

GERONIMO!



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OPERATION DRAGOON

August 15, 1944

thru

September 14, 1944



America's First Combat Paratroopers!





PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Paratroopers and 509th Family,

The year is moving fast and a lot of great events have been celebrated in 2019!

As many of us gathered for the annual 509th PIA Reunion during the first week of June in Fort Smith, Arkansas – several of our most dedicated 509ther's, and family of 509ther's, were making "trips of a lifetime" visiting Normandy and preparing to visit Le Muy, France

Lawrence & Lori Blood represented the 509th spectacularly during the 75th Anniversary of D-Day and made an incredible tour of the whole Normandy battle area.

LTC Matthew Anderson (our Historian & Webmaster) invested many months preparing, planning, and training to participate in demonstration jumps and professional representation of the 509th and all American Paratroopers for both the D-Day Anniversary and the 75th Anniversary of Operation Dragoon, in Southern France. If you don't know about Matt, I invite you to watch these two short videos:

~ Matt's Story: ['Be Your Best, Be a Soldier'](#)

~ Matt in Action: ['Be Your Best'](#)

Tom Tsvigas, Teresa Klisiewicz Johnson, Tryggvi & Amy Larum, and Matt Anderson – All made the pilgrimage to Southern France to represent the 509th during the 75th Anniversary of Operation Dragoon. From all accounts, they had a wonderful time and spent many quality hours with the local community, members of the WWII reenactment group: Airborne Command and the WWII Airborne Demonstration Team. We all live vicariously through adventures such as these! Upon her return, Teresa received some attention from the local newspaper. See the article here:

~ [Teresa's Story in The Fayetteville Observer](#)

If you're like me, I'm already looking forward to our next reunion. The specific details are yet to be worked out, but the location has been narrowed down to Boston, Massachusetts for the 2020 reunion. I believe the Association has put out information regarding the decision behind this location, but feel free to contact me if you have any concerns or thoughts!

Lastly, I want to thank every one of you, our 509th family, for continuing to support the 509th Parachute Infantry Association! It is because of you, that we are able to perpetuate the esprit de corps, lineage, and honor of the 509th Parachute Infantry Regiment.

**=AMERICA'S FIRST COMBAT PARATROOPERS=
Airborne All The Way – GERONIMO!**

Kevin E. Boatman
President, 509th Parachute Infantry Association
Contact: abn509thassoc@yahoo.com

OUR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2019-2020



Kevin E. Boatman,
President



Henry Hyde,
Vice President



Dale Fairbanks,
Treasurer



Sheila Hyde,
Secretary



Joyce Hegeman,
Membership Secretary



Philip Handscomb,
Sergeant-at-Arms

It is an honor and privilege to serve the 509 Parachute Infantry Association along with its members!

We, as individuals and as a group, aim to represent all past, present & future Paratroopers while serving on this board.

Thank you all for your time, efforts and dedication to the Association!



Matt Anderson,
Historian



Dave Bush,
Trustee



Lee Barber,
Trustee



Eric Luneau,
Trustee



Rogelio Urrutia,
Trustee



Tom Tsvigas,
Trustee

75th Anniversary Travels

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On left: Tom Tsivas, 509 PIA Trustee & Theresa Johnson



On Right: Matt Anderson, 509 PIA Historian & webmaster with WWII Demo Team



One of our own 509ther's, and a good friend, was in this class!
Way to go Lawrence Blood!
AATW-GERONIMO Brother!!

Airborne Daughter Honors Father at 75th Anniversary of Operation Dragoon in Southern France

Like many members of our Greatest Generation who fought in the theatres of World War II, former Fayetteville resident, Massachusetts born Henry Dennis Klisiewicz, did not speak of his war experiences with his family. As a child, daughter Teresa Klisiewicz Johnson, a Fayetteville native now living in Apex, did not give much thought to the shadow box full of medals that sat on the family's fireplace mantle. Growing up in the town heavily dominated by neighboring Fort Bragg, Teresa recalls thinking, "Everyone's Dad had been in the military and had medals." It wasn't until after his death in 2009 when she read through a notebook that her Father kept documenting his military career that she realized he was a hero, and among our country's first combat paratroopers, the 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion, (PIB).

Soon after, Teresa became involved in the 509th PIB Association which honors the legacy of the 509th and hosts annual reunions to celebrate the history of the battalion. Teresa was fortunate to meet several of her Father's former comrades at the reunions and hear first-hand accounts that were testimony to her Father's bravery during the war. For years she has had a desire to trace his steps on the battlefield. Teresa finally had the opportunity to walk in her Father's footsteps during the recent celebration of the 75th Anniversary of Operation Dragoon, the Allied invasion of Southern France.

On August 9, Teresa joined several 509th PIB veterans and 509th PIB Association members, along with the World War II Airborne Demonstration Team in attending a week-long celebration in Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur to commemorate this historic event.

Operation Dragoon was significant in establishing a second front in France to rapidly bring about the destruction of the German war machine. The Allied airborne and seaborne assault on Nazi-occupied Southern France involved 1000 ships, 3000 aircraft, and up to one million troops. The week long celebration included airborne and land demonstrations, tours of significant airborne Drop Zones and battle areas, commemorative jumps, cemetery services, wreath layings, ceremonies, parades of US military war time vehicles, and street parties.

