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67th Merrill's Marauders Reunion

sponsored by the Proud Descendants

Aug. 29-Sept. 1, 2013

Crowne Plaza Hotel & Suites

Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport Hotel
3 Appletree Square (I-494 & 34th Avenue South)
Bloomington, MN 55425

Saturday Banquet Speaker — Stephen Osman

Renowned Minnesota Military Historian. Author of 8 books and numerous magazine articles. Sought after speaker and elected Fellow of the Company of Military Historians. Stephen recently retired as the Senior Historian with the Minnesota Historical Society with over 30 years of service. He is a U.S. Army veteran and serves on boards of directors for 3 historical and literary organizations. He is a graduate of St. Olaf College. ★

Reunion Event Highlights

Men's Gathering — The Men's Gathering will take place on Friday afternoon from 3–4:30 p.m. This will give the men an opportunity to socialize. Just like the Ladies Reception the Men's Gathering will have prizes, and the big draw is a raffle for the John Garlewsky Memorial Gift. This gift is given by his daughter Marlene Hoginski and covers the cost of a meal package. Only Marauders will be in the meal package drawing, and you *must* be present to win.

Ladies Wine and Cheese Reception — The Ladies "Get To Know You" Tea is having a makeover this year. Same time, Friday from 3–4:30 p.m., but with a new format. This year we are having a Wine and Cheese Reception. The wine is donated by a Proud Descendant. And as usual, prizes will be part of the celebration. ★

Reunion Time Is Almost Here!

Some of you Burma heroes haven't made your reservations yet. I know that as we get older it becomes difficult to travel, but our kids, The Proud Descendants, do everything they can to see that we have a good time. The only way we can show our appreciation is to show up.

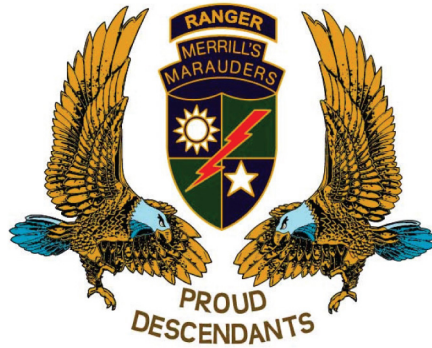
This message is meant for you! Yes, you! Since when did the difficult, or even the impossible, stop us?

Even at our age, making it to the reunion pales in relation to what we have accomplished. With the grace of God, I look forward to seeing you in Minneapolis (Bloomington) MN.

For reservations at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, 3 Appletree Square, Bloomington, MN 55425, call 952-854-9000 and tell them you want to attend the Merrill's Marauders Reunion. For the meal package, send in the form from the March issue of the BN, visit: www.MerrillsMaraudersPD.org and download the form, or email Jerrie Daly at: mmpdtreas@gmail.com, or call Jerrie at: 651-204-5002. ★

— Robert E. Passanisi, President

A Message from the MMPD President



When my brother and I were kids we always asked my dad how many Japs he shot. His answer was always the same. “None, I just shot my gun a lot.” He also had a scar on the front of his chest and on his back. They were about the size of a silver dollar, and he claimed he was born that way.

One Memorial Day I found my dad hiding behind the shed holