444@hotmail.com>](mailto:dougwarden444@hotmail.com)

**Subject:** C Company Individual Award for Larry Holder, Medic

C Company Brothers,

I am extremely pleased to announce that the Department of the Army has seen fit to award the Silver Star Medal, for Gallantry in Action, to former 3<sup>rd</sup> platoon medic and paratrooper, Larry Holder for actions on December 17, 1966 at the Battle of 506 Valley. For those of you who don't know about that particular day, 1LT John Rudd's 3<sup>rd</sup> platoon was patrolling away from LZ Bird and got a call that they were air assaulting into 506 Valley to help out D Company, who was in heavy contact. One of the helicopters that carried the 3<sup>rd</sup> platoon was shot down and crashed on the initial insertion. John Rudd went out to check on a couple of D Company guys who appeared to be wounded or dead. He was wounded and when his RTO, Bill McKeown, went out to aid Rudd, he was shot up pretty bad.

Larry Holder, against advice from everyone, left his secure position, and ran across over 100 yards of open terrain to aid McKeown and Rudd. He saw an enemy machine gunner move his weapon to aim at McKeown to kill him. Holder threw his body across McKeown to shield him. Holder took two bullets meant for McKeown. McKeown thought that Holder was dead and had known Holder only as "Doc".

Since 4 of the 5 C Company medics were killed that day, McKeown had thought through the years that Holder was killed.

In 2006, at Ft. Benning, they were re-united and Bill found out Holder had never received any recognition for his actions that day. So, 46 years later, a wrong has been corrected.

Senator Richard Burr of North Carolina will announce soon as to when and where he will present the Silver Star to Larry. Bill McKeown and I will be in attendance. I'll keep you up to date on the particulars.

Boot to Boot,

Doug Warden  
3<sup>rd</sup> platoon, C Company, 1<sup>st</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> Cavalry  
Vietnam

More on Holder, McKeown and Warden next month.



2nd from left, Bill McKeown, 1st Cav Paratrooper, Plover, at Walt Pakulski's funeral with VFW buddies. Never, ever give up! (Laney photo)



## Menomonie Benefit raises \$13,000 for Ranger Jason!

(Cont. from pg. 1)

"Jason was an All State lineman for the Menomonie Indians went on to star for the UW-Lacrosse Eagles. He is actively involved in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and a great soldier. We wanted to do something for Jason and the family and came up with the Benefit idea," said AmVets leader Dave Buss.

"Our whole family got involved in this" says Dave who MC'd the event. "We have a Veterans Center with a banquet hall here in Menomonie and thought it would be a great place to have the benefit. We called the center and they donated the hall. Kristy Schutte went ahead and did all the planning. What a great job she did!

"Kristy thanks all who made the benefit possible, the workers, and the sponsors who donated gifts for the raffle," Dave said. "We make a special thank you to VFW Post 1039, and AmVets Post 72 for their help.

"With the raffle, food and donations the benefit brought in \$10,000. The Thrivent Financial For Lutherans gave an additional \$3,000," Dave said. "Money not used by the Church family will go to the Wounded Warrior Project."

The Menomonie Veterans Center led by Col. Terry Miland; the Menomonie Football and Wrestling teams and cheerleaders worked hard on the Benefit. 100s of supporters turned out, including WWII Paratrooper Bill Hannigan, 90, who came all the way from St. Paul with son Chip to honor and support Jason.

Hannigan knows all about combat. He was a Squad Leader in H/504 Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne, Jim "Maggie" Megellas' platoon. Bill fought in the Italian Mountains and Anzio Beach, jumped into Normandy with the 508th PIR Pathfinders, jumped into Holland and fought in The Battle of The Bulge.

"I know the Rangers," says Hannigan. "The Rangers paid a heavy price as we did at Anzio. Many of them were attached to us. I wanted to come here today to let Jason and his family know that an old Trooper like me still recognizes the Rang-



President Obama visited Jason at the new Walter Reed.



Jason #60, road grading for Menomonie Indians. (Dunn County News photo)

ers as part of the Airborne Brotherhood.

"I came here today to support Jason and meet his family and friends and to let them know that we in the 82nd Airborne understand what they are going through because we went through an awful lot of it," Bill said.

State Sen. Sheila Harsdorff and Wisconsin's finest high school football coach Joe laBuda were there as were many of his Menomonie Mustangs players.

Lots of Veterans came including Charlie Nelson, 3rd ID, Prescott ; and Bob Shrader, 82nd Airborne, Ripon.

Thanks to all from the Buss family!



## Assignment 13: "Jason's Story"

**Reporter:** Bob Gallaher Email  
 Updated: Thu 7:15 AM, Nov 22, 2012  
 Back to HomePage

In this season of Thanksgiving, there's one local family whose optimism shines through, even on the darkest of days. We've told you about U.S. Army Ranger Jason Church. At 23, he's been through more in his years, than most people go through in a lifetime. Just a few years ago, he was a star football player, then he went into the military. Earlier this year, he lost his legs in Afghanistan. For the first time, we talk to his parents about what they went through.

WEAU's Bob Gallaher has tonight's Assignment 13 Report, "Jason's Story."

After spending more than two months recovering from his injuries at Walter Reed hospital in Maryland, the 2007 Menomonie High School graduate came back to Western Wisconsin earlier this month. Last week, Bob had a chance to spend an evening with Jason and his parents, Barb and David before he went back east to continue his rehab. Jason says he has plenty to be thankful for this Thanksgiving, "The Gift of Life."

Jason Church says, "One of the emotions I felt was like, 'wow' I'm alive because there are so many men including a friend of mine in Afghanistan that have died..."

Jason Church is thankful and fortunate his life was spared, the 23-year old former star football player at Menomonie understands the challenges that have been placed before him, he must learn to walk and run again with the help of prosthetics. His life journey has been altered forever.

Jason says, "It was that realization that this is a scar that will remain with me for the rest of my life, and my life has changed dramatically.."

The Church's are a military family, his father, David a Colonel in the army, has 28 years dedicated to serving his country. Jason's dad knows the risks involved, but admits dealing the pains of war are much more devastating when it's a loved one



The Buss Family with Vets Center's Col. Terry Miland on right.

that is hurt.

Col. David Church says, "No one signs up or joins any branch of the service knowing what price they're going to have to play, you sign up and say I'm willing to do my duty, and I'm willing to sacrifice."

Jason's mother Barb Church adds, "When we walked in, he was covered but he looked great to us because he was there but parts of him were missing, but I didn't

this earth for a reason, not to cry and feel sorry for myself, but to go out and do something for his glory.."

During his visit, Jason was honored for his sacrifice for his country at a UW-La Crosse football game, Church played for the Eagles, graduating back in 2011. At halftime, Jason received his purple heart, presented to him by his father, an emotional and surreal moment for his mom.

Barb says, "My son that's 23-years old is receiving a purple heart for giving something for his country, it was difficult, you hear about it, you never think you'll be there doing that, it's just hard to me, he's always going to be my son and who is young and active and he will be again."

And while Jason and his family will not be home this Thanksgiving, David says the Church family will be counting their blessings that they are still able to gather together. David says, "When you just about lose someone, it just makes it so real and special when we can be

together...."

Bob Gallaher says, "I want to wish Jason and the Church family a Happy Thanksgiving, we will continue to pray for him as Jason recovers from his injuries. Jason told me that he wanted to thank the football communities of Menomonie, Eau Claire, La Crosse, and all of Western Wisconsin for the overwhelming support.



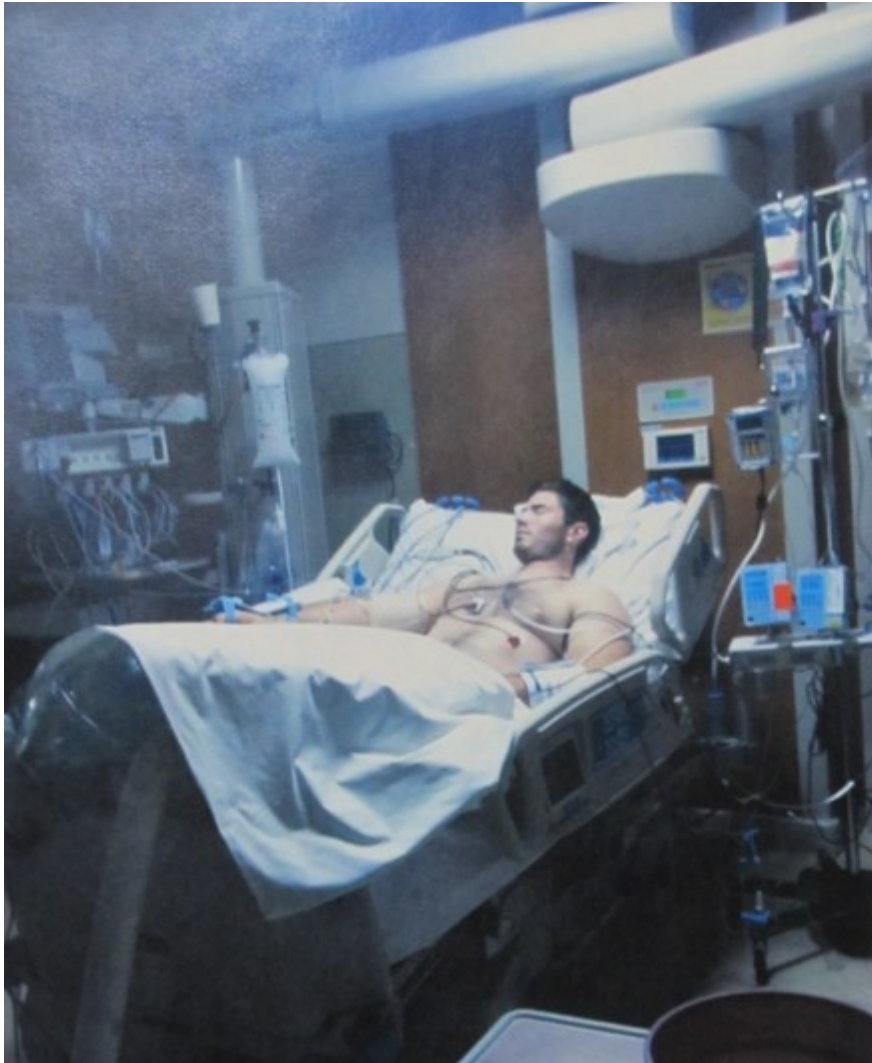
care, because he was still my Jason."

While visiting his family and friends back in Menomonie, Jason and his parents spent an evening with their church congregation, his story an inspiration to others about perseverance, his faith giving him the strength to accept that God has a plan for him.

Jason says, "He (God) kept me around on



## Long way back for the Ranger but lots of help!



*Left, WWII H/504 Parachute Infantry Regiment/ 82nd Airborne Division's Bill Hannigan, St. Paul, with Matthew Church, Jason's brother; and Col. David Church, Jason's dad.*

*Col. Church is also a Paratrooper, serving on a unit in Minnesota.*



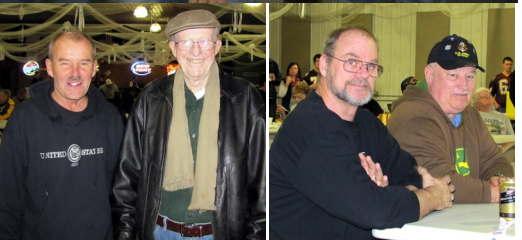
*AmVets Dave Buss, here running raffles for Jason, is a credit to his community, country and all Veterans. Dave encourages you to use the Menomonie Veterans Center. Your support for the Vets Center helps Wounded Warrior and all Veterans who need assistance.*

*Dave is just about the nicest guy I've ever met!*  
-Tom Laney

*(Benefit photos by Tom Laney)*



*Ranger Jason Church, family and friends Lead The Way, Menomonie Vets Center, AmVets, VFW, Mustangs and neighbors make America proud! God bless you all!*



## Every one of these Heroes deserves the Medal Of Honor

*....And so does this one!*

**YOU** be the judge:

**Here are a few excerpts from Medal Of Honor Citations for Heroes whose gallantry was properly decorated:**

.... (the Ranger) was quickly wounded when a round went through both of his legs, but he still managed to direct the other officer behind a chicken coop and join the other soldiers. After a live grenade was thrown at them by Taliban fighters, he grabbed the explosive and threw it away from his fellow Rangers.

....the team continued forward and upon reaching the wounded soldiers, the Specialist realized that another soldier was still separated from the element. Specialist then advanced forward on his own initiative. As he crested the top of a hill, he observed two insurgents carrying away an American soldier. He immediately engaged the enemy, killing one and wounding the other. Upon reaching the wounded soldier, he began to provide medical aid, as his squad caught up and provided security.

....The Corporal killed a number of enemy fighters with the mounted machine guns and his rifle, some at near point blank range, as he and his driver made three solo trips into the ambush area. During the first two trips, he and his driver evacuated two dozen Afghan soldiers, many of whom were wounded. When one machine gun became inoperable, he directed a return to the rally point to switch to another gun-truck for a third trip into the ambush area where his accurate fire directly supported the remaining U.S. personnel and Afghan soldiers fighting their way out of the ambush. Despite a shrapnel wound to his arm, Corporal Meyer made two more trips into the ambush area in a third gun-truck accompanied by four other Afghan vehicles to recover more wounded Afghan soldiers and search for the missing U.S. team members. Still under heavy enemy fire, he dismounted the vehicle on the fifth trip and moved on foot to locate and recover the bodies of his team members.

....the Second Lieutenant crawled up the treacherous slope to within five yards of the nearest machine gun and hurled two grenades, destroying the emplacement. Before the enemy could retaliate, he stood up and neutralized a second machine gun nest. Although wounded by a sniper's bullet, he continued to engage other hostile positions at close range until an exploding grenade shattered his right arm. Despite the intense pain, he refused evacuation and continued to direct his platoon until enemy resistance was broken and his men were again deployed in defensive positions. In the attack, 25 enemy soldiers were killed and eight others captured.

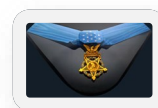
....the Private First Class crawled 20 yards toward the hostile nest with fire from the enemy machine gun barely missing him. Reaching a point 15 yards from the position, he quickly raised himself to a kneeling position and threw four hand grenades, killing or wounding at least three of the enemy soldiers. Later, his company was ordered to withdraw from the crest of a hill so that a barrage could be placed on the ridge. On his own initiative, the Private First Class remained in position to cover his comrades' withdrawal. While moving toward the safety of a wooded draw, his platoon became pinned down by deadly machine gun fire. Crawling to a point from which he could fire on the enemy position, the Private First Class quickly and accurately fired his weapon to pin down the enemy machine gunners. His platoon was then able to withdraw to safety without further casualties. KIA.

**Maggie's Herresbach heroism meets standard and precedent for the Medal Of Honor.**

**Col. Sim's Proposed Citation for the Medal Of Honor for Maggie**

James Megellas, O-439607, First Lieutenant, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, for conspicuous valor on 28 January 1945, near Herresbach, Belgium. After breaking a trail across country for 12 hours in deep, dry snow, First Lieutenant Megellas, a platoon leader, was ordered to advance with his platoon (27 men) and two Tank Destroyers (TD) along the main road leading into Herresbach and attack an oncoming German force of over 200. About one mile from the village he and his men executed a frontal assault on the startled enemy force and engaged them in close-in fighting with small arms and automatic weapons while the enemy forces attempted to fight back. First Lieutenant Megellas' direction and leadership of his men was so superb that within ten minutes the entire enemy force was either killed, captured or fled. As he pursued the fleeing enemy forces, a German Mark V Tank appeared moving in his direction with heavy automatic fire, which caused his men to take cover. Knowing the TDs were not in a position to engage this tank, First Lieutenant Megellas, without hesitation and under heavy fire, moved rapidly toward the approaching enemy tank and stopped it with a Gammon grenade. He then moved closer to the tank and tossed a hand grenade into the open hatch, killing the entire crew. Due to his personal bravery and risk to life, First Lieutenant Megellas, with his platoon was able to continue his mission into Herresbach. Under heavy enemy sniper fire and rifle fire, he took a leading part in flushing the enemy out of their houses, killing eight more and causing others to be captured. As a result of Lieutenant Megellas' fearless leadership, individual actions and skillful handling of his men over 100 enemy were killed, including the 25 he personally killed and 180 were taken prisoner. This feat was accomplished without a single U.S. casualty. First Lieutenant Megellas demonstrated a remarkable degree of tactical skill and an unusual brand of valor that few could equal. His actions reflect highly upon himself and the Airborne Forces.

Entered military service from Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.





## Black Earth's Larry Michaelis' Patton story best ever!

I ask you, is this story from Larry Michaelis the best you've ever heard?

Larry was with the 327 GIR, 101st Airborne, a replacement at Bastogne. He says some 101st Engineers discovered cases of top hats in a Bastogne store. Naturally, they shared the top hats with their buddies .

The unit moved out in a small convoy. Replacing the helmets were the top hats on every trooper. They're all having a great time until the convoy drives past Gen. George Patton.

Patton pulls the convoy over and start reading the riot act to a young 101st LT.

"You're the worst goddam soldiers I've ever seen. Get rid of those goddam top hats and get your goddam helmets on you \*&^%\$#@!"

And Patton continued to call the troopers every name in the book. Until, he heard the safeties clicking off the M-1s. His attitude improved instantly.

The Lt. asked, "Will there be anything else General?"

"No LT. You're doing a fine job here. Carry on."

And he ran for his Jeep and got the hell out of there.

That's the story. Very funny to me.

But I had a hard time believing the grunts would challenge Gen. Patton so I called up my Airborne teacher Lester Schwarm, told him the story and he laughed.

"Les, do you think those 101st guys would really have shot Patton?"

"Tom, you didn't have to be Airborne to want to shoot George Patton. Lots of guys wanted to shoot Patton, including his own troops, "Les said.



327's Larry meets 325 Vets Herb Huebschen and Les Schwarm at the 82nd Badger Chapter's WWII dinner a few years ago. Les, who thought Patton was a grandstander, said, "You didn't have to be Airborne to want to shoot Patton." (Laney photo)



Larry at the / glider Museum in Iron Mountain, MI. Mucho thanks to Donna Juno, Larry's daughter for these pics and for backing the troops all the way!




Larry on the Honor Flight

Old Abe Chapter

## 101ST AIRBORNE BOAT RIDE

July 13, 2013  
 12PM meet in Hotel Lobby  
 Dinner on the Lacrosse Queen River Boat.  
 Howard Johnson's Hotel  
 2150 Rose St.  
 LaCrosse, WI  
 800-363-2297

Questions?  
 Call Jerry Votaw:  
 414-464-2795





[Defend Michael!](#) ← (CTRL Click on link)

Remember this? ***THE AIRBORNE CREED :***

**I volunteered** as a parachutist, fully realizing the hazard of my chosen service and by my thoughts and actions will always uphold the prestige, honor and high esprit-de-corps of parachute troops. **I realize** that a parachutist is not merely a soldier who arrives by parachute to fight, but is an elite shock trooper and that his country expects him to march farther and faster, to fight harder, and to be more self-reliant than any other soldier. Parachutists of all allied armies belong to this great brotherhood. **I shall never fail** my fellow comrades by shirking any duty or training, but will always keep myself mentally and physically fit and shoulder my full share of the task, whatever it may be. **I shall always accord** my superiors fullest loyalty and I will always bear in mind the sacred trust I have in the lives of the men I will accompany into battle. **I shall show other soldiers** by my military courtesy, neatness of dress and care of my weapons and equipment that I am a picked and well trained soldier. **I shall endeavor** always to reflect the high standards of training and morale of parachute troops. **I shall respect** the abilities of my enemies, I will fight fairly and with all my might. Surrender is not in my creed. **I shall display a high degree of initiative** and will fight on to my objective and mission, though I be the lone survivor. **I shall prove my ability as a fighting man** against the enemy on the field of battle, not by quarreling with my comrades in arms or by bragging about my deeds. **I shall always** realize that battles are won by an army fighting as a team, that I fight first and blaze the path into battle for others to follow and to carry the battle on. **I belong to the finest fighting unit in the world.** By my actions and deeds alone, I speak for my fighting ability. I will strive to uphold the honor and prestige of my outfit, making my country proud of me and of the unit to which I belong. **AIRBORNE LEADS THE WAY!**

***LT. MICHAEL BEHENNA FOUGHT FOR HIS MEN LIKE A PARATROOPER. PLEASE JOIN THE FIGHT FOR JUSTICE FOR MICHAEL BEHENNA!***





**MESSAGE FROM  
THE COMMANDANT**

*by Mary Hansen*

Wisconsin Veterans Home at King

On November 16, 2012, veterans, dignitaries, volunteers, guests and community members from throughout the State of Wisconsin gathered together at the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King for the dedication and unveiling of the Medal of Honor monument. The monument recognizes and honors sixty-two men from Wisconsin who were recipients of the highest military award to be conferred to those individuals who risked their lives and went above and beyond the call of duty. The Medal of Honor has its origins in the Civil War, and how befitting to have this monument at the WVH – King, dedicated in the 125<sup>th</sup> year of King's existence. We were honored to have Mr. Gary Wetzel, U.S. Army Medal of Honor recipient with us that day, as a keynote speaker and assisting with the unveiling of the monument. His inspiring words will be remembered as we think back to that day.

December 7, 2012, Governor Scott Walker, Secretary John A. Scocos, and Mr. Clyde Stephenson, Pearl Harbor survivor, were

honored guests at the Veterans Home, as we observed Pearl Harbor Day. Governor Walker welcomed guests, and honored those Pearl Harbor survivors living at King, and Mr. Stephenson, a keynote speaker from Appleton. How fortunate we are to be able to serve the veterans living at King, those men and women who served our nation, to provide us with the legacy of freedom. How fortunate we have been over the past month to have other veterans from Wisconsin such as Mr. Wetzel and Mr. Stephenson sharing with us their military service in defending our freedom.

With the holidays upon us, we are thankful for our many friends, visitors, and caroling groups who visit our Home during this festive time of year. Thank you for your talent and for your time, as you bring joy to our Veterans Home. Members of the veteran service organizations, strong supporters throughout the year, make a world of difference, making King a true home for all who live here. The holidays are filled with visitors, carolers, music holiday decorations, cheerful

activities, and special meals. The staff members of the Veterans Home are committed to personalizing care, and work diligently to meet the needs of members. Thank you for your caring work, which makes a difference for those we serve.



**YEAR OF THE  
VETERAN**





# Thank you Gary, Vets & Sec. Scocos for yet another troop tribute!



Col. John Scocos, Paratrooper & Secretary of Wisconsin Veterans Affairs never tires of honoring all Vets. This guy seems to be everywhere!



Medal of Honor Recipient Gary Wetzel wows the Packers and everyone else with his good humor. "I waer this Medal for you. For all of you, Gary says. (Laney pics)



Bob Shrader, Skip Saprks, Ed Barnes, Ron Worthey, King Director Mary Hansen and Sims Team Coach Jim Neumann, (Laney pics)



Medal Of Honor Recipient Gary Wetzel, Milwaukee with Sims Teamers Ed Barfnes and Jim Neumann Fond du Lac. Gary says his biggest thrill was being visited by Bart Starr in the hospital after being wounded. "I still had the jungle mud and blood on me and they said, "There's someone to see you. And here's Bart! I couldn't believe it!"

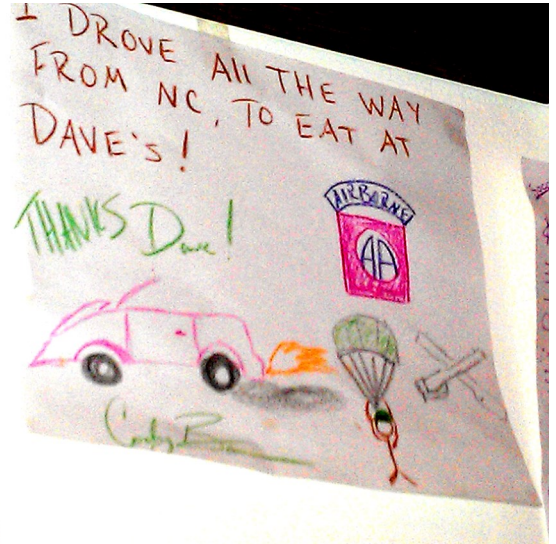


Packers put in \$5 Grand for the MOH Monument!



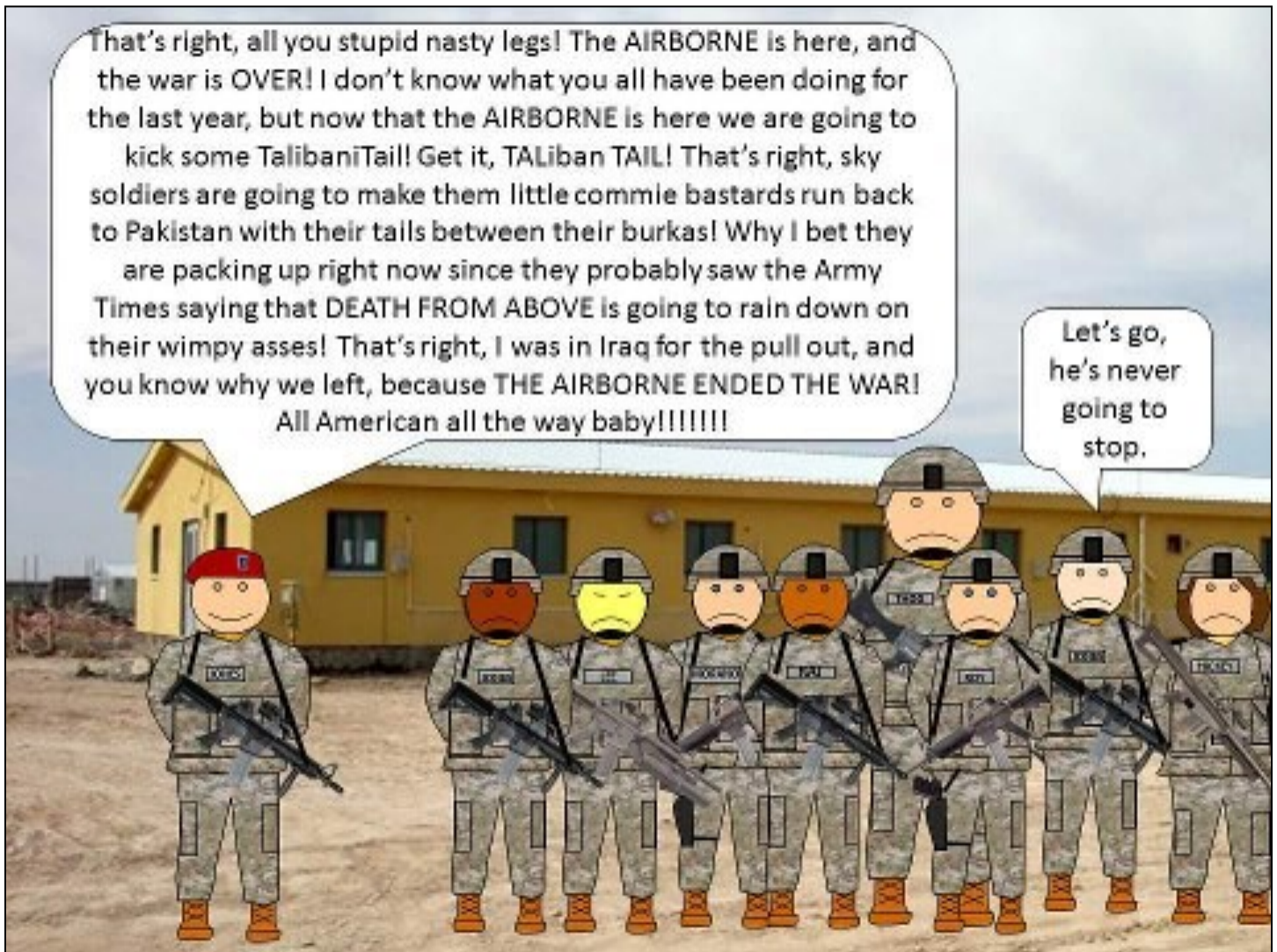


Frank Lopez' car wins again!



Posted in Dave's Restaurant somewhere in Minnesota!

Those Legs still be hating on us.





## Shots from Merrilan Labor Day Parade



TSGT Floyd Pratt, 513th, 17th Airborne WWII, drove his Airborne John Deere; Mr. 325, Howard "Handlebar" Rennhack marched with his 82nd colors topped by the 325 crest and Floyd recruited another young man for the Airborne.

Gun rights sign was sent to me by my nephew Tommy Keough, Chicago!  
(Laney photos)



### Join the 325 PIR Association!

Renewal 2013

Membership dues are \$15 per year for a Veteran and \$3.25 for Active Duty Troopers

Checks payable to 325 ABN Association

Send to Clifford Scott, Treasurer

110 AshLyn Ridge

McDonough, GA 30252



Last name \_\_\_\_\_ First \_\_\_\_\_ Middle initial \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Unit \_\_\_\_\_ Rank \_\_\_\_\_ Pay for \_\_\_\_\_ years





**Phil Pierce's art rocks!  
Ctrl click on poster to go to Phil's site.**

## Wisconsin Military Museum's Mike Telzrow's Dad flew 509th to N. Africa!

*(Editor's note: In addition to being one hell of a Director of Wisconsin's Military Museums, Michael Telzrow has given us a local connection to the first U.S. Paratrooper drop in WWII! Mike's Dad flew one of the C-47s that flew from England to N. Africa with the 509th PIR, aka "The Gingerbread Men or Geronimo's. I had sent a copy of the James Dietz' print, "You Have Your Orders" and received this email from Mike:)*

That's a wonderful print. [I'd like to get one](#). I have a large file on my dad that I'd be happy to share. I have a great photo of him getting his Air Medal in N. Africa.



He was part of D Flight, 60th TCG, 10th Squadron, who transported members of 503 (before it was re-designated

509). He flew C-47, tail number 41-7800 along with his co-pilot Dick Charon, Navigator Allen Clapp, Engineer Robert Gilmore and Radio Operator Bob Seymour. I interviewed Seymour before he passed away. Here is dad's report from that mission:

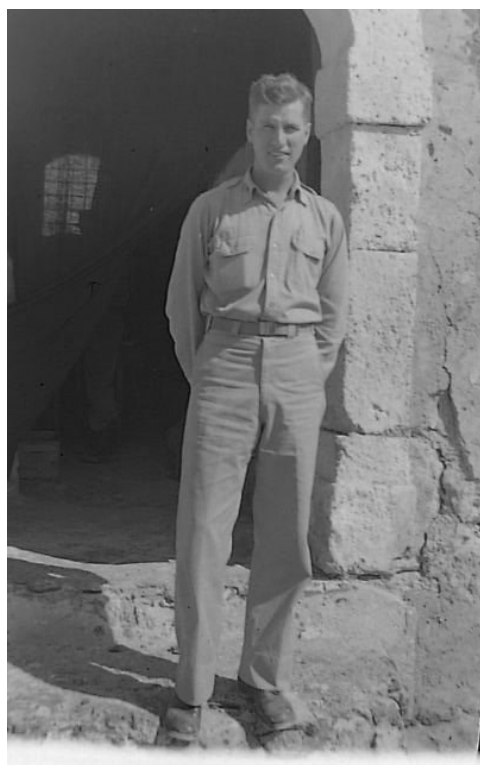
"This ship was assigned to fly on the wing of Captain Barrere's ship, No. 10. A delay in his take off at Predannack caused us to lose the flight and we were unable to contact it at Portreath. We therefore set out alone and managed to fly the course as prescribed. Every check point was observed, light instruments, weather encounters, however, we never once lost sight of Captain Barrere's ship and flew on his wing all the flight.

We arrived over the ship in the Oran harbor, homing on it at approximately 0600 hours. Presuming that the main body of the flight had already arrived we proceeded in the direction of Tafaraoui. At that time Lt. Beck met us and warned us of heavy anti-aircraft fire at this destination. We then determined we were the first few ships on the scene. Captain Barrere advised us to remain near the mouth of the Oran harbor in an attempt to direct the rest of the flight to our position.

"We finally landed on the Sebkra with Captain Gibson when it became apparent that the main body of the flight



Mike's dad in center wearing leather jacket.



was lost. In the afternoon we proceeded to Tafaraoui where we were shelled upon landing. No damage to the personnel or aircraft.

"The following day the field was again shelled and our ship was damaged by fragments. The control surfaces were

pierced and various parts of the fuselage suffered slight damage. None of the crew sustained injury. The engineer patched the ship and we pushed off with the flight the following day."

Dad mentioned in a later interview that the paratroops that landed with him, Barrere and Gibson engaged Vichy French forces ensconced in the hills surrounding the Sebkra after they landed. They French were eventually driven off. He also watched a Dewoitines and Spitfires in action near the dry lake bed.

Dad also took part in the drop at Youk-les-Bains. Same crew minus Allen Clapp, and on the same AC. That was the mission where they departed Maison Blanche on Nov 15. Under the command of Col. Raff they dropped paratroopers of the 509 to secure the Youk Airdrome. Dad went on through N. Africa and Sicily before coming back to the US to instruct.

See you in GB!

Michael Telzrow

Director

[Wisconsin Veterans Museum](#)

(ctrl-click)

More on Mike's dad next issue.



## 509th ARCT was quite an outfit!

I had been reading about the disdain MG Ridgeway and Brigadier Gavin had for LTC Edson Raff, the commander of the 509th Parachute Combat Team. I mentioned this to Michael Telzrow who knows everything there is to know about WWII Airborne. And just about everything else.



*Ctrl-click*

(Wisconsin is lucky to have this guy!)

Mike told me his dad was a C-47 pilot and ferried part of the 509th from England to N. Africa! And then he said his dad thought Raff a wild man too.