Teresa met local historians, authors, members of French demonstration teams such as the Battle Patrol and the Airborne Command, which is the official French 509th Allied World War II Demonstration Team, American, French and British veterans. She even rode in a US World War II era jeep during a military parade in Saint Maxime where the amphibious assault occurred. "My Father attended the 50th anniversary celebration when he was living. It was truly an honor for me to be there to honor not only my Dad's memory but the memory of all of the Allied Forces who fought and died to liberate this area from Nazi control." Teresa said. "The gratitude, respect and reverence of the French people, young and old alike, was overwhelming! There were British, French and American flags flying everywhere in all of the towns in Provence and along the French Riviera."

On their first day in southern France, Matt Anderson, Historian for the 509th PIB, led Teresa and the rest of the group on a tour of Drop Zone C, high above the town of Le Muy where HQ and A Company and the 463rd PFAB landed. "I was struck by the dangerous rugged, rocky, terrain of the DZ in contrast to the beautiful vineyards and scenic area around me. The paratroopers were actually misdropped there. The vineyards of the intended DZ less than a mile away would have certainly made for a nicer landing." A total of 552 paratroopers jumped with the 509th. Half of them jumped in Le Muy while the other half were misdropped in Saint Tropez. Despite the hazards encountered on the DZ, all but 32 paratroopers survived the jump. (photos of DZ C and the intended vineyard DZ available).



Left photo: Henry Klisiewicz

Right photo: Henry's daughter, Teresa Johnson



Airborne Daughter Honors Father at 75th Anniversary of Operation Dragoon in Southern France

According to official military documents, on August 15, 1944 at 0423 hours, Henry Klisiewicz, a Medic in A Company Headquarters, of the 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion attached to the Light Machine Gun Platoon jumped into the foggy darkness onto a rugged drop zone C, south of Le Muy, France along with 45 other plane loads of paratroopers. Their mission was to secure the road networks passing through Le Muy to deny the enemy the ability to reinforce their own positions along the coast and give time for the amphibious forces to come ashore and establish a strong foothold for the long anticipated liberation of Southern France.

The group's Le Muy tour continued with a stop at the Machine Gun Mortar area and positions which overlooked the town, where the 509th and 463rd took up positions, viewing it as Teresa's Dad and his comrades did 75 years before. "I couldn't imagine how a small group could succeed at such a huge undertaking with only 3 men being killed in action." (photos of these areas available).

The 509th would be successful in carrying out its mission and was given an additional mission to capture the southern half of Le Muy while the 550th Glider Infantry captured the northern half of the town. This was accomplished despite half of the 509th PIB (another 45 planes) being misdropped at Saint Tropez and accidentally liberating that town. Twenty-three members of the 509th would be killed or missing in action during these first three days of the operation. Even tougher days for the 509th PIB were ahead.

On August 19, 1944 the 509th received new orders to move out and secure the right flank of the advance of the US 7th Army which was rapidly advancing north to join forces with the Allies who had landed in Normandy in June. On August 20, 1944 the 509th PIB moved into positions vacated by the 141st Infantry Regiment of the 36th Infantry Division. There they found themselves facing enemy defenses on Castle Ridge north of Napoule occupied by the German 28th Reserve Jager Battalion. Plans to attack were to commence the next morning.

On August 21, 1944, B and C companies of the 509th PIB would advance to attack while Headquarters and A Company would provide support by fire to keep the enemy busy while B and C Companies advanced across a deep ravine under enemy fire. B Company would suffer heavy casualties and Henry Klisiewicz and other 509th Medics would aid in providing care and evacuating the wounded back to the safety of the battalion aid station for further care. C Company captured the castle on the ridge and what few Germans that were not captured or killed, fled to the next hill called San Peyre. Thirteen members of the 509th PIB were killed with another 13 injured on Castle Hill. The next morning it was A Company's turn to attack the hill San Peyre and liberate the town of Napoule. They did so by noon meeting only light resistance. The 509th PIB was ready to advance on Cannes.

"On the tour we visited the beautiful seaside town of Napoule where the 509th took up a position on a ridge across from the opposition who had control of Castle Hill. The ridges were very close in proximity and though the ridge occupied by the Germans was very rugged, it allowed them excellent visibility of the 509th as they forged their way through the ravine to gain control of the castle. I imagined my Dad running into enemy fire to retrieve the wounded from the ridge." (Photos of the ridges and the castle available. Non battle photo of my Dad standing near this area available.)

On August 23, 1944 the 509th PIB came upon a destroyed bridge across the Saignes River. With the 645th Tank Destroyer Battalion attached to support the 509th PIB, it was necessary to secure this area to allow the combat engineers of the 596th Airborne Engineer Company to make repairs to allow the armor to continue its advance. The 509th PIB would push east and secure the next key terrain and deny the enemy the ability to place effective fires on the combat engineers. A Company would advance across the Saignes River and the parallel running Beal Creek into a clearing



Left: 509th DZ C
Le Muy, France

Right: US WWII Airborne
Demo team member
Overlooks DZ at Le Muy



Airborne Daughter Honors Father at 75th Anniversary of Operation Dragoon in Southern France

Fully exposed to enemy fire Henry Klisiewicz and the other medics repeatedly ran out to recover the wounded bringing them back to Beal Creek and placing them under the bridge. Once all were brought back to the creek further care was administered and preparations were made to further evacuate them to the rear. With the bridge itself still under enemy fire, the medics began the process of swimming the casualties across the 30 foot wide and 10-foot-deep creek up on the opposite bank and then back the six hundred yards to the Saignes River and finally to the Battalion Aid station for further care. The battle as well as the evacuation continued for five hours. The 3rd platoon managed to successfully repel the enemy counterattack led by their wounded Lt Shaker who continued to move along the line encouraging his men and directing their efforts. Lt Lieber was severely wounded and was not able to crawl/walk back and was the last to be evacuated from the Beal Creek bridge.

The 509th PIB had repelled the last organized German assault in this sector. The 509th PIB advanced the next day to find that the Germans, out of men and resources, were falling back leaving the path open for the liberation of Cannes. Eleven members of the 509th PIB were killed in action in St. Cassien.

Henry Klisiewicz was awarded the Silver Star for his actions. According to the Silver Star Citation: "For gallantry in action near St. Cassien, France, on August 23, 1944. The infantry platoon to which Private First Class Klisiewicz was attached as a medical aid-man had been subjected to heavy artillery and machine gun fire and was forced to withdraw. The only route of withdrawal was along a road under direct enemy observation and fire. Private First Class Klisiewicz, knowing that the enemy could overrun the position at any time, volunteered to remain with the wounded. Although constantly exposed to enemy fire, Private First Class Klisiewicz moved from one wounded soldier to another, administering first aid, and successfully evacuated four of his comrades along the heavily shelled road to a place of comparative safety. Again exposing himself to enemy fire, he moved far in advance of his own troops and located an officer who was seriously wounded. As the wounded officer was unable to walk, Private First Class Klisiewicz, after administering first aid, placed the wounded officer on his back and carried him a distance of over four hundred yards along the shell beaten road to a point where other aid men completed the evacuation. The courageous and prompt actions of Private First Class Klisiewicz resulted in the expeditious evacuation of his wounded comrades from the heavily shelled areas and prevented their possible capture or death."

In "Stand in the Door", a book covering the wartime history of the 509th PIB, by Charles H. Doyle and Terrell Stewart. Lt. Harry Lieber recalls: "The bridge was denied us by anti-tank small arms fire. I was put under the bridge for protection while the rest were being evacuated. The ambulance could not reach us because of the blown out bridges. Out of the night came Henry Klisiewicz, the machine gun platoon medic. He had been busy tying up and evacuating the wounded on Chuck's side. He finished tying me up, then carried me piggyback to the aid station, which was a longways back. On the way we met Chuck Holmes [LMG Platoon Sergeant], whose arm was in a sling, but he had stayed to get the platoon in a defensive position before going to the aid station."

Silvers Stars were also awarded to Lt. Kenneth Shaker, Lt. Jack Darden, and PFC Hyman Perlo, CPL Russell Cook, PFC George Bell for their actions near St. Cassien.

"For years I have imagined this horrific night at St.Cassien. Visiting the site where my Dad performed these heroic acts was very emotional for me; and it really meant a lot to have the World War II Airborne Demonstration Team honor my Dad by sharing the experience with me. To think that my Dad was only 21 years old when he did this brings tears to my eyes and makes my heart swell with pride. Lt. Lieber's description of that night is poetic. That statement, "Out of the night came Henry Klisiewicz" epitomizes the man that later became my Dad. Family, friends and everyone who knew him could always count on my Dad in the darkest hour. "Out of the night", he always showed up to help his family or a friend through a difficult time."

Photo to right: Teresa wearing her dad's silver star & standing with the French Airborne Command (official 509th demo team)



Airborne Daughter Honors Father at 75th Anniversary of Operation

"I recall my Dad attending a 509th Association Reunion nearly 35 years ago in Reno, or maybe it was Las Vegas. To his surprise he hit the jackpot on a slot machine and left with a pretty decent sum of money. He gave most of the money to a family member who had been struggling to pay for a much needed home renovation.

I remember another time when my Dad received a call on a Sunday night from my aunt and uncle who were stranded with car trouble way up in the North Carolina mountains near Fontana Dam. Their daughter, my cousin, Donette, was in the 6th grade and had a perfect school attendance record that she wanted to maintain. Without delay my Dad jumped in the car and drove all the way up there and back throughout the night to bring them home. My cousin got to school before the bell and maintained her perfect attendance record through her high school graduation."

Henry Klisiewicz would continue to serve in the 509th PIB through the liberation of Cannes and Nice, France and during combat patrols into the French Maritime Alps. In December 1944 the 509th would move out to take up positions in the vicinity of Manhay, Belgium in what would be referred to as the Northern shoulder of the Battle of the Bulge. In January 1945 the 509th PIB would advance through Spa, Belgium on to Born, Belgium where on January 21, 1945 Henry Klisiewicz would earn a Bronze Star Medal.

According to the official military citation, "Private First Class Klisiewicz, medical aid man, without hesitation, ran forward one hundred yards over the open ground under fire to administer aid to a wounded man. He then led the man to a place of comparative safety. When overwhelming odds forced the platoon to withdraw, he voluntarily remained with his wounded comrade. At that time one of the squad leaders was hit and Private First Class Klisiewicz again braved the heavy fire to bring him fifty yards to cover and administer treatment. He withdrew on himself only after one man had died and he was able to assist the other to move. This action is typical of the courageous service rendered by Private First Class Klisiewicz on another occasion."

Klisiewicz also received the Bronze Star as part of a Unit Citation for meritorious achievement in ground combat against the armed enemy during World War II in the European-African-Middle Eastern Theatre of Operations. The citation states: "During the period of December 22-30, the 509th Infantry Battalion was given the mission of assisting in the slowing down of the enemy thrust toward Liogo, Belgium. Through its aggressiveness, the Battalion destroyed leading elements of the enemy south of Manhay, and permitted other units to reorganize along the Grandmenil-Manhay axis. Opposing the finest enemy troops, the 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion contributed materially to the destruction of elements of the 25 SS Panzer Grenadier Regiment and kept the enemy from cutting the Grandmenil-Erezee road. The aggressiveness and extraordinary heroism displayed by the 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion were in keeping with the highest tradition of the service and contributed materially to the blunting of the enemy spearhead thrust toward Liego."

Having entered the Ardennes with about 700 men, the 509th PIB would finally come off the line. On January 28, 1945 they reported strength as only 7 officers and 48 enlisted men. On March 1, 1945 the 509th PIB would be disbanded, and surviving soldiers were assigned to various units in the 82nd Airborne. Klisiewicz, a veteran of two combat jumps in Avellino, Italy and Le Muy, and eleven 509th PIB campaigns, was assigned to the 508 PIR and remained with them until his discharge in June 1945.

In May 1947, Henry Klisiewicz reenlisted in the Army. He was assigned to the Korean Conflict from September 6, 1950 through November 16, 1951. During the May 1957 to September 1959 time frame Klisiewicz was assigned to the Joint United States Military Aid Group, JUSMAG, in Athens, Greece. Sergeant Klisiewicz retired from the Army on March 1, 1964. Klisiewicz was appointed Honorary Command Sergeant Major of the 509th Parachute Infantry Regiment by the Secretary of the Army on May 21, 1988.

"I wore my Dad's medal to all of the events. At one of the street parties in La Motte, I told my Father's Silver Star story to a group of young French demonstration team members. I will never forget their looks of awe. During another conversation I had forgotten a detail about my Dad's service. Before I could access the information on my phone, one of the young French pulled up a file about the 509th PIB on his phone and provided me with the missing detail. I was blown away!"

"My Dad was not afraid to live or die. He lived his life free from any obvious worry, confidently and fearlessly, but never with the least bit of arrogance. One of his trademarks was his sense of humor. One of my aunts once asked him if he was ever cold during the bitter winter fighting in the Bulge. With that twinkle in his eye that so endeared him to others, he quipped, "Yes. It was cold. I was shivering so much, the bullets couldn't catch me!"

"Dad has remained very much alive and with me since his passing in 2009. My involvement in the 509th PIB Association and my attendance on this commemorative trip have brought me even closer to him. I have often wondered how I could keep my Father's memory alive once my sister, Mary, and I pass away. I can stop worrying about this. The 509th Association will always celebrate our country's first combat paratroopers. This trip has assured me that the French will ensure my Dad's immortality, and that of all of the Allied Forces who fought for their freedom. The French say, "We will never forget." Truer words were never spoken."

Airborne Daughter Honors Father at 75th Anniversary of Operation Dragoon in Southern France



Matt Anderson, 509 PIA Historian & Teresa Johnson standing on the path her Father, Henry, walked with Lt. Lieber on his way back.

Matt provided Teresa with the background of her father in order for her to write this story.

The house where John DeVanie & Pathfinders stayed in the first night after drop.

Men in picture are:
US WWII Airborne Demo team members & Grandson of man that led Pathfinders to this house.



Above and right: Henry Dennis Klisiewicz
Passed away in 2009
RIP AATW!



The Fighting 509, A Daughter's Poem in Honor of her Father

By: Susan G. Copeland @ 2017

You've heard of the Screaming Eagles, the Bastards of Bastogne
That's when the 101st found themselves alone.
And all of the heroics of courageous fighting men
Of the 82nd Airborne, the All Americans.

But few have heard the stories of the first and best of their time
For few have heard the tales of the Fighting 509
It was back in 41, when Miley and Lee got the call
To organize some fighting men, the toughest of them all.

A call went out across the land but few could pass the test
There was no time for a second chance they only wanted the best.
Training started in earnest under that hot Georgia sun
They had to prove to others that it truly could be done.

The men had to be fearless to jump into the unknown
If they couldn't do it, it was off to San Antone
After weeks of training they left by the dead of night
To join with the British to prepare for an upcoming fight.

Just outside of London they worked both night and day
And after months of training they earned the red beret.
Honorary Red Devils they boarded C47's
For a 1500 mile flight and a drop from the heavens.

The convoy left at night in accordance with the plan
Every trooper knew his duty, down to the very last man.
But the pilots lost their bearings in the dark of the night
And after hours of flying no drop zone was in sight.

Running low on fuel, they circled the desert sand
Some troopers made their jump, while others were forced to land.
The 509 was scattered from Gibraltar to Algiers
Surrounded by the enemy, the troopers had no fears.

Miles from their objective, Raff gathered up his crew
To march across the desert before the day was through.
Once the airfield was secure, allied planes could land
It would be on to Tunisia in accordance with the plan.

Joined by allied Frenchmen from Regiment 3Z's
Raff was determined to drive the enemy to the sea.
A raid on El Djem, far behind the lines
Dan DeLeo led the jump for thirty-one of the 509s.

*Dedicated to Lloyd
Plummer and All
Other 509'ers*

Past and Present



The Fighting 509, A Daughter's Poem in Honor of her Father

South of their objective, they marched through the night
To only find by morning, the bridge was not in sight.
One hundred miles behind the lines, and they were all alone.
To fight their way across the sands but only eight would make it home.

With Allied troops pouring in, Rommel was on the run
Soon he would be out-manned and definitely out-gunned.
Leaving the Italians to raise the white flag, the Germans escaped to the sea
With the war all but over in Africa, it was on to Sicily.

The 509 stayed behind while others led the way
With orders to regroup and train, to fight another day.
Next was a raid on Ventotene to capture a radar site
They tricked the Germans into giving up without a single fight.

The Italians surrendered, giving up in the fall of forty-three
But the Germans were determined to keep their hold on Italy.
Across the Strait of Messina with their eyes on Naples and Rome
The 509 knew they had to defeat the Germans before they could go home.

Operation Shingle was the next thing on their board
This would be a practice run for Operation Overlord.
On the beaches of Salerno, the Allies landed 70,000 men
So the 509 jumped behind the lines, in order to defend.

A jump at Avellino, the highest mountain peak
With orders to engage the Germans and keep them from the sea.
An amphibious landing on the beaches of Anzio
The Germans held the high ground, there was no place to go.

Darby's Rangers were the spearhead, the 509 was on their right.
By the time they reached the mountains there was one hellava fight
Faced with overwhelming numbers, Darby's Rangers were no more
But the 509 held their ground, like they've done so many times before.

"B" Company took the beating, when the Germans attacked
They used their fists and rifle butts to beat the Germans back.
With a 3 to 1 advantage, the Germans thought they could break the line,
But that was before they encountered the Fighting 509.

After 73 days of combat in the mountains of Anzio,
The remaining Rangers and Gingerbread men were finally allowed to let go.
Moved back to Naples for a much needed and overdue rest
The Geronimos began training for what would become an even bigger test



The Fighting 509, A Daughter's Poem in Honor of her Father

The Gustav Line was broken, the Germans were pulling back
 The roads to Rome were open and the Allies were on the attack.
 In June a landing at Normandy with the 101st leading the way,
 So the Geronimos stood ready to be called on at any day.

Moved to Lido de Roma, five miles from the city of Rome
 For the next two months, the Gingerbread men would call this school their home.
 So June turned into July and then before the next moon
 Operation Anvil would turn into Operation Dragoon.

General Truscott's Seventh Army sent to invade Southern France
 In order to secure Mediterranean seaports to aid in the Allied advance.
 He needed an airborne division so called on the 509
 To again spearhead the operation and cut the Axis line.

A jump in the Argens River Valley 15 miles from the sea,
 To take the town of Le Muy from the hands of Germany
 The Devil's Brigade took the islands and then stormed the Riviera shore
 And prepared for the Allies landing of 150,000 men or more.

"B" and "C" Companies missed their drop zone, some falling in the sea
 The rest regrouped and marched on to confront the enemy.
 As the Germans were retreating along the Riviera coast
 Each town the 509 liberated, they received a champagne toast.

The Germans were running quickly to the mountains of Italy
 With the 509 on their heels, they needed to regroup south of Germany
 The enemy set up defenses in the Siagnes River plains
 With machine gun encampments, it would not be the same

High on the mountain ridge, a chateau was in sight
 At a place they called the Castle, this would be their next fight
 Company "C" led the first assault followed by Company "B"
 Company "A" stayed behind and directed the artillery.

The castle finally secured with prisoners of sixty-one,
 The enemy countered with heavy mortars from one of their big guns.
 Directing fire from a naval ship, miles from the shore,
 "A" Company aimed at Castle Ridge, the mortars fell no more.

The 509 marched forward pushing the Germans home
 Sometimes they were far ahead and sometimes all alone.
 By the end of October, they were needed in a place called Turini
 Others tried, three times or more to wrest this from the enemy.



Lloyd B. Plummer
 B Company, 1st Platoon
 509 PIB
 WWII

The Fighting 509, A Daughter's Poem in Honor of her Father

The Germans yielded to the pressure from the 509
 Leaving their posts and retreating far behind the lines
 Every approach and many houses were mined and booby-trapped
 But the 509 cleared them all out with very little mishap.

Enemy positions were probed daily by the fearless patrols
 Resulting in numerous fire-fights, but the Germans continued to hold
 By November it's called a stalemate and with winter moving near
 The 509 had to come up with something to cause the Germans fear

Lt. Pritchett had a plan to sneak deep within their post
 To cause a little havoc and then fade away like a ghost
 With code name Raid Geronimo they started out in the night
 To set up their defenses and prepare for the upcoming fight.

Before the last man was in place the German alarm did sound
 Answering with machine gun fire, the Germans dropped 50-mm rounds
 The 509ers tossed in their grenades and started back to their home
 The post was set on fire and the Germans knew they were not alone.

The campaign in Southern France came to an end for the 509
 Relieved by the 68th infantry, they felt it was about time.
 Moved to Villers-Collerets northeast of Paris, quite a little town,
 When the 509 arrived at their destination, it was time to settle down.

The Germans left the Balkins, the Russians pushing from the east
 Leaving Rumania, Bulgaria and Finland and finally abandoning Greece
 Retreating to the Siegfried line, considered a safer place to be
 With a system of concrete bunkers from Switzerland to the North Sea.

Air raids on German cities now occurring most every day
 Dropping a thousand bombs or more as they passed along the way
 Seven armies on the borders, ready to break the German line
 Waiting the orders to march forward, it should come at any time.

The Ardennes called a "ghost front" with little action through the fall of 44
 Guarded by Hodge's First Army, it would become the battle ground for more
 For Hitler gathered his armies of 200,000 men with tanks and artillery
 To drive a wedge between the Allies hoping to bring them to their knees.

