



The Burman News



Published Quarterly

Official publication of Merrill's Marauders Association, Inc.

November 06

No. 90

Group Photo of Merrill's Marauders Attending The 60th Annual Reunion in Fort Mitchell, Kentucky



The 61st Annual Merrill's Marauders Association Reunion will take place in St. Louis Missouri

Next year's reunion (2007) will be at the **Sheraton Westport Hotel Plaza Towers** in St. Louis, Missouri on Labor Day Weekend, **Friday, August 31st through Sunday, September 2nd**. The Sheraton Westport Hotel Plaza Tower's address is **900 Westport Plaza, St. Louis, Missouri 63146** and is located just off of **I-270**, a short distance south of **I-70**, mid-point between historic St. Charles and St. Louis attractions. The Hotel offers 209 guest rooms, your choice of two double beds, king, or for those with extra guest, king with pullout double bed, indoor/outdoor swimming pools, iron/board in every room, hairdryer, coffee maker and a complimentary copy of USA Today. Within the hotel is the Terrace Restaurant, Lucerne Restaurant as well as room service and exercise facilities, plus the hotel is within walking distance of 18 restaurants in Westport Plaza, a comedy club and a walking track around Westport Lake. It also has free shuttle service to and from the St. Louis/Lambert International Airport which is just 8 miles away, and has free outdoor parking or indoor parking with validation in an adjacent garage. The reunion package rate **for two guests is \$345** for double occupancy and **\$260 for single** occupancy. The package includes: Fri./ Sat. banquet, Sat./ Sun. breakfast, ladies tea, 2 cocktails and Fri./Sat. room rates, tax and gratuities included. Additional day rates from Tuesday, **Aug. 28, through Tuesday, Sept. 4, are \$79 plus tax per night**. The meal packages, for additional people staying in the same room as the registered guest is **\$100 per person**. The Friday or Saturday Night Banquet is **\$35 per banquet meal**. Please make your reservations before the **cut-off date of Aug. 9**. For Reservation, **you must call during business hours, 9:00 to 5:00, Central time, 314 212-2134 and reference Merrill's Marauders**. To guarantee your reservation, there will be a **\$100 hold on your credit card**. For mail in reservations, send a check or money order of \$100 to the **Sheraton Westport Hotel Plaza Tower's, 900 Westport Plaza, St. Louis, Missouri 63146, Attention Nancy Masterson**. Be sure to state the number of guests, arrival date and departure date.

**MINUTES OF ANNUAL BOARD OF
DIRECTORS MEETING
AUGUST 31, 2006**

The meeting was called to order at 4:15 p.m. by our President, Phil Piazza.

PRESENT WERE: The six- (6) members of the Executive Committee and eight- (8) other members of the Board of Directors, for a total of fourteen- (14).

Financial reports by Treasurer Herbert Clofine and the Executive Secretary, Susan Passanisi, were presented and accepted.

The cost of publishing and mailing *The Burman News* and possible methods of reducing the expense were debated. Chairman Robert Passanisi explained that after conferring with Herbert Clofine, it was decided to place an article in the August issue of *The Burman News* explaining the necessity for members to let us know that the intended recipient is still with us and receiving the newsletter. Passanisi also explained that the article precipitated many donations for which we are very thankful.

The issue of the next reunion or the lack of a proposal for next year was discussed. Piazza stated that he had hoped that the Proud Descendants would come up with one. Passanisi stated that he's been in touch with Mark Bursian who did a lot of work towards finding a hotel in Michigan. Due to being bogged down with preparation for the upcoming reunion, other duties and multiple e-mail problems, Passanisi wasn't able to continue helping Mark.

Piazza asked about getting the Proud Descendants (PD) more involved. John Passanisi explained that part of the problem is that the PD are here for their Marauder kin and that they don't have quite the same camaraderie that is found with the Marauders. He also stated that a hesitation to release some of the responsibilities by the "old timers" tends to discourage the PD's from more involvement. The question of whether a different reunion date would be convenient for the PD's was asked and John explained why it would still be a problem for some.

The subject of publishing a revised version of the book The War Diary Of the 5307th was discussed, without coming to a conclusion.

Motion was made by Susan Passanisi, and duly seconded, to elect Patrick Egan to the Board of Directors; the motion was carried.

Motion was made and duly seconded and passed that there being no further business the meeting be adjourned

Motion was made and duly seconded to dispense with the reading of the minutes from the previous meeting; the motion was carried.

Treasurer Herbert Clofine read the treasurer's report. He disclosed the deposits and expenditures for the past year. A motion was duly made and seconded to accept the treasurer's report as submitted to the membership. The motion was carried.

The other officers present were called upon and gave their reports.

President Phil Piazza reported on how well the gifts made by the association to the Ranger Graduating Classes at Ft. Benning, GA. were received. In addition, President Piazza stated that he had given 72 talks to various military organizations this past year.

President Phil Piazza thanked John and Susan Passanisi for their extensive work and efforts in support of this organization. He thanked all the many members of the Proud Descendants who pitched in to give a hand wherever they could.

Election of Officers

Motion was made from the floor, and duly seconded, that the entire slate of the Officers be elected to another term of office. They are as follows: Chairman/Historian Robert Passanisi, President Phil Piazza, Vice President/Liaison Officer/Recording Secretary Jackson B. Pokress, Treasurer Herbert Clofine, Executive Secretary E. Susan Passanisi, Historian Emeritus David L. Quaid. The motion was voted upon and carried.

Reunion Site

President Phil Piazza stated that no proposals for the Annual Reunion in 2007 had been received. He noted that although a number of Proud Descendants were working on several sites none were ready for presentation. (please see page 4 for continued discussion of this matter)

A motion was made by Chairman Bob Passanisi and seconded by John Pingel that all proposals for reunion sites for the 2007 Reunion be submitted to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will then examine the proposal to see that they meet our requirements and will then make a final selection. Then the membership will be informed in *The Burman News*. The motion was voted upon and carried.

There being no further new business to come before the Association, a motion was made and duly seconded that the meeting be adjourned at 1:05 pm.

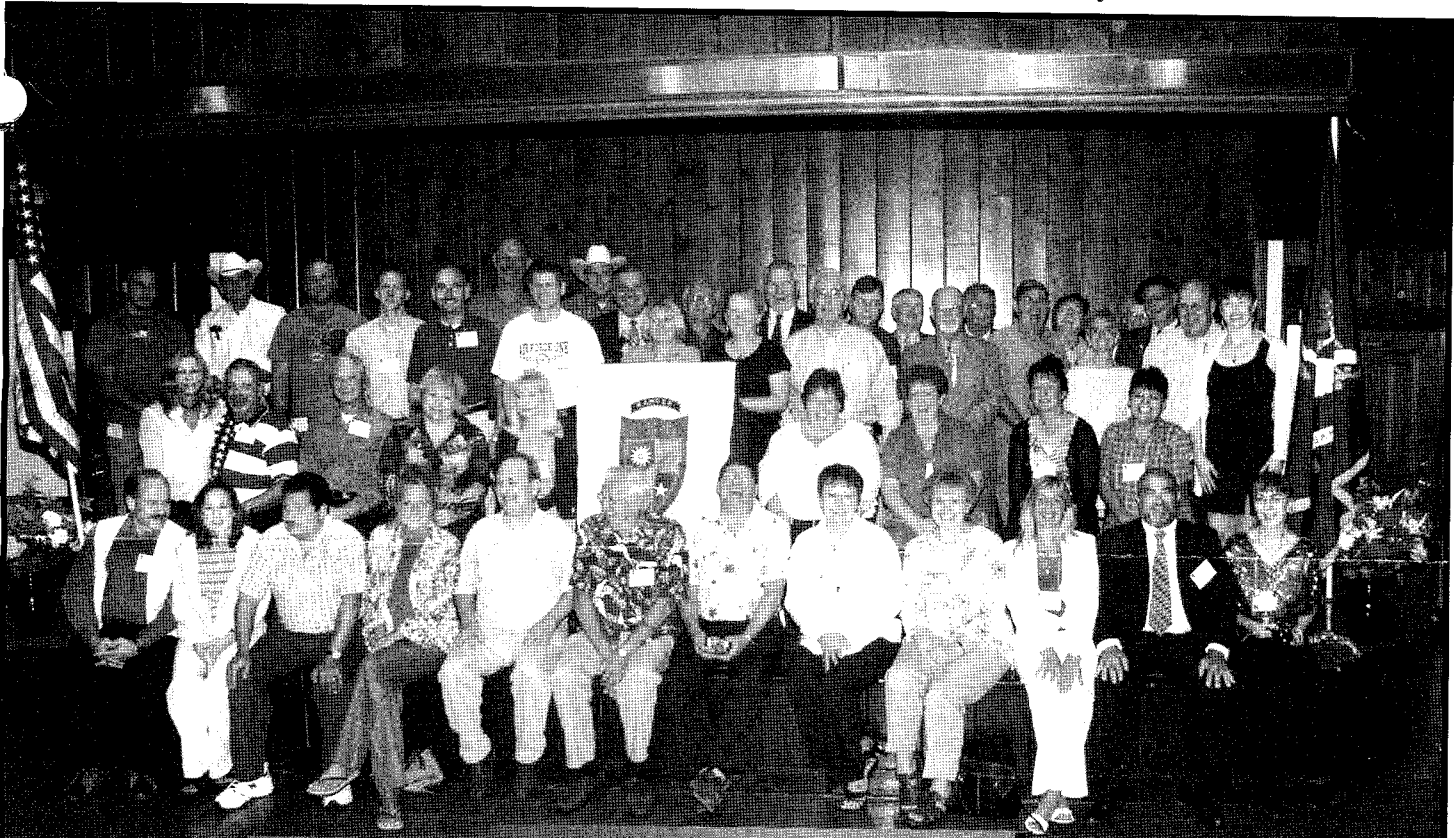
Respectfully submitted,

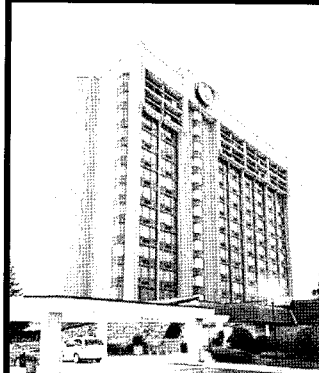
Jackson B. Pokress, VP/Recording Secretary

MANY THANKS

The members of the Executive Committee wish to acknowledge John and Susie Passanisi for their work at the registration desk. Without their devoted effort, our 60th reunion would not have been nearly as successful.

Group Photo of The Proud Descendants Attending
The 60th Annual Reunion in Fort Mitchell, Kentucky

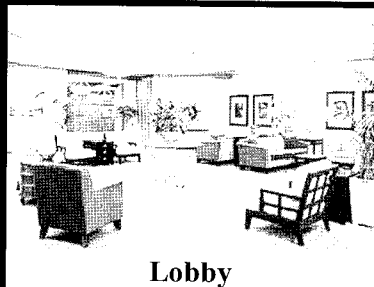




Sheraton Westport Plaza

General 2007 Reunion Information

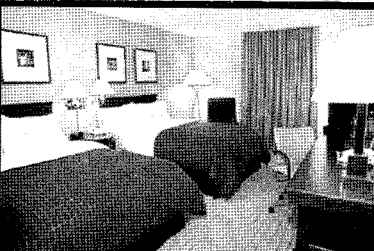
Shortly after the 60th reunion on September 7th, we received a proposal from the Westport Sheraton. They said they wanted us back and offered us the same package that we had in 2004 of \$345, This is just \$10 more than the 2004 price. Although the Executive Committee agreed to the Westport Sheraton, it was decided to wait and see if anything else would be presented. There were a number of possible reunion site recommendations. One especially good final version from Cecil Cox was received on October 17th, but, unfortunately, was six days after our October 12th commitment to meet in St. Louis. We wish to thank Mark Bursian, Sherry Weston Cowling, Cecil Cox and everyone else that worked on securing a hotel for the 61st reunion. We certainly hope that they and others will start a bit earlier and have a proposal ready to present to the membership at our 62nd reunion. Phil Piazza or Robert Pansani would be happy to help anyone through the process of coming up with a good proposal for presentation.



Lobby



King



Double Queen

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

This year, our 60th reunion was a wonderful success with an excellent turnout. We were honored with the attendance of two representatives of the Stilwell Research Center and Museum in Chongqing, China: Mr. Xie Xianhui, director of Stilwell Museum and Research Center, and Ms. Zhang Jin, research fellow at the Stilwell Research Center. Mr. Xie Xianhui and Ms. Zhang Jin were very interested in the Marauders and spent many hours listening to their stories. The museum has been expanded and improved, and Mr. Xianhui and Ms. Jin, were interested in acquiring some new and additional material.