The 509th was the first U.S. Paratroop group to fight in WWII. When attached to the 82nd they felt The Division was green and beneath them.

Raff was close to the Limeys and the Brits gave—or wanted to give- the 509th British red berets which angered Ridgeway and Gavin who thought Raff was a hotdog. Later they opposed Raff's assignment to the 82nd.

"The Boldest Plan Is the Best", an outstanding book about the 509th by Jim Travis Broumley, makes the case for the "Gingerbread Men/Geronimos" being a fierce fighting outfit, with plenty of Airborne recklessness and audacity.

Broumley also makes the case for Raff being somewhat of an egotistical jerk.

The 509th guys loved Bill Mauldin and sent him a pair of Jump Boots. Mauldin loved the boots and wore them every where. In the famous photo of Mauldin in his beloved Jeep, you can see he's sporting Corcorans.

He probably shouldn't have offended the 82nd's All Americans. The 509th's gallantry helped turn the tide in the Ardennes. But the fighting decimated the 509th in The Bulge and it's remnants were assigned to the 505 PIR, 82nd Airborne.

509th Lt. Mike Reuter remembers his welcome by LTC Krause, 505 EX O: "He told us we were nothing and we were joining the greatest outfit in the world. He invited anyone who disagreed with him to stand up and fight him. No one did of course but this gave me a bad feeling about the 505th which stayed with me to this day."

I highly recommend this book!  
- Tom



*Wisconsin's Director of Military Museums, Mike Telzrow admiring the 82nd Badger Chapter's museum display at King. Mike promises big things for the Airborne!*



*(ctrl-click)*

The 509th is now attached to the 25th ID in Fort Richardson, AK. They are covered by none other than All American Photographer Justin Conaher!

Picture at right is supposedly 509th Troopers with Marlene Dietrich. However, some guys seem to be wearing Leg boots and shoes and only a few officers are sporting the Glider Patch.

It does look like Marlene. 82nd must have been out that day.





**WELCOME TO THE WISCO FRED HOECK!**

*(Note: I got a call from Fred on Lester Schwarm and the Wisco all the way from Holland! Fred was a friend of Lester and Les' daughter Tami, Ray Fary, Maggie and many other WWII combatants and historians. I asked Fred for a small bio and he was good enough to send me the email below. Thank you Fred for connecting with us!)*

Hello Tom,

Well, I am an historian ( hobby ) regarding history ( WWII and especially the 82nd Airborne!

I am member of 508<sup>th</sup> F&F as well as the 505<sup>th</sup> F&F and a life member of the C-47 club. I like to help veterans who come back to Europe to see the battle fields they fought on to liberate us.

That is why I have (and had as many passed away ) contact with WWII veterans from USA, Canada and England as well. I am a volunteer to help vets , arrange hotels, drive them through the countries and what is more needed, also am host family for veterans who come back to Holland. I also help a local organization to investigate the history during WWII on our island ( [www.wo2go.nl](http://www.wo2go.nl) ) and as you might know I found 2 crews I ( B-17) who crashed in our village in 1944 and 1945, for 1 we already made a memorial and for the second still working on.

See link bellow as the 2 sisters Dorothy and Ellan, who I meet every year in St. Mere Eglise, who received the French Medal of Honor, and I am also working on this for a WWII veteran who served in the 508<sup>th</sup> ( red devils )

Best regards  
Fred Hoeck

<http://ambafrance-us.org/spip.php?article3913>



*Fred sent me pics I didn't have before. Here he is with Ray Fary 80th AA, 82nd and my dearly-missed pal Les, 325 GIR, 82nd from Wausau. Below, Ray and Les on a Dutch panel.*



*Les with Airborne Nemesis, German Panther Tank.*



[325 WWII Memorial](#)



# WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



MSG Sean Beaudette , L, Paratrooper, Combat Vet, Air Assaulter, Officer Trainer, Packer Fan, Bow Hunter, etc. Retired from the Army after 22 years of outstanding service to America. Sean is now working as an Officer at the Tomah VA. Now assigned to Signal at Ft. Hood. More on these Troopers next issue. 1st Lt. Bob Phillips , Paratrooper is in Ft. Hood.



Stephanie, Capt. Malon and kids are now in Korea. Stephanie keep in contact through Facebook. Capt. Malon attended our Airborne Tent at the 2011 Baraboo Air Show. Great guy!



Doug Rasmussen is all over the place, story next month.

## Hope to see you all in Stevens Point June 2!

Been a long Winter for most but we were in Texas for four months. Hope to catch up June 2 at the Airborne Memorial honoring Walt, Doc, Les, Norb and all.

Bruno and Lorraine Mueller have moved to an apartment.

Hope to see Les Schwarm's daughter Tami Halbelslaben and Faye Schwarm June 2.

Judy Durkee got married! She is now Judy Durkee Peters and is planning on seeing us all June 2 at the Airborne Forces Bridge.



Me with Gordy Starck. Gordy and Margie have moved to an assisted living apartment. Gordy lost one of his good friends, Col. Mike Collopy, Orthopedic Chief, Milwaukee VA. See obits.

**MAIL CALL**

11/5/12

Tom,

Thank you so much for this well written and wonderful article on Sgt. Nelson. I was fortunate enough to travel to Normandy and Bastogne this June with my 16 year old twins sons on a Beyond Band of Brothers tour.

Amazingly, no one on this tour had heard of the 82<sup>nd</sup>'s ferocious battle at La Fiere Bridge on my tour group, but the tour director was aware of the battle and kind enough to divert off the planned activities to take us there.

I was astonished to see how far Ray and others had to travel on the causeway during the fight and it is a miracle any of them survived.

Please give Ray this Oklahoman's gratitude for his service the next time you see him. Thanks again for the article.

Darrell Downs  
Oklahoma

6/12/12

Thanks Darrell.

I'm not surprised a Band of Brothers tour would not know of LaFiere.

I am one of those guys who is perturbed by the prominence of the 101st over the 82nd. The 82nd did far more in WWII than the 101st but the 101st got the glory. After Ambrose came out with Band of Brothers, it got worse. Many people thought the 101st was the only Airborne Division to fight in WWII.

I will pass your letter along to Ray. God bless you for showing your sons our history! ATW,

Tom

6/12/12

Tom,

I couldn't agree more and was very happy when the tour director agreed to my specific request to take us to La Fiere even though it had no connection with the BOB.

I told my boys this was some of the most intense fighting small unit fighting of the war and educated them about the 82<sup>nd</sup>'s combat operation in

Normandy. Of course, no one in the tour group recognized that up the cause way a Medal of Honor was won or the circumstances surrounding it, but at least there is a plaque honoring PFC DeGlopper.

In any event, thank you again for the wonderful article and if you ever have an article about a veteran who participated in the Waal river crossing, I will certainly look forward to reading it! Regards,  
Darrell

4/9/13

Tom,

Good to hear from you....WW2 vet, Ray Fary, [C battery, 80th AA] and myself made it back to the States March 2 after 10 days in Belgium....over 1200 people participated in the 82nd March the only problem was the snow and cold. When we started at 7:00 a.m. it was 11- C and only warmed up to 7-C..pretty much snowed the whole way....got great pictures...

we went to both Henri Chappelle Cemetery and Ardennes Cemetery [largest in Belgium and honored Pfc Charles Ressler [A battery of 80th AA] my Dad's buddy from Marietta, Pa KIA in Holland 10/1944...

Dad wrote down " Charlie was court-martialed twice and worked for me at BN Hqt while under Guard!. Volunteered to replace a glider man in Holland who cracked up..." Dad also wrote " came into Co Aid station, shrapnel to back of head...someone should remember him" ...

I was allowed to put Normandy Sand on the gravestone for pictures and now am waiting to hear from Marietta, PA and Columbia, PA Legion and VFW for me to send pictures of our little ceremony... {I've not been able to locate any family }....will keep looking....

I asked my Belgian friends about German survivors at Herresbach..he said getting any soldiers from Germany to talk is very hard. They are great record keepers as to troop movement, POW etc but no one will reveal where or when they actually were [due to too many atrocities. Civilian and military]....we spent time driving from Werbomont to Tros Ponts to Stavelot...found one of two bridges Dad could have been on near Hablemont

[ a Belgian friend gave me M-1 casings from there]..

some of the rural roads are closed during winter due to snow...I read about Judy Durkee [plan to go to Belgium] Airfare from Chicago to Brussels is \$860...add \$90 from Minn to Chicago...2 hr drive from Brussels to Werbomont....I see on the map Glen Ward was KIA near St Vith [actually Wallerode,/e ] most of the fighting done by 505 rct, 508 , 325 etc at that time was on the advance or moving forward across open fields...

They don't have roads every mile like here and looking at the map it looks like a 2-3 mile stretch between roads...I have an extra Ardennes map you can have...most of the 82nd walk was on farm lanes and logging trails too narrow for pickups and with knee deep snow I just don't want her to travel all that way and be told the location is three miles on a logging trail [gas is \$7 a gal and I never saw a snowmobile or 4 wheeler anywhere]...

The Ardennes is much like it was yrs ago [you walk to get where you want to go]..on the map Wallerode is near a green section which means, Spruce trees or forest,...it is green for about 20 miles to Herresbach with only two unidentified roads on that stretch....when you get back lets look at this map....take care ...

Rick Holle  
Hammond, WI

*Send Judy to Belgium*

*Rick's reference to Judy above is to Judy Durkee Peters whose dad, Glenn Ward, Rhinelander was KIA fighting for his 508th brothers. After the June 2 Airborne Memorial, We will be working with the Rhinelander VFW to raise airfare for Judy to Belgium. We will have a flyer about this at the All Airborne Memorial in Stevens Point June 2. Basically we'll just be asking people to send checks to the VFW. Thanks!*

Tom





## Last Jumps Soft Landings

### Thank you!

He was getting old and paunchy  
And his hair was falling fast,  
And he sat around the Legion,  
Telling stories of the past.  
Of war that he once fought in  
And the deeds that he had done,  
In his exploits with his buddies;  
They were heroes, every one.  
And 'though sometimes to his neighbors  
His tales became a joke,  
All his buddies listened quietly  
For they knew where of he spoke.  
But we'll hear his tales no longer,  
For ol' Joe has passed away,  
And the world's a little poorer  
For a Soldier died today.  
He won't be mourned by many,  
Just his children and his wife.  
For he lived an ordinary,  
Very quiet sort of life.  
He held a job and raised a family,  
Going quietly on his way;  
And the world won't note his passing,  
'Tho a Soldier died today.  
When politicians leave this earth,  
Their bodies lie in state,  
While thousands note their passing,  
And proclaim that they were great.  
Papers tell of their life stories  
From the time that they were young  
But the passing of a Soldier  
Goes unnoticed, and unsung.  
The ordinary fellow  
Who in times of war and strife,  
Goes off to serve his country  
And offered up his life.  
The politician's stipend  
And the style in which he lives,  
Are often disproportionate,  
To the service that he gives.  
While the ordinary Soldier,  
Who offered up his all,  
Is paid off with a medal  
And perhaps a pension, small.  
It is not the politicians  
With their compromise and ploys,  
Who won for us the freedom  
That our country now enjoys.  
Should you find yourself in danger,  
With your enemies at hand,  
Would you really want some cop-out,  
With his ever waffling stand?  
Or would you want a Soldier  
His home, his country, his kin,  
Just a common Soldier,  
Who would fight until the end.  
He was just a common Soldier,  
And his ranks are growing thin,  
But his presence should remind us  
We may need his likes again.  
For when countries are in conflict,  
We find the Soldier's part  
Is to clean up all the troubles  
That the politicians start.  
Then at least let's give him homage  
At the ending of his days.