On the 16th of December German armies crashed through the pines
 Overwhelming the raw recruits defending the American lines
 The Germans rolled across Belgium bending the Allied lines way back
 It was the Battle of the Bulge, the Germans were on the attack



Lloyd B. Plummer
 B Company, 1st Platoon –
 509 PIB
 F Company, 2nd Platoon –
 505 – 82nd Airborne

The Fighting 509, A Daughter's Poem in Honor of her Father

The 101st was sent to Bastogne assigned to First Army's VIII Corps.
The 82nd headed to St. Vith, yet they would both need help from more
The Germans encircled Bastogne but they could not break the defense
The enemy demanded they surrender, but this was all nonsense.

McAuliffe just muttered, "Nuts!" and sent this as his reply
The 101st would wait for Patton or they would wait there to die.
The 509 arrived at Manhay assigned to hold the road to Erezee
And parceled out to several task forces, their job wouldn't be easy.

"C" Company loaded onto trucks and rushed to the Southeast
To set up their defensive line and block the road to Liege
Now known as Parker's Crossroads, they repulsed the German attacks
Yet they were so outnumbered, the Germans kept coming back.

Fighting a delaying action they covered other units in their retreat
Using an anti-tank gun until the Tiger came rolling down the street
"C" Company was depleted but they continued their fight
While others were retreating they stayed on to do what was right.

"A" Company was assigned to Brewster and headed for the crossroads too
But they were stopped just out of town as the Germans were marching through
They set up their defense at Belle Haie, a deep cut in the side of the road
As soon as they saw the enemy, the 509 started to unload

The 509 held their ground as the Panzers attacked several times
Until they were ordered to retreat, in order to "shorten the lines."
The Germans had cut a new road bypassing the Brewster Team
Continuing to march north, there was no stopping them it seemed.

"B" Company entered the fight at Sadzot, in order to protect the lines
While the Americans withdrew from Grandmenil, the bitter cold was all on their minds.
The 2nd SS Panzer continued their push to Erezee leaving the town of Manhay
The 509 would be waiting, they would be standing in their way.

The little town of Sadzot was overrun by the German advance
"B" Company fought back as best they could but they didn't stand a chance.
Major Tomasik saw the town on fire and decided to take it back
Instead of just defending, the 509 would now go on the attack.

"C" Company would attack from the left, while "A" Company would take the right
"B" Company would come straight down the road and then enter the fight.
With the support of tank destroyers, the troopers entered the town
When the enemy revealed itself, the 509 would take them

The Fighting 509, A Daughter's Poem in Honor of her Father

After twelve days of steady combat, the 509's strength was low
They were ordered to the rear to rest but didn't want to go.
They received a few replacements but there were not nearly enough,
They would enter their last battle and it was going to be rough.

The Allies had to abandoned St. Vith when the battle began
And now it was time to take it back, this was the job they had planned.
"A" and "B" Companies were assigned to Task Force B going up against SS Troops
"C" Company went with Task Force C and was ordered to make a loop.

The troopers came under fire as the Germans had the upper hand
Task Force B felt their sting and power but refused to disband.
They were pushed off the crossroads, the winter snows were deep
The 509 was exhausted and freezing but there was no time to sleep.

Their brothers needed their help so the gallant force pushed through,
The tanks couldn't take the mountains but the troopers knew what to do.
So fight they did, depleted, their strength was all but gone,
But they turned the tide forever, so the end would not be long.

The 509 answered the call when Belgium came under distress,
746 men entered the fight and it would be their biggest test.
But at the final muster call, their numbers were so few,
For less than 60 walked off that line, the 509 was through.

They fought their way across Africa and up the boot of Italy.
They chased the Nazis from the Riviera forcing them back to Germany.
Now the survivors were being split up and sent to outfits that were new.
The 509'ers didn't like it but there was nothing that they could do.

They carried out every mission. They reported every day.
They raised havoc when they had to and they went All the Way
So now you know their story and must agree they were the best of their time,
For now you know the truth about the Fighting 509.



1-509th IN (ABN), OPFOR, Fort Polk, Louisiana



1G hosted 3G to conduct practice war games:

Key leaders of the battalion staff traveled to Fort Polk, Louisiana for JRTC's Leader Training Program. The program gives the 3G Staff two repetitions at planning battalion attacks, while improving our procedures. Today, they conducted the three wargames of the first attack .

Major General Kendall W. Penn was Deputy Commanding General (RC), First United States Army.

General Penn began his military career in 1982 upon enlistment in the Arkansas Army National Guard. He was commissioned a second lieutenant of Infantry upon graduation from the Reserve Officer Training Corps program at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock in 1985. Throughout his career, General Penn served in a variety of command and staff positions, including Commander, 1st Battalion, 153d Infantry and Commander, 39th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, both while deployed to Baghdad, Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Named as The Adjutant General, Arkansas National Guard on August 10, 2019. This is the top officer position in the state and is responsible for commanding the Arkansas Air and Army National Guard, with nearly 10,000 Airmen, Soldiers and state employees.

From February 1988 to August 1991, MG Penn (then Lieutenant Penn) served as the A Co 1-509th Executive Officer, A Co Platoon Leader, then Assistant Operations Officer in HHC 1-509th.



(picture on right)

3-509th IN (ABN), Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Anchorage, Alaska



On August 15, 2019:

Today, 3G had the privilege of promoting SSG Daniel Wagner to Sergeant First Class. Congratulations to him and his family! GERONIMO! #3G

(picture on left)



3G had the opportunity to say goodbye to some strong leaders this week. Yesterday, Hawk Company had a Change of Command ceremony for CPT Tom Reynolds. The new HAWK Company Commander is CPT Sang Miner.