The visitors from China honored the Marauders with the presentation of a beautiful, seven-foot scroll, which was accepted by our President Phil Piazza.



Mr. Xie Xianhui, Director
Ms. Zhang Jin, Fellow.

The Friday night speaker was our own David Quaid who narrated a series of Marauder episodes

The Saturday night guest speaker was General Joseph Stilwell's grandson, John Easterbrook. Easterbrook didn't talk of his grandfather's military career but instead gave a picture of some of the other aspects of the General. In the process, Easterbrook related a few stories about him that were informative, interesting and showed a side of Stilwell few of us that served under him were aware



Phil Piazza and Mr. Xie Xianhui of.

One of the stories Easterbrook told was about a time in 1945 when Stilwell was an Army Ground Forces commander. Stilwell flew out to Los Angeles to present a DSC to the sister of a Nisei who had been killed in Europe. The sister, Mary Matsuda, had recently returned to her home from the Gila Relocation Camp. Stilwell knew that she had been threatened with bodily harm by some locals if she stayed in her home, so he presented the medal to her on the front porch of her home with plenty of press coverage. At that time, he announced that he was a charter member of the "Pickax Club" pledged to come to the aid of Japanese-Americans being discriminated against by what he called "barfly commandoes." He said,

the Nisei bought an awful big hunk of America with their blood. You're damn right those Nisei boys have a place in the American heart, now and forever... We cannot allow a single injury to be done them without defeating the purpose for which we fought.

Mary had no more problems.

He also told how Stilwell hated to see the poverty and suffering of the common man and detested those who took advantage of people. One day in the 1930's, he encountered a Japanese soldier beating a Chinese man on the street. He was so incensed, he got out of his car and started hitting the Japanese soldier. The Japanese soldier, and others around, were so surprised, they beat a hasty retreat.

Telling The Story

Lt. Greer, who at the time was a Technical Sgt. in Lt. Logan E. Weston's (the late Col. Weston) I&R Platoon, gives an eyewitness account on Lt. Weston's actions against the Japanese on the Poakum trail.

Those of us who have served in combat can never completely relate what we experienced, but I will try. Some memories will never be forgotten. On these dates, we were on a long-range combat and patrol operation in enemy infested, mountainous jungles. I was Lt. Logan Weston's second-in-command, a Technical Sgt. of the Orange Combat Team Intelligence & Reconnaissance (I&R) Platoon, Merrill's Marauders. Our I&R Platoon functioned as the eyes and ears of the larger combat unit, providing information and guidance for required action by the Battalion. We did our reconnoiter 12 to 24 hours ahead of them and usually made first contact with the adversary. Due to Lt. Weston's abilities, we were one of the most active platoons in the regiment.

During these 4 days and nights, Lt. Weston exhibited extraordinary courage, leadership ability and tactical knowledge. A tall, lanky, soft-spoken man he did not act like the typical officer. He wasted few words. We engaged in heavy warfare this entire time against a greatly, numerically superior and more powerful enemy. Lt. Weston had an uncanny ability to know when to shift and how to re-position the men, which consistently confused the surrounding forces. We were hard-hitting and fast moving, and we did all the damage to them that we could as we fought back their attacks. The battles held them back and blocked their advances. Despite the vicious, hostile and threatening enemy maneuvers, Lt. Weston's well-deployed ambushes, clever tactics and classic holding actions worked.

On this mission, we had to overcome one obstacle after another - we almost ran out of ammo and rations (had a blown radio) and were physically beat to a pulp. The physical exhaustion of marching through and over the mountains, mud and water, disease, insufficient provisions, little sleep, biting insects and always in enemy territory was brutal and gnawed away at our bodies and nerves. Lt. Weston's actions and prayer with us gave us the will to go on.