"OUR COUNTRY IS IN MOURNING,  
A SOLDIER DIED TODAY."



Walter Pakulski may be gone but the Airborne Forces Bridge Memorial he conceived should last a lifetime. Walt got help from Les Schwarm, Doc Stolp and others in the Badger Chapter, 82nd Airborne Association. We'll be remembering them all. This year on June 2, we invite everyone to join us at the Bridge to remember all the Troopers from all the wars and all the peacetime Vets too. In the morning we'll be attending the Korean War Memorial service in Plover. Then, back at the bridge, Airborne displays open at noon with the program opening at 2PM.



Memorial Day Cross Plains, remember all especially Bill "Knobby" Walsh, 2/504 PIR, 82nd, who earned the DSC at Cheneaux and 2 PHs. Look for the stone with the Paratrooper.



## Bigger Obits

*Electronics makes large obituaries easy. I couldn't get all the obits in this issue but will add as many as possible next time. If you have a loved one who was Airborne send me the details and I will do my best to publish them. - Tom*

WALTER PAKULSKI JR.

Eulogy by CSM Norb Strasser  
Comrade Walter Pakulski Jr.

joined the US Army on May 30, 1944, at Ft Sheridan Illinois. As a young soldier, after Basic and Infantry training, he chose to go Airborne and eventually joined the 82nd Airborne Division at Ft. Bragg, NC.

Comrade Pakulski served in Central Europe as a Sergeant with the 326th GIR in the 13th Airborne Division. He received the WW 11 Victory Medal, American Theatre Ribbon, European/African/Middle Eastern Theatre Ribbon with one Bronze Battle Star Medal. He received one Overseas Bar and the Good Conduct Ribbon. He was honorably separated from service at Ft Sheridan, Ill April, 1946.

Walt often sat in the VFW Dining Room with us at our Steak and Omelet Breakfasts, taking a break with a cup of coffee from his "bread toasting duties" and shared stories of his Airborne experiences at Ft Bragg, during the war, his Glider Training and Flights, how the Gliders were disassembled for shipment to France and then reassembled, and his time in France.

The Gliders were actually towed by a C-47 two engine airplane, with a 300 ft. nylon rope. Many were built and sizes included ability to carry 15 and 34 combat troops and also many other needed supplies.

Gliders and Allied Airborne Forces spearheaded all major Invasions and Operations of the War starting with the Invasion of NORMANDY ON June 6th, 1944.

The 326th GIR was part of the 82nd Infantry Division during WW I and was REACTIVATED during WW 11. The 326th was eventually moved to an Airfield in Nebraska and trained up for deployment.

The fame of the 326's close combat course is recorded in "Yank", and was said to be the toughest in the country. January of 1945, the 326th GIR



Walter with Buddy Les Schwarm, 325 GIR, 82nd, Wausau. The two were very close friends and always did their best to honor the Glider Riders and all Troops. (Laney photo)

moved to Camp Shanks, NY and embarked on the regular Navy Transport, Gen George O Squire to the war zone.

Walt landed with the regiment in LeHarve France and ultimately in the "Staging Area" called Camp Lucky Strike in SEINE-INFERENCE FRANCE.

After the war was over, The 326th returned to the states in August of 1945 to Ft Bragg and was again incorporated in the 82nd Airborne Div.

Comrade Pakulski was proud of the 82nd Airborne Division and a testimonial to that is the 82nd Airborne Me-

monial located on the South Side of the Clark Street Bridge in Stevens Point. He was in part responsible for this monument. Look to your left before you cross the Bridge going west. Think of Walt.

Comrade Pakulski was a very early active member of VFW Post 10262 in Plover and was proud to have served as Post Chaplain for 25 years.

Comrade Pakulski reluctantly turned over his Chaplain Duties this past year to Comrade Frank Rashka.

Comrade Pakulski is missed.



## Walter Pakulski

I have been asked to say a few words about Walter Pakulski today at this, his Celebration of Life. What a distinguished honor this is for me. But, anyone who knew Walter knows that no one can say just a few words about this generous gentleman, dedicated husband, caring father, loving brother and distinguished Glider Rider Veteran of World War II.

From the moment you first met Walter, you knew they were standing in front of a special man. Walter always spoke with authority, walked with pride, and carried himself in a manner of distinction with that smile of his that was a mile wide.

During WWII, after basic and Infantry training, he volunteered for airborne school, wanting to be a paratrooper. After graduating from jump school, he was sent overseas to Europe to be a proud member of the 13th Airborne Division. Now, as we look back at that time of history, we all know that it took more courage and faith to sit in a big wooden box with wings, a tail and no propeller, and let the winds and the pilot take you and the other 13 soldiers, where ever the winds wanted to take you. We all now know that the fatality and injury rate of those glider passengers greatly outnumbered those who jumped from those safe airplanes. There were no landing strips, just small fields and lots of woodlands. This was one of Walters regrets; that he was not able to wear a combat jump star on his Glider Wings. I always looked at Walter with greater respect, knowing he was a glider rider. He was among the elite; the proud; and distinguished few; a WWII Glider Rider.

We all know that look of his that told us we just screwed up. He could look at any of us, not say a word, just look at us, and we knew we were in deep trouble. Think back to the 60's and 70's and all those young Navy sailors who boarded his Chicago Northwestern passenger train. They were heading from Great Lakes, north to Waukegan, Kenosha or Milwaukee for a weekend of liberty. Headed to a sailors weekend of frivolity and fun. Can you imagine the look they got, when they boarded the train, heading back to Great Lakes full of youthful and alcoholic enhanced vim and vigor, only to meet up with Walter and his look, knowing they had better sit down, be quiet and act like mom taught them to act?

As a young commander of the Plover, WI, Veterans of Foreign Wars Post for five years, I saw that look many times from Walter.



BSC Chair Frank Morris with Trapper



Walter guided and advised me during his 25 consecutive years as our Post Chaplain. Walter only missed 4 meetings for his first 23 years. That alone is an example of how Walter dedicated himself to whatever task he took.

While he was our Post Chaplain, and an active member of the 82nd Airborne Association, Walter felt that there should be an Airborne Memorial here in Stevens Point, where Highway 10 (the State of Wisconsin's Airborne Memorial Highway), crosses the Wisconsin River.

Walter wrote a letter to the State of Wisconsin, the State Highway Dept., the Department of Conservation, the Department of Natural Resources and many, many other letters to request assistance with this memorial. Walter got the 82nd Association's Badger Chapter to support him.

All efforts were in vane, as all his requests were denied. But, the State of Wisconsin did not know who they were dealing with. They did not know they were dealing with Walter Pakulski, an Airborne Glider Rider from WWII's 13th Airborne Division. Walter took on the State of Wisconsin single handedly, and won. They did not know Walters perseverance and "never give up" attitude. The State of Wisconsin proudly built what Walter wanted, on the West side of the Highway 10 Bridge, going over the Wisconsin River.

Years later, the bridge was upgraded, widened and lengthened. The memorial was going to be taken away in this new construction project. Again Walter went to work, and the State of Wisconsin decided to construct a new memorial on a bigger plot of ground, and completely enhance the entire concept. Today, that is a proud memorial to all our Airborne, Air Assault and Glider Riding veterans from all the conflicts of the United States of America. As you cross the Wisconsin River in Stevens Point, on the east side, look to the south, and you will see three flags proudly flying over Walters's tribute. The State of Wisconsin did not know whom they were dealing with when they became an adversary of Walter. It was their luck that all his contacts with them was done by U.S. Mail, and not in person, or they would have been given that look, and immediately known they had just screwed up saying "no" to him.

Over the past few years, I had the distinct privilege to work with Walter at our VFW Posts monthly steak and omelet breakfasts. Walter always made the toast. Wheat and white. Two four slice toasters. Walter had his work station on the counter, and all the other 15 volunteers knew not to dare encroach onto his toaster space. If you placed anything, temporarily in his space, you would get the look as he would gently slide your stuff, off his space and



back onto yours, even if you were just an inch or two into his three foot space.

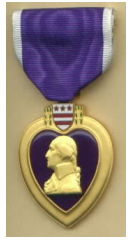
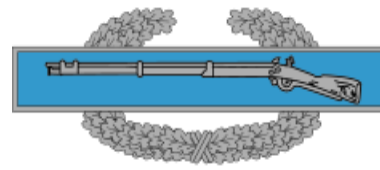
I filled in for Walter one Sunday. Put bread in one of the toasters, and shortly smelled burning toast. The toast did not pop up. The toaster was shot. As Commander, that week I went and bought a new, four slice toaster to replace the broken one. Next month, next Breakfast, I could hear Walter, in his "gentle quiet way", asking where the heck his old toaster was, and who in blazes spent \$30.00 to buy a new toaster? I told him I did. I got the look again. He said that the old toaster had been broken for more than a year, and he knew when to manually bring the toast up, and it was a waste of money to buy the new one, and wanted me to take the new one back. I told him I threw out the old one, so we had to keep the new one. He never got over that exorbitant expense I made, buying him a new toaster.

All who knew Walter respected him and admired him. He was a true American, a proud Veteran, dedicated husband, caring father, and loving brother who was always proud to serve his church and community.

When I grow up, I want to be just like Walter.

"Trapper" John Schultz  
Past Commander  
Plover VFW Post 10262  
US Army Retired  
7th District VFW Commander





Tom Driscoll, 3rd ID; and Pops arrive for Dick Leseman, USMC Tarawa, Memorial in Prescott Cemetery. Popeye was a fixture at Vets Memorials and events, an Airborne All The Way member of the VFW and American Legion. Center, this is Pops jumping Hollywood, probably at Ft. Benning Jump School. Pops kept jumping at Pierce County Fairs. His kids and their pals packed his chute! (Laney photo)



Popeye blessing WII Heroes, Paratroopers John Hankas, Hastings, Special Forces; and Bill Hanigan, 504 PIR, 82nd Airborne at 2010 Airborne Days in Baldwin. The Twin Cities Special Forces who organize the annual event, invited them as Honored Guests. An expert on Airborne Combat History, hell raising and fun, Pops was one of Prescott's all-time great characters. (Laney photo)



Pops on patrol in Korea sometime after jumping in with the 187 Airborne Regimental Combat Team at Suk Chan. He was with 2800 + of his "Rakkasan" Brothers who were dropped behind enemy lines to cut off the enemy headed North and to free POWs. Popeye was later wounded twice and missed the 187's second jump. Those are C-119s unloading the Rangers and the 187, the only U.S. Paratroopers in Korean War.



## Eugene "Popeye" Tronnier August 7, 1930-March 15, 2013

Popeye Tronnier could have been a Sgt. Major but opted for fun. Growing up in Prescott, Paratroopers like Pops and Bud "Salami" Hanken were like Supermen to us kids, Inspired me to jump off the garage with an umbrella even. Pops always looked pretty Hollywood but it must have pained him greatly to be so out-fished by Pat, his movie-star like wife.

My pal Tom Driscoll has a lot of stories about Popeye. "Popeye was an accomplished river pilot and occasionally covered vacations for pilots on other boats," says Tom. "He was steering the Mississippi Queen for a couple of weeks and just before the Captain returned, Popeye had a watch engraved, 'In appreciation for your terrific service, The MQ.' He showed it to the Captain when he came back. What a company! Look what they gave me!