Today, HHC had a Change of Responsibility ceremony for 1SG Joshua Hubbard. Stepping in as HHC 1SG is 1SG John Wirth.

3G would like to thank 1SG Hubbard and CPT Reynolds, and their families for their dedication and hard work for the Battalion. Each of them will be greatly missed.

We look forward to the leadership of 1SG Wirth and CPT Miner as they lead 3G paratroopers!

(picture on right)



On Friday, 8/16/2019, we promoted Chief Jeremy Stevens to CW2. Chief Stevens is indispensable to 3G's success. Most recently, the battalion deployed our equipment at the Port of Anchorage. Our successful vehicle inspections are a direct reflection of Chief Stevens's tireless efforts to help maintain our equipment and prepare for deployment.

(picture on left)

3G would like to congratulate and acknowledge SSG (P) Jonathan Grant, of Baker Company, for winning USARAK NCO of the year! NCO of the year is an outstanding accomplishment. This achievement displays SSG (P) Grant's strong leadership, professionalism, and discipline!

(Picture on right)



3-509th IN (ABN), Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Anchorage, Alaska

We are proud to announce that 1LT Jesse Martin (far left) and SPC Stephen Rivers (second from the right) graduated Ranger School Class 8-19! Congratulations to these men as they join the long legacy of Airborne Rangers.

Why go to Ranger School? Ranger School is the US Army's premier tactical leadership school. Simply put, all Paratroopers and families of 3G deserve the best leaders.

(picture on right)



On Thursday, 3G conducted a change of responsibility between 1SG Anthony Nocera and 1SG William "Bloodbath" McGrath. In recognition for their contributions to the Infantry, 1SG Nocera and his wife, SFC Jennifer Nocera, were awarded the National Infantry Association's Order of St. Maurice. We wish the Noceras farewell, as they move to their next assignment.

(picture on left)

We are unbelievably proud to present our newest Pathfinder graduates- SSG Brock, SSG Tift, SSG Harris, SSG Turcotte, and CPT Wendt. It is important to note that 3G had 5 of only 22 Pathfinder graduates. Pathfinder is one of the most intellectually demanding schools that infantryman can attend and stands as a testament to the caliber of leaders in 3G

(picture on right)



One of the most important things that we do regularly is recognize our Paratroopers for their performance with awards and potential with promotions. Today, Charlie Company conducted a ceremony to recognize the top performers in their recent squad live fire exercises, as well as promote several Paratroopers and leaders. Congratulations to SSG Brock, SGT Wamble, SGT Gray, SPC Heim, SPC Porter, and PFC Young.

(picture on left)

3-509th IN (ABN), Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Anchorage, Alaska



September 16, 2019, the battalion recognized three Hawk Company mechanics for their hard work resulting in zero overdue services. We're proud to have leaders like SGT Rushinski, SGT Yu, and SGT Corson on the team. Congratulations

(picture on left)

battalion's continued outstanding performance at professional military education is a direct reflection of the mentorship and development that regularly occurs in our companies

(picture on right)



Not only is 3G doing great things in Mississippi but also in Georgia! Congratulate our newest ranger school graduate SGT Khatter! He is a medic from the Battalion medical platoon and assigned to Dog Company. Geronimo! Rangers Lead The Way! Airborne!

(picture on left)

There is no stopping Geronimo! Please congratulate newest Sergeants in 3G FiST! From left to right: SGT Lemus, SGT Merrill, SGT Dixon, SGT Demapan. Also Baker Company 3rd Platoon conducted a combined arms rehearsal and the medics taught everyone how to apply a intravenous catheter. All the way!

(picture on right)



Happy Birthday!!

Ms. Ernestine Dellaca celebrate a birthday in September. We don't ask a lady her age!

Ms. Ernestine and her husband founded the 509 PIA! Her husband was an original 509er



WWII original 509er, Charlie Audet, turns a young 101 in October!

WWII original 509er, Lloyd Plummer turns 95 in December!



In Memorial



TIMOTHY WOODS

A U.S. Army sergeant stationed at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson is dead after being seriously injured in a motorcycle crash on the Glenn Highway over the weekend.

U.S. Army Sgt. Timothy Woods, 26, died from injuries he sustained in a motorcycle crash on the Glenn Highway in Palmer on Aug. 17, 2019. Woods was stationed at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. (Photo by U.S. Army)

U.S. Army Sgt. Timothy Woods, 26, died from injuries he sustained in a motorcycle crash on the Glenn Highway in Palmer on Aug. 17, 2019. Woods was stationed at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. (Photo by U.S. Army)

“Sgt. Timothy Scott Woods II was severely injured Saturday, Aug. 17, when ... he lost control of his motorcycle and hit a guardrail along the Glenn Highway near the (Parks) Highway interchange,” John Pennell, an Army spokesman, said in an email.

Woods, 26, was from Salem, Virginia, and had been in the Army since 2013, Pennell said. After training at Fort Benning in Georgia, he served at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington and Fort Carson in Colorado before coming to Alaska in 2016.

“He was an infantryman assigned to the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division’s 3rd Battalion, 509th Parachute Infantry Regiment,” Pennell said.

ROBERT DAVID MARUSKA

FELTON — A Felton man was killed in a solo motorcycle crash Tuesday morning on Highway 9, the California Highway Patrol reported.

Robert Maruska, 66, was riding a 2007 KMT 950 motorcycle just before 7 a.m. on southbound on Highway 9 south of Glengarry Road when he ran off the roadway while taking a turn and collided with a dirt embankment according to CHP-Santa Cruz.