He was always more concerned about our protection and welfare than his own. I'll never forget the many times



Lt. Logan Weston

he would crawl from man to man, under intense machine gun fire, to encourage and check on each of us. This motivated us to counterattack the aggressive opponent at every opportunity and make every bullet count. Lt. Weston was positive, thorough and was a great combat leader. He personally never left an area until he knew no one was left behind, and he kept complete control of the men and the situation at all times. He had the respect, confidence and admiration of all the men. On numerous occasions, by re-deploying, he kept our entire unit from being captured or killed.

In particular, several times, completely by himself, he personally risked his life for the entire platoon to acquire critical information by searching out the exact location of the nearby Japanese. These extremely hazardous reconnaissance trips also gave him valuable information that he used to order shelling from our rear support units causing more casualties and distraction to the enemy. Although Lt. Weston was wounded two times, he would never consider leaving, but ignoring the pain, he deliberately went right back to battle. Toward the end of this operation, under heavy fire, Lt. Weston, along with a few well-placed men, held the persistent Japanese back until our entire platoon passed to safety. He never panicked nor did he show any fear of the enemy.

Due to Lt. Weston's daring leadership and personal courage, against all odds, we with resolve held the enemy at bay as long as possible without becoming surrounded - which was long enough for the Marauder 2 and 3 Battalions to complete their missions and withdraw to safety. It is amazing that none of us in our platoon were killed in all this although several were wounded. This is a remarkable tribute to Lt. Weston's inexhaustible courage, tactical skill and fearless leadership. Because of the trail block proposed by Weston and accepted by his superior officers, we saved many lives.

Lt. Weston is a hero and a dedicated leader of rare excellence. I, as do many of us still alive who served under him, believe that Lt. Weston's brilliant display of valor and intensity, inspirational self-sacrifice, and supreme leadership for this action should definitely be honored with the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Sincerely,

2nd Lieutenant Alfred M. Greer, Jr. (U.S. Army, Ret.)

THANK YOU

I wish to thank the many people that sent in donations in support of *The Burman News* and our Association.

OUR RECORDS

Many thanks to Hansel Haycox, for all the work he has done in generating a database with daily reports and many other records. Hansel had set up a computer at the reunion and was retrieving personal military data, for those who requested it.

Unfortunately, time ran out before he could complete the many requests, Hansel promised to finish the job after

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Unfortunately, time ran out before he could complete the many requests, Hansel promised to finish the job after

his return home. Somehow his notes were lost and is now asking everyone who is waiting for their data to please contact him at, 11471 Rineyville Rd, Vine Grove, KY 40175-9688 or E-mail: <hlrmhaycox@kvnet.org>.

THE BURMAN NEWS

In a previous issue, I explained why it is necessary for me to hear from our members. It is the only way of knowing that *The Burman News* is going to a living member and not to a disinterested party or the dead letter office. Fortunately, I heard from many of you and I thank you for taking the time to let me know. Many of you sent in donations with your note for which we are very appreciative and thank you for your help.

Unfortunately, there are still many I haven't heard from. If you haven't contacted the Association in any manor or have not been to a reunion in the last few years, please do so, even if you just send an address label. It's the only way of knowing you are still there.

INCOME TAX

Did you know that your donations and all or part of the expense of attending a reunion may be tax deductible. Ask your financial adviser.

FROM THE UNPUBLISHED WORKS OF HAROLD L. BENGTSON (BING).

Edited for size

Lt. Albert Higgins was our commanding officer. We left Fort Bliss for New Orleans and boarded the Jose Navarro Nov. 1, 1943. We left for overseas on Nov. 15, 1943. We were on that Liberty ship 57 days before we were torpedoed at 4:15 AM, Dec. 27, 1943. When the torpedo hit, I was in the top cot 5 high, sound asleep. I lit on my feet between the cots. I could smell burning oil. As I started up the ladder, I realized I had no shirt on. I ran back to my cot and got it. As I was running on the deck to my station, which was down a well in the back of the ship, I ran through smoke and fire, and slippery oil. My job was to put shells on a hoist for the gun in the stern. Oh, how I hated to go down into that hole as the ship was sinking. The torpedo knocked out the partition between #1 and #2 hold. There are only 5 holds in a Liberty ship. You can not imagine the relief I felt when they blew abandon ship! I came up that ladder a lot faster than I went down. I can still almost smell the burning oil, as I hurried along the ship looking for a life boat. I slide down about six ropes of a pulley that was used to lower the life boat to the water. I cut all the ropes to release the life boat from the ship, as I was the last one in the life boat. After daylight I saw there was a pin I could have pulled to release all the ropes at once.