"And the Captain went nuts! 'Those dirty, rotten, no good &^%\$#@! I worked for them for 30 years and they never gave me a goddam thing!'"

Hoping to someday compete with Pat, Popeye practiced fishing every chance he got. One day that meant putting his boat into Alphonse Huppert's swimming pool and organizing a party around it to welcome Alphonse home. That one made the Prescott Journal.

"Pops also set up a chair and card table inside the VFW door, where he offered customers \$10 bills for \$5 bills," says Tom. "No one took him up on because they thought it had to be a Popeye gimmick. He jumped into the County Fair at night. We asked how will we see you? Pops said he'd have a flashlight on when he jumped out of the plane. He did but dropped the flashlight and we all thought that was it for Popeye," Tom said. "But Popeye had it all planned and got a big kick out of it."

Son of Oliver and Marie Tronnier, lifelong resident of Prescott. Drafted 1951, volunteered for Airborne, Wings at Ft. Benning, assigned to 187 ARCT and deployed to Korea where he was also attached to the Rangers.

Gene was licensed as a First Class Pilot, Master and Steam or Motor Vessels from Minneapolis to the sea. Federal Ship Pilot, New Orleans. Delta Queen Pilot. In 1983, he had the honor of piloting "Calypso" for Jacques and Simone Cousteau during the Calypso's Mississippi Expedition. He was a member of the American Maritime Officers, the VFW and the American Legion.

He married Patricia Girgen, Hastings, in 1952 and was extremely loving and proud of her even though she out-fished him for 61 years! He was passionate about pheasant hunting, fishing, reading, playing cards, writing letters to the editor, practical jokes and story-telling over and over and over.

Preceded in death by his parents, two dear sons Michael and Jeff, his beloved daughter-in-law Barbara and his cousin/hunting buddy, Dale Carmen.

Gene is survived by his wife of 61 years, Patricia; daughter Jeanne (Jim) Tobias; son David; four grandchildren, Ian, Adam, McCray, and Bryar; two great-grandchildren, Kira and Karha and by his brother, William of Eau Claire.

It was an honor to know this great Paratrooper! My favorite Pops quote: "Anyone who knows anything about the WWII Airborne, knows the 82nd did a lot more than the 101st."



Rakkasans in Korea. (by James Dietz)



Top, Bill, Marie, and Eugene "Popeye" Tronnier. Bill was in the Air Force, Marie was one of Prescott's greatest ladies and Popeye just returned from Korea. It looks like Popeye's sleeves are stripeless! Bottom, Pops with his beloved B.A.R. in Korea, and, right; receiving a bottle of Root Beer from a Brother Rakkasan. Thanks to Pat Tronnier & Tom Driscoll for the pictures! We will remember Popeye!

May 2008

## Perry Hurlburt: Paratrooper, Citizen, Patriot



*Durand, WI-*

It was a hell of a winter but 100's of Durand residents were at least cozy inside thanks to Perry Hurlburt and his furnace installations. Perry's winning fights against the cold began in the famous, furnace-hearted 82nd Airborne Division.

It was more than cool for 1944 Paratrooper Perry crossing the N. Atlantic on a boat that was so crowded he stood in the chow line constantly.

The cold would only get worse. At the ripe old age of 19 Perry joined the Battle of the Bulge at St. Vith. "It was so cold you couldn't believe it! I joined C Co. of the 504 Parachute Infantry Regiment (The Devils) as a replacement. Did they need me? The company was down to 11 Paratroopers left out of 150."

He was assigned a machine gun squad leader's Sgt. position as a PFC. "There was no rank until after the war." Fighting at St. Vith is lesser known than Bastogne but - at least - just as tough. The 82nd "All Americans" killed SS

Panzer Tank Divisions there with machine guns, grenades, mortars, M1s & BARs. No one fights harder with less than the 82nd Airborne.

"We fought our way through things that were unbelievable during The Bulge and through the Siegfried Line", where he was awarded the Bronze Star for Valor. "We liberated concentration camps...what we saw was unbelievable."

After the war was won in the ETO, Perry and the rest of the 82nd prepared for the invasion of Japan. They were saved by the bomb.

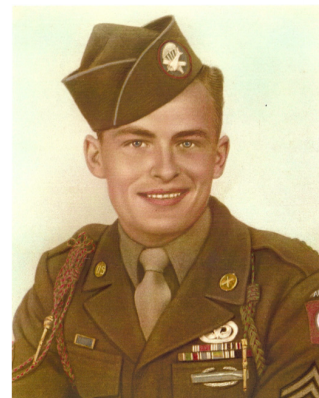
He was assigned to the 508 PIR, made Sgt. and became a member of the Honor Guard the 508 turned out for Ike. He re-upped. And he broke his arm sliding into second. "I made it through all that combat without a scratch and then broke my arm playing baseball!"

He came home in 1948 after making 26 jumps and was assigned to a burial honor guard traveling to service funerals. "The caskets were always closed."

Returning to Durand, he worked on the family farm for a short time then joined the local hardware store where he learned furnace installation. "I worked 70 hours a week for \$45! I decided to go to work for myself and opened a shop next door to our house."

He married Packer Fan Frances Schlosser and they have 11 children, all with names beginning with "M"!

Perry served on the Durand City Council and School Board. He flies the 82nd flag outside their seven-bedroom home. The new shop is located across the Chippewa and a lit-



*Cpl. Perry Hurlburt, 19, 82nd Airborne All American Machine Gunner at age 19.*

tle bit north on Hwy. 25. Perry's small business is now a family enterprise doing the same good work. Hurlburt Plumbing & Heating is run by three sons and a son-in-law and has 20 employees!

Paratrooper Patron St. Michael has watched over Perry. He had a stroke two years ago but is doing well. He looks good. "I worked until last year and now I fish," he says while hoping it warms up soon. He and Frances wonder how the Packers will do without Brett?

America's democratic soul rests in good men like Perry Hurlburt - the true *All Americans* who by age 20 lost more friends than most of us lose in our entire lives. Great men like Perry—and Herb Huebschen, whose story appears inside - came home to honor those friends throughout their lives with profound love for their families and hard, honest work and service to their communities.

We can thank them by trying to be more like them. Perry's virtuous, community service is what America needs now, more than ever.



It bothers me to be in Texas and miss the Airborne farewells to great men like Perry Hurlburt. But one thing I can do is re-post stories like this one on Perry and others I have, to help remember them to other Airborne Brothers. It was an honor to know Perry Hurlburt, Frances and the family.







*Top, 504 Machine Gunner Perry with active duty 82nd Paratroopers and Mike Haller, R; Center front, Tom Gaukel, Perry and Frances and Mike and Mark in 2nd row; the Hurlburt Clan assembled at The Highground for laying of Perry's Memorial Stone. (Laney pics)*

**Perry J. Hurlburt**, age 86,

of Durand, died Friday, December 21, 2012 at Chippewa Valley Hospital in Durand, with his family by his side.

Perry was born on January 12, 1926, in the town of Maxville. He attended Spring Creek School, but as a depression-era child, he started working at a very young age.

Perry was 18 when he enlisted in the Army, to serve in World War II. He served from February of 1944 until being honorably discharged on October 29, 1948, as a paratrooper in the 82nd Airborne Division. He made 26 jumps, liberated prisoners from war camps, and in December of 1944, he fought for our country in the Battle of the Bulge. After the war, Perry served under General Eisenhower and was also an Honor Guard at General Patton's funeral. On February 4th, 1948 he was awarded the Bronze Star for meritorious achievement in ground operations against the enemy.

In 1950, he married Frances Schlosser and they settled in Spring Creek, where he farmed and worked at Durand Hardware as HVAC technician. A year later they moved to Bear Creek. Together with Frances, they started their family business in 1959, Hurlburt Heating and Plumbing. Perry served on the Durand School Board from 1970-1979. Perry loved his wife, his children and especially his grandchildren and great grandchildren. Perry enjoyed fabricating sheet metal, loved to read, listen to classical music and was an avid fisherman and hunter.

Perry was a devoted member of the Badger State Chapter of the 82nd Airborne Division Association and flew the 82nd flag in his front yard.

Perry is survived by his loving wife Frances of 62 years and their 11 children, Mary Boxeth of Eagan, MN, Michael (Donna), Matthew (Debi), Mark (Sue Ann), Melissa (John) Weber, Max (Karen), Monte (Gay), all of Durand, WI, Myles (Sue) of Wausau, Martha (Jerry "Joe") Hartung of Elmwood, Maureen (Mike) Krings of Prescott, Myrna (Mike) Barthel of Farmington, MN. He has 26 grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren; three surviving brothers, Hugh (Claire) of Holyoke, MA, Glen (Cathy Powers) of Durand, Horace (Carol) of Eau Galle; and two sisters, Lola Hurlburt of Durand, and Lana Odegard of Eau Galle; and sisters-in-law, Rose Carlisle, Barb Bauer, Joan Hurlburt, MaryLou Hurlburt and Rosella Schlosser.

He is preceded in death by his parents; James M. and Edna B. (Hill) Hurlburt three brothers, brothers-in-law, and sisters- in-law.

Funeral services were December 28th, 2012 at Holy Rosary Catholic Church-Lima, rural Durand, with Rev. Eric Linzmaier officiating, burial in the church cemetery with Military Honors provided by the Durand American Legion Post #181.

Perry will be remembered at The Airborne Forces Bridge in Stevens Point at 2PM, June 2, 2013.





*Sam SanPhillippo, February 14, 1920—April 22, 2013. 325 GIR, 82nd Airborne Medic, 5 Purple Hearts for saving 100s of Troopers*

Madison - Salvatore (Sam) Sanfillippo, age 93, passed away peacefully on Monday, April 22, 2013, at 9:06 p.m. in his home thanks to the devotion, love, and care by his daughter Ellie, surrounded by his loved ones as he always wished.

Sam was born February 14, 1920, in Waukesha, WI. His mother and father arrived in this country from Palermo, Sicily when they were 12 years old.

Sam started in the funeral business in 1941 at the Wisconsin Institute of Mortuary Science in Milwaukee, WI, pursuing his degree until he was drafted into the United States Army in 1942. Sam had a very interesting and impressive past in the Army and entered the service at Fort Sheridan, IL on March 27, 1942. Sam received special training at Fitzimmons General Hospital in Denver, CO as a male nurse, and received a degree as a surgical technician during the Invasion of North Africa, landing in Casa Blanca in 1943. He also flew into the Skies of Tunisia, and then invaded Sicily, the country of his parents' birth. From Sicily he landed at the tip of the boot, for the invasion of Italy. After his mission in Italy and time in Naples, he went to Ireland and then to England to prepare for the invasion of Normandy Beach, June 6, 1944, D-Day.

He was also involved in taking over the second largest bridge in Holland, The Nijmegen Bridge, September 17, 1944, across the Moss Wood Canal.

Under the leadership of General James M. Gavin the 82nd Airborne continued to engage in the Battle of the Bulge, but sustained many losses. They broke through the German Siegfried line in the spring offensive. Sam, a part of the 82nd was the first to March through the City of Cologne. It was responsible for capturing the German 21st Army Division of 145,000 German soldiers and stopped Von Rundstedt in Belgium. Sam was awarded the Purple Heart 5

times for being wounded on the battlefield. He was involved in 7 major battles. He also received the bronze star for being responsible for the return of 295 wounded veterans to their loved ones.