Bystanders stopped and tried to provide aid until medical personnel arrived, according to CHP Officer Sam Courtney.

Maruska succumbed to his injuries and was pronounced dead at the scene, officials said.



Forever in our hearts

In Memorial



Chris Enns

We regret to announce that SSG Chris Enns, a former 3G medic, died of heart complications this past weekend. After leaving active duty, Chris continued to serve in the Army Reserves, while living in Alaska. 3 Geronimo sends its prayers and condolences to the Enns family.

Never Forget!

Leroy Lauer was killed September 14/15, 1943, Avellino 509th Parachute jump. Wounded, captured by German forces & later died of his wounds. This paver is at Airborne & Special Ops Museum, Fayetteville, NC

Submitted by: Emmet Lauer,
Leroy's Nephew



Financials

Treasurer, Dale Fairbanks

~\$33,538.91 in large savings account

~ \$5.00 in small savings account

~\$8,104.65 in checking account

~\$820 came in from membership dues

~ (\$1200) reimbursement to Lee Barber for his trip to the 3/509

~(\$401.15) for flower wreath for funeral of an active duty 509er

~Two checks are outstanding and not cashed

~Children of fallen patriots' donation of \$1,625

~Donation for attendees to the Ball \$325

Membership

Membership update: Joyce Hegeman

Please Welcome our newest members!

~Jonathan Byrd (Active Duty)

~Akira Shinomiya (Active Duty)

~Troy Warrington (Active Duty)

~Gene Markel (Regular)

~Ty Owens (Regular)

~330 total members

~258 regular ~ 25 Associate ~ 21 Honorary ~ 16 Active Duty ~ 5 Gold Star ~ 5 WWII~

Know someone who is a 509ther & not a member of the Association?

Do a Buddy Check, reach out & get them to join!

Join Today!

Return application and payment to:
509th Parachute Infantry Association
P.O. Box 43
Owatonna, MN 55060
Make payable to:
509th PIA



Membership application,
renewals and member
record updates can also
be processed online at:
www.509th.org

509th PARACHUTE INFANTRY ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

(Select your membership level; see next page for definitions)

- CHARTER MEMBER (WWII Veteran) – Free Lifetime Membership
- GOLD STAR MEMBER – Free Lifetime Membership
- HONORARY MEMBER – Free Lifetime Membership
- ACTIVE DUTY MEMBER – \$25.00/one-time fee (for duration of active duty)
- REGULAR MEMBER – \$25.00/year
- ASSOCIATE MEMBER – \$20.00/year

NAME (FIRST MI LAST): _____
(As you want it to appear on your membership card)

SPOUSE'S NAME: _____ YOUR OCCUPATION: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____ E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____
(No e-mail address may limit your access to information)

SERVICE INFORMATION: ON ACTIVE DUTY _____ IN RESERVES/NATIONAL GUARD _____ RETIRED MILITARY _____
(Check any that are applicable)

509TH SERVICE: _____ DATE SERVED: _____
(Platoon, Company, Battalion) (Mo/Yr – Mo/Yr)

COMBAT TOUR(S): _____ DATE(S) SERVED: _____
(Platoon, Company, Battalion) (Mo/Yr – Mo/Yr)

Join today [Click here](#)

Join Today!

MEMBERSHIP LEVEL DEFINITIONS:

Charter Member (WWII Veteran) - Free

Subscription period: Unlimited

Charter Members shall consist of all officers and enlisted persons assigned to the 504th Parachute Infantry Battalion, the 2nd Battalion 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment (from February 24, 1942 through November 2, 1942), the 2nd Battalion 509th Parachute Infantry Regiment and/or the 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion, between October 4, 1941 and March 1945. Charter members shall also be LIFE MEMBERS, with NO DUES being necessary to continue their membership in the Association.

Gold Star Member - Free

Subscription period: Unlimited

Any family member or next of kin to a service member, who has been assigned, or attached to, and honorably served with, the 509th Parachute Infantry by whatever designation and whatever location since 1963, under competent orders, and died in service to the nation at any time of their military service. Gold Star Members shall also be life members, no dues being necessary to continue their membership in the Association.

Honorary Member - Free

Subscription period: Unlimited

Any person, whose life and activities has fostered the ideals of the 509th Parachute Infantry to the general public or whose service to the Association has been exemplary, may be elected an HONORARY MEMBER of the Association by majority vote of the Executive Committee. Honorary Members are EXEMPT from paying dues, per the by-laws.

Active Duty Member - \$25.00 (USD)

Subscription period: Unlimited

One-time fee, while on active duty! Includes any Soldier currently serving in the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps or Coast Guard who is, or has been, assigned to a properly constituted unit of the U.S. Army organized under the heraldry and lineage of the 509th Parachute Infantry Regiment.

Regular Member - \$25.00 (USD)

Subscription period: 1 year

Automatic renewal (recurring payments)

Any officer or enlisted Soldier, who has been assigned or attached to, and honorably served with, the 509th Parachute Infantry by whatever designation and whatever location since 1963, under competent orders, shall be eligible for membership in the Association.

Associate Member - \$20.00 (USD)

Subscription period: 1 year

No automatically recurring payments

Any family member of an individual who is eligible for membership (other than Gold Star Members), any family member of a deceased Charter and Regular Member of the 509th, or any other individual who supports the aims and purposes of the Association may become a member of the Association, with approval of the Executive Committee.