There were about 40 sailors, 40 merchant marines, and between 80 and 110 soldiers. You can imagine what it was like with sixteen, foot-long oars with some in oar

locks and others not. One time the oars would be ten foot in the water and the next time would miss altogether, because of the high waves. That same evening they put another torpedo in the ship and sunk it the rest of the way. We could hear the torpedo going under our life boats.

We split up then so they could not machine gun us! I don't know for sure how long we were separated, but we were back together the next morning. There must have been a prevailing wind that brought us back together, because we didn't know what we were doing! I think there were about 8 life boats. I remember seeing sharks with a little pilot fish near it's head swim right under our boat. I also saw a sword fish.

I never got sea sick all the days on the ship, but it was all I could do to keep from heaving in the life boat. What it felt like to me was someone was shoving the boat up the roof of a house and then all of a sudden pushing it off the end. Then, just as we were about to hit bottom something would slam against the bottom of our boat and start pushing us up over and over and over again!

A person has a lot of things go through his mind when you are in a situation like this. I think many of us thought that was the end! We were at a time when our country could not spend much time looking for us. The tide of war was not in our favor at this time.

My early thoughts turned to prayer as did most of the others. A lot of my life went through my mind as we drifted along in the life boats. At 23, I thought I had seen more of life than most people, and had seen harder times. I thought back to the winter of 1941 when I hitchhiked from Clinton, Iowa to Atlantic City, Wyoming, a place way up in the mountains with a population of maybe 20 people. Everything went good until I got near Lander, Wyoming where the highway didn't go any farther in my direction. I turned off on a one lane road, if you could call it that. From here on I had to walk the rest of the way- 30 miles. It was a nice winter day and I was dressed in a top coat, a felt hat, and low cut, dress shoes. It was about 2pm when I started up a very steep hill out of Red Canyon. This was the start of some steep mountains-the Rocky Mountains. As I was getting over this first hill, it started to snow. It was about the first of December, and I knew that Atlantic City got snowed in for most of the winter. The mail man went in by ski's or sled a couple times a week or so. This is where I was really stupid for going on, but I was young and foolish!

The farther I went the deeper the snow got, and the wind began to blow. At places, the mountain was so steep the so called road zig zaged back and forth to get up the mountain. My feet were getting wet, and I was getting cold, mostly my ears, face and feet. There were many times I felt it would feel so good to lay down and go to sleep; it would be so easy and peaceful, and I was so tired. What stuck in my mind then was hearing my parents talk about how people have died that way because of the false feeling of tranquility, so I forced myself on. I did have a pair of light gloves, so I would hold my hands over my ears and walk backwards. By this time the snow was getting so deep I couldn't see the road any more, so I started following the telephone poles cross country, as I knew they came out at Atlantic City. There must have

been at least two-and-a-half feet of snow plus it was drifting by the time I got to Ellen Carpenter's log hotel. An old, hard-rock miner, Jim Cassy, was there with Bud Carpenter, Jim Carpenter and Ellen Carpenter. They were just ying how it wasn't a fit night out for a dog, when in comes stumbling me with frostbitten face, ears, feet, and barely navigating!

It was on the way hitchhiking back home at Cheyenne, Wyoming, at a gas station on the west edge of town, I heard about the Japs bombing Pearl Harbor! I just put this in to show how when I thought I had seen and been through everything, I didn't know how wrong I was. The next two Burma campaigns made this seem like child's play!

This was in the Arabian sea that we were sunk. The sharks must have had a good meal of over three hundred mules. There are many other things to remember of our sinking, but I will wait for some of the reports of my buddies

Harold L, Bington

DONATION IN HONOR OF DECEASED HEROES

JESSE G BRASHER, 5307/2HQ BCT, By Daughter Bonita Brockman, Clarksville, TN, October 19, 2002

GERARD J CREEDEN, 5307/2 BCT/MED, BY Widow Joan, Rosendale, NY, July 22, 2006

RAYMOND FOSTER, 5307/1/B RCT 475/1/B, By Daughter Raemarie Koehn, Grand Junction, CO, August 3, 2006