The 82nd Airborne was awarded the



Netherlands' highest decoration, the Royal Order of Wilham Nassau, thus being the first foreign unit to receive such a high honor.

After the service, Sam married Patricia Butler in the University Chapel in 1946. They raised their two lovely daughters, Melanie and Ellie in Madison, WI.

Sam started working for Ed Lawrence of Fitch Lawrence Funeral Home in 1953. Mr. Lawrence joined Deming Fitch in the funeral business in 1910. Ed and his wife, Salma took Sam in and treated him like their own. Working very hard Sam soon became a partner in the business. Patricia assisted Sam in the operation of Fitch

Lawrence Sanfillippo Funeral Home. Sam and Patricia decided to sell the establishment to Bob Cress and his family in 1998. In 1999, Sam received a citation from Fred A. Risser, president of the senate. It commemorated the 149 years of business service provided to the Madison community by Fitch Lawrence Sanfillippo Funeral Home.

Sam, also an avid Badger fan was a sportsman like no other. Over the course of Sam's life, Sam enjoyed countless hunting and fishing trips. Fishing his way to becoming a legendary angler, Sam was eventually inducted into the Fishing Hall of Fame. His unique 3,000+ piece exhibit of his hunting and fishing conquests is still admired to this day.

Sam is survived by his daughters Melanie (Fred Petrie) of Milwaukee and Ellie Sanfillippo-Ketelsen of Madison; 5 Grandchildren Sam (Becca) Ketelsen, Sarah (Nick Case), Jon (Kelsey) Petrie, Michael, Stephen (Joree) Ketelsen; 11 Great Grandchildren Zak, Hailey, Allah, Abbi, Samuel, Camdyn, Lucas, Elijah, Tessa, Logan, and Beckham.

He is further survived by his sister Mary Sanfillippo of Oconomowoc, WI and many other admirers, relatives, and friends.

Sam was predeceased by his wife, Pat and his other brothers and sisters.

A visitation was held Monday, April 29, 2013 at the CRESS CENTER, 6021 University Ave. There was a Mass of Christian Burial on Tuesday, April 30, 2013 at St. BERNARD CATHOLIC CHURCH, 2015 Parmenter Street, Middleton with Msgr. Douglas Dushack presiding. Burial followed at Resurrection Catholic Cemetery. Dad, all that you left behind will forever keep your memory alive.

May you rest in Peace, Fishing on calm waters, Reuniting with loved ones and comrades and catching those infamous mounters. We love you!



## Sam Sanfillippo, 325 GIR Medic, Fisherman and Good Citizen

**Editor's note:** BSC Member Sam Sanfillippo, 89, is probably the nicest guy I've ever talked to on the phone. For a couple of years, we've been trying to get together in Madison but Sam's health is not the best and so it has not worked out. But he always asks about the family and let's me know he's praying for me—not new for Sam.

Sam was a 325 Glider Rider and Medic. During WWII he prayed every day that God would help him save his Airborne Brothers. Prayers answered he saved many 82nd Airborne Troopers in the battles of N. Africa, Sicily, Italy, Normandy, Holland, Belgium and Berlin.

He met Gen. Jim Gavin at the Lord Mayor of Leicester's party for 500 American and British Soldiers and became friends with the General.

The jacket he's wearing in the picture at right is Badger Red. He wears the 82nd patch on the shoulder and a pair of huge Glider Wings on the left collarbone. Below those are his decorations and Bucky. Sam was a close friend of Gov. Warren Knowles and fished with him often. Sam wore this jacket when accepting the Fishing Hall of Fame's Legendary Angler of 1999 Award. A steady contestant in the Governor's Fishing Opener, Sam also won the Largest Bass Award in 1999 and is pictured with Gov. Tommy Thompson.

Here's a terrific story on what this great Airborne Trooper and Citizen did for kids:

MADISON, Wis., Jan 31 (Reuters Life!) - A stuffed squirrel clutching a fishing rod. A dead badger hefting a football for a winning pass. Other ex-rodents enjoying a carousel ride.

Welcome to the world of Sam Sanfillippo, a funeral director who has amassed a large collection of stuffed animals in unconventional scenarios to cheer up guests mourning their loved ones -- and created a mini-tourism attraction.

"This is to show kids when they come for a funeral and they cry," said Sanfillippo, 86, the semi-retired director of the Cress Funeral Home in Wisconsin's capital city, Madison.

In one room here stuffed squirrels drink and carouse in a warmly-lit saloon, while over at "The Woodland Fair," families of dead animals enjoy fair rides and three squirrels dance on stage in grass skirts in the "Topless Girlie Show."

Alongside the numerous display cases and 1,200 fish on the walls, which includes everything from a hammerhead shark to marlins, are trophies showing Sanfillippo's prowess as a fisherman. "I caught all the fish myself," said Sanfillippo, a war veteran, who is unique as his collection.

On the walls hang pictures of Sanfillippo on fishing trips with celebrities like former



astronauts Deke Slayton, Vance Brand and Tom Stafford and politicians Gerald Ford and Ronald Reagan.

Sanfillippo served as a medic in World War Two, receiving five Purple Hearts, a Silver Star and a Bronze Star. A veteran of campaigns in North Africa, Sicily, Italy, and France, he says he was briefly declared dead in 1944 when a large shell exploded above his unit.

"The shell supposedly killed five of us," he said. "Afterward they figured that the vibrations of the lorry they put us in started my heart because I sat up. The driver thought the dead were coming back to life and he was so scared he ran away."

Since the late 1940s Sanfillippo has worked in the funeral business in Madison and built up his collection of stuffed animals.

Although he caught the fish himself, the squirrels and chipmunks have all been killed by cars, with the exception of the albino squirrels, on display playing basketball or driving miniature cars. Friends in Marionville, Missouri, who raise them sent those to him.

"The first time they came I was amazed to find a box of eight frozen squirrels at the door," sent via United Parcel Service Inc., Sanfillippo said.

Buses of tourists come to see his collection on a regular basis. Andrew Johnson, one of the Cress Funeral Home's directors, said the home is happy to accommodate guests if they call ahead and no funerals are under way.

"It's certainly an interesting collection," he added, "but it is most definitely Sam's."

We thank Sam Sanfillippo for Badger America.

It is our honor to know him!

### RANGERS RECON

By Kipp Hartman, Ranger/504PIR

#### *Rangers Lead the Way!*

2010 is going to bring big changes to the way Paratroopers arrive to the field of battle. The new T-11 Parachute is now being used at The US Army Airborne School at Ft. Benning GA.

The new T-11 parachute is designed to hold up to 400 pounds compared to its predecessor the T-10 at only 300 pounds. The ability to carry more weight equals a softer landing for Paratroopers reducing injuries. Today's paratroopers are carrying more equipment to the field of battle and are exceeding the capabilities of the T-10 parachute. The T-11 has more of a square shape than the familiar circular shape of the T-10 parachute. Its being said that the deployment of the parachute is smoother and oscillation is minimized.

Currently Students at the US Army Airborne School are required to jump both the T-10 and T-11 parachutes. The T-11 parachute is currently being used by the Ranger Regiment and the US Army Airborne School.

The 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division is currently fielding the T-11 parachute and the rest US Army plans to field the T-11 parachute by 2014.

After more than 50 years of service, the T-10 parachute that most of us jumped with, will be replaced by the new T-11.

*All The Way!*

- Kipp



## Donald R. Olson

(7/23/12) Donald R. Olson, age 91, of Black River Falls died Saturday, July 21, 2012 in the Pine View Care Center in Black River Falls, WI.

He was born in Eau Claire, WI. on Jan. 26, 1921 to Martin B. and Tillie (Olson) Olson. Don graduated from Hixton High School.

He served in the United States Army during WW II from July 3, 1941 until Sept. 20, 1945. He was a Paratrooper in the 502<sup>nd</sup> Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division. He received the Silver Star for his heroism during the Battle of The Bulge. He received the Purple Heart for wounds he received while in action in Holland in 1944.

Don married Ruth J. Janke on Jan. 26, 1953 in Augusta, WI. Following their marriage the couple resided and farmed on Ruth's family farm in the Town of Garden Valley. They later moved to Black River Falls where Don worked as a painter at Fort McCoy. He later became a letter carrier for the U. S. Postal Service in Black River Falls. He retired from the postal service.

He was a member of St. John's Lutheran Church in Black River Falls.

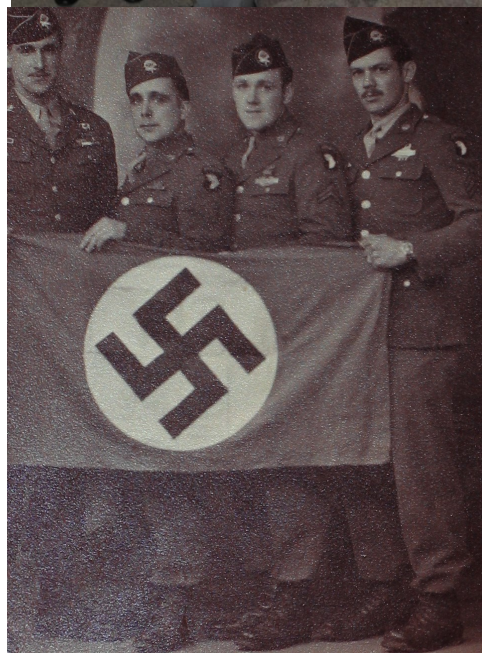
Don enjoyed gardening, fishing, deer hunting, and helping-out on Dick and Joanne Holder's Farm.

Surviving are two step daughters, La-Donna Humphrey, Eau Claire, WI. and Bonnie



(Joseph) Jacobson, Chippewa Falls, WI., 1-brother, Harold Olson, Northfield, WI., 1-sister, Helen Stevens, Mankato, MN., 2-step grandchildren, Barron and Tammy, 3-step great grandchildren, Isaiah, Jaxsyn "Mae", and Gracie Jo, and 1-step, great great grandson, Sebastian.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Ruth, on July 20, 2009, his parents, 2-brothers, Leonard and Victor, and one sister, Irene Jacobson. Funeral services for Donald R. Olson were at the Upper Pigeon Creek Lutheran Church, Hwy 121, Hixton, WI. Pastor Steven Stork conducted services and Don was eulogized by SSG Howard Rennhack a veteran of the 325 Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division. Burial with military honors was in the church cemetery.



**"You and me Tom,"** Don Olson told me, "we were Airborne. We were lucky. We were Airborne. The 502nd, what an outfit that was!"

It was the last time I saw Don. He told me he was leaving and he died a few days later, one of the proudest Paratroopers I've known. A hunter and fisherman who liked his brandy and good friends. First time I visited Don, I had to marvel at the buck mounts. 8-10 pointers, maybe even bigger, lined the top of the living room walls! I liked him right off. I liked him even more when he said, "So you were in the 82nd Airborne. Well, I guess I'd have to say they were senior to us."

I had read a book called "We Die Alone". It's about a Norwegian WWII Com-mando, an incredible, true story of toughness, human survival and community. When I went to Don's home to interview him I marveled as much at the mounts as I did their placement. In the small talk warm-up, Don reminded me of the Norwegian in the book. When I got the stories of him being shot twice in Market/Garden and getting the Silver Star in The Bulge, I was convinced Don was Five- Oh -Deuce tough. A real Airborne Norwegian. Even had the accent.

Howard Rennhack of the 2000+ jumps eulogized Don. Before he was done he had the whole church chanting Airborne. A few years earlier Howard had asked me to come to Merrilan for lunch with Don. He broke it to me lightly that Don was 101st. I said that putdown stuff doesn't bother me anymore. But it was kind of fun when we were 19. Don was a great combat Paratrooper. He had a great heart too. Howard and I had lots of lunches with him, got him the Combat Jump Star for his Wings, enjoyed all his stories. He loved Howard's homemade wine. His foot doc was a good friend. When I was gone South, I'd get calls from Howard and Don when they were sampling the grapes. Don couldn't hear a thing I said. But he said the nicest things to me. And when he left us, I told Howard, "You know getting to know these WWII guys is like losing your dad again when they die." Howard said, "We were honored to be friends with Troops like Don is how to look at it." And so we were and are. - Tom



**From Small-Town Roots: It shouldn't take a holiday to honor our nation's veterans**

JULY 25, 2012 1:48 PM • BY CASSANDRA COLSON | REPORTER

I was 5 years old when I asked my grandpa Lester why he had a funny drawing on his upper arm.

"That drawing won't ever go away," he told me. "I got it when I was in the Navy."

That green, fading tattoo of a little boy and girl was my first real glimpse into a veteran's service in World War II — a war that served as a defining conflict in U.S. and world history and a defining era in the lives of those who served our country during those crucial four years.

Oh, that tattoo. I asked so many questions about it.

Why did you get it? Why is it a little boy and girl? Why did you get something on your arm that you couldn't wipe off?

Grandpa didn't tell me much about it — other than fibbing and telling me it was a picture of me and my cousin Ross. He didn't tell me about his time as an electrician on the USS Greene during the war either, and that was OK. I grew to appreciate his service and other veterans service much more as I aged.

My grandpa had a vastly different experience in World War II than people like Donald R. Olson of Black River Falls. Donald, who passed away last weekend, graciously sat down with me for an interview for a front-page Jackson County Chronicle Veterans Day story in 2009.

He came to my office, sat down and began recounting his experiences as a member of the Army's 502nd Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 101st Airborne Division during World War II.

The stoic man and proud Norwegian braced himself as his voice broke when he told me about watching his comrades die right before him. It moved me.

Donald, the recipient of a Purple Heart and Silver Star, also told me how he somehow escaped a near-certain death during a mission in Eindhoven, Holland, when a bullet struck his rifle and ricocheted off into his helmet.

The bullet just missed striking his spine.

Donald received the combat jump stars he so rightly deserved a little more than a year after our interview and 65 years after his World War II service.

A friend of Don's told me why they acquired the stars for the then-89-year-old.



*At Don's 90th we gave Cassie a thanks plaque for all she does for Vets.*

ber of the Jackson Little League program, also was a proud World War II veteran.

I talked with Bob, who passed away in August 2011, about how he felt about having a local baseball field dedicated in his name, and he was as humble about that as he was about his service. He's the author of five books, including two on veterans.

Bob's son told me about his father's long-lasting appreciation for veterans that continued long after his service was complete. Bob's another veteran we should all appreciate.

I also have several high school classmates who joined the armed forces after our graduation and subsequently served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

I don't take their service lightly either because, as we all know, I sit at a desk and write for a living. I don't put myself in harm's way, and I most certainly appreciate their contributions to our country's safety and security.

We also must never forget the sacrifices of the men and women who never make it home from conflict. Their ultimate sacrifice should always be kept in mind, appreciated and appropriately honored.

It may not be Veterans Day or Memorial Day today, this week, month or even next month, but I'm making a concerted effort to appreciate the service and sacrifice of current, former and late military men and women who make my life as an American freer, safer and more secure.

Thanks Grandpa, thanks, Donald, thanks, Bob, and thanks to all the other men and women who I could never have enough space to name. Your actions are tattooed in my mind.

Sgt. Don Olson, 502nd PIR, 101st Airborne Division, WWII  
*A Paratrooper's Paratrooper*

"When the enemy attacked with 14 tanks and a battalion of infantry, Don's entire section was knocked out by tank, artillery, mortar and machine gun fire. Although under the most intense enemy fire, Corporal Olson carried each man to the machine gun emplacement and treated their wounds. He then manned the machine gun unassisted and delivered accurate and effective fire on the enemy infantry and armor which was only fifty yards from his position. Between bursts of machine gun fire, he treated his wounded comrades and attempted to call for aid. His courage and determination enabled him to repel the enemy attack and inflict approximately forty casualties on the enemy troops." (From Don's Silver Star citation.)

Rest easy Paratrooper. We will remember you Don.  
Your 82nd Airborne Badger Brothers

"This is America and these guys were the Americans that stood up for us ... America wouldn't be what it is without people like Don to keep this country free," Howard Rennhack told me. We hear that type of sentiment over and over again when veterans-related holidays roll around, but it's true — and important to keep in mind every day and not just on the designated days. Don's service — and all veterans' service — should not be taken lightly and most certainly not for granted. Every time I drive on Highway 54 out of Black River Falls to Melrose, I pass by the former home of longtime BRF resident Bob Teeples. Teeples, known around the county as a baseball aficionado and founding mem-

**Dr. Michael Collopy**

No Dr. did more for combat veterans than Col. [Mike Collopy](#). Chief of Orthopedics at the Milwaukee VA, Mike cared for a lot of Vets including Gordy Starck, 505 PIR, 82nd Airborne, Franklin, after Gordy had a stroke a few years ago.

"He was a great Dr.," Gordy says, "and he knew baseball too. I had a good time with him"

"We always looked forward to Gordy's appointment with Dr. Collopy," Margie Starck says. "Dr. Collopy and Gordy would go on and on about everything from wars to sports. We loved him and we will miss him dearly."

Mike was a field surgeon in Vietnam and volunteered to serve in the 1st Gulf War. Gordy had four combat jumps and saved 100s of Paratroopers lives as a combat medic.

My brother Bill who is also an Orthopedic Surgeon worked with Mike at the VA. "Mike had the greatest love for combat Vets," says Bill. "I remember combat Vets coming in and Mike would always say, 'Give them whatever they want.'"

That's the way it should be.

**Lew A. Dowler**

Lew A. Dowler, 88, of Fond du Lac, met his heavenly Father on Jan. 19, 2013, at Grancare Nursing and Rehab Center, Fond du Lac. He was born 12/5/1924 in Birch Tree Missouri.

Lew served in the 82nd Airborne Division from 1943-45. During his service as a Paratrooper during WWII, Lew showed heroic efforts by rescuing his fellow soldiers who were in enemy territory.

After returning from the war, Lew pitched for the Fond du Lac Panthers, a farm team for the NY Yankees.

He married Arleen K. Glasow, Nov.



Chapel at Pigeon Creek Cemetery, Hixton, WI.

8, 1946 at the parsonage of St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Fond du Lac by the Rev. Gerhard Pieper.

Lew was previously employed at Mercury Marine and retired from Tecumseh Products of New Holstein after 23 years of service.

Lew was a long-time member of Good Shepard Lutheran Church. Besides spending time with his family, Lew enjoyed playing baseball, horseshoe, fishing, golfing, camping and traveling.



He is survived by his wife, Arleen Dowler; two daughters, Caren (Richard) Gantner of Fond du Lac; and Debra (Bruce) Klintworth of Kansas City, MO; grandchildren, Brian Gantner, Fond du Lac; Eric (Amy) Klintworth of Lawson, MO; Kara Pennington (Blaine) of Belton, MO; and Tammy (Michael) Bernhard of Theresa, WI; great grandchildren, Zackery and Kyler Klintworth, Samantha and Sabrina Bernhard, and Alexandra Pennington; brothers, Donald (Fran) Dowler of Fair Play, MO; and Dow Dowler of Fond du Lac. He was preceded in death by his parents and brother Robert.

Per Lew's wishes, a private burial was held at Good Shepard with Rev. Brett Naumann officiating. Burial was in Rienzi Cemetery.

R.I. P. Paratrooper.

**Doanld W. Lucksted, Sr.**

March 19, 2013 12:00 am

MELROSE — Donald W. Lucksted Sr., 66, of Melrose passed away Satur-

day, March 16, 2013, at Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center.

He was born in Mauston, Wis. on Aug. 9, 1946, to Theodore and Earline (Skaggs) Lucksted.

Donald worked out of Local 18 as a journeyman sheet metal worker for thirty-eight years.

He served in the U.S. Army and was a combat Veteran of the elite 82nd Airborne.

Donald is survived by a son, Donald Jr. (Paula) Lucksted of Onalaska; and a daughter, Lisa (Larry) Waite of St. Peters, Mo.; four grandchildren, Alex, Cassie, Josie, and Donovan; three sisters; and three brothers. He was preceded in death by his parents; a granddaughter, Danielle; a brother, Jim; and a sister, Donna.

A Celebration of Life with Military Honors was held at the Dickinson Family Funeral Home, 401 Main St., Onalaska.

John Givens, Editor, Badger Chapter, 82nd Airborne Division Assoc. saluted Don's 82nd Airborne service and his good life.

Memorials are suggested to Donald Lucksted Jr. or Lisa R. Waite for the procurement of the family farm. Online condolences may be sent to the family at [www.dickinsonfuneralhomes.com](http://www.dickinsonfuneralhomes.com)

R.I.P. Paratrooper.





# 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**

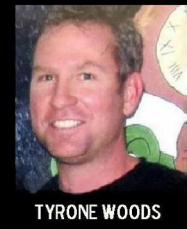
**ALL MAAA TROOPERS ARE LEADERS.**

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

THESE TWO NAVY SEALS HELD OFF AN ENTIRE PLATOON OF TERRORISTS FOR 7 HOURS AT THE BENGHAZI EMBASSY. THEY VOLUNTARILY TRIED TO SAVE OUR AMBASSADOR CHRISTOPHER STEVANS AND HIS AID SEAN SMITH.



GLEN DOHERTY



TYRONE WOODS

THE WHITE HOUSE AND STATE DEPARTMENT WATCHED THEM DIE FROM THE SITUATION ROOM IN THE WHITE HOUSE. OBAMA HAD MARINES 1 HOUR AWAY. HE HAD TWO AIRCRAFT BASES WITHIN AN HOUR OF BENGHAZI. THERE WERE C-130 GUN SHIPS READY TO GO. BUT OBAMA DID NOTHING!

**I WILL NOT SUPPORT A COWARD  
TO BE THE COMMANDER AND CHIEF  
OF OUR BRAVE FORCES.**



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.



*"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*



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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: Inclark@aol.com  
608-222-4833

## 82nd Re-Enactors once again traveling a long way to honor Vets!



82nd Airborne Vet and historian Steve Mrozek goes over the WWII Airborne ETO Battlefields in planning for the "Maggie's War" tour. Mrozek, an All Pro tour guide and combat veteran was a longtime historian for the famed 82nd Airborne Division. (Photo by Justin Connaher)



### Specialty Tours



If you're going to St. Mere Eglise, check out Specialty Tours. Steve Mrozek is a leading authority on the WWII 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions. Steve was 82nd Historian, has written two books, and knows the ETO.



Dave Kemp, 82nd, 173rd Airborne Brigade Vietnam Vet with Frank Parzatka, WWII 327 GIR, 101st Airborne at the King Veterans Home on Veterans Day.

Frank made Normandy, Holland, The Bulge and Bastogne.