RAYMOND FOSTER, 5307/1/B RCT 475/1/B, By Friend Debbie Mixer Flanigan, Bath, ME, August 3, 2006

BOBBIE L FRICKE, 475/2/E/1, By Widow Alma, Seymour, IN, August 25, 1996

MSGR EDWARD F GLAVIN, 5307/3/I, From Paul Valles, Gualala CA, June 21, 1997

WARNER KATZ, 5307/3/K KCT I&R, Ranger Hall Of Fame, By Robert E Passanisi, Lindenhurst, NY, Nov 5, 2006

WARNER KATZ, 5307/3/K KCT I&R, Ranger Hall Of Fame, By John & Susie Passanisi, Ft Mill, SC,

WARNER KATZ, 5307/3/K KCT I&R, Ranger Hall Of Fame, By Anne Richardson, Washington, DC

LEO M PRZEBOROWSKI, 475/1/HQ, By Widow Jeanett, Chicago, IL, May 9, 1991

DONATION IN HONOR OF LIVING HEROES

Herbert Clofine, 5307/2/HQ BCT I&R, By Ranger Roy Matsumoto, Friday Harbor, WA

Ranger Roy Matsumoto, 5307/2/HQ I&R Ranger Hall Of Fame, By Robert E Passanisi, Lindenhurst, NY

Edward A Mc Logan, 5307/2?HQ GCT, Ranger Hall Of Fame, By Ranger Roy Matsumoto, Friday Harbor, WA

GERARD J CREEDEN, 5307/2 BCT/MED, PO Box 46 Rosendale, NY 12472-9718, From Widow Joan, died July 22, 2006

SALVATORE DE MARCO, 5307/3/HQ 475/3/M, 55 Bay 14th St Brooklyn, NY 11214-3637 Widow Jennie, From Grandson John Troy1531-64th St Brooklyn, NY 11219, died July 27, 2006

DANIEL F DONAHUE, 5307/3/HQ 475/3/HQ, From son Daniel, on the internet ddonahue13@comcast.net died September 23, 2006

LOWELL DYER, 5307/2/F 475/2/F, PO Box 42 Backus, MN 56435-0042, From return mail, died approximately, May 2006

RAYMOND FOSTER, 5307/1/B RCT 475/1/B, PO Box 58 Whitewater, CO 81527-0058 Widow Marian, (303) 241-3851, From Daughter Raemarie Koehn, 3058 Sandpiper Ave, Grand Junction, CO 81504 August 3, 2006

BOBBIE L FRICKE, 475/2/E/1, From Widow Alma, 10152 E County Road 275 N, Seymour, IN 47274-9249 (812) 522-3845

SEYMORE I GETZ, 5307/3/ K KCT, From Grandson Ronnie Getz, on the internet, <rgetz@cfl.rr.com > Deid September 22, 2006

WILLIAM GOLDFIELD, 5307/1/A MED 475/1/A, 3105 Doris Ct, Phoenixville, PA 19460-1869 Widow Anne

KENNETH O HANSEN, 5307/2 GCT, From Widow Elaine, PO Box 115, Davey, NE 68336-0115 died November 26, 2005

HAROLD F KALLHOF, 5307/2/G GCT, 11385 Cheyenne Trl Apt 201, Parma Hights, OH 44130-1998, Widow Loretta, (440) 234-1706 From Larry Kollhof, died June 2006

WARNER KATZ, 5307/3/K KCT I&R, Ranger Hall Of Fame, 280 Boylston St, Apt 914, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467 From Son Douglas, died November 5, 2006

JOE D KEITH, 5307/1 WCT, 516 Shipley Rd, Manchester, TN 37355-7660, From Grandson, Ranger Scott Hickerson, 832 275 7689, November 4, 2006

JOHN F KOHLER, 124/HQ HQ, From Widow Elizabeth, 2451 Black Gap Rd, Fayetteville, PA 17222-9746, died December 3, 2004

ROSCOE H MEEKS, 5307/2/G GCT, From Son Mike Connors On The Internet <bpecu@Verizon.Net> April 12 2006

EMMETT L PAYNE, 5307/1/HQ RCT 475/1/HQ, PO Box 7765, Boise, ID 83707-1765, (208) 334-2107

STAN SUBANSKI, 5307/3, From Nephew On The Internet, died May 6, 2006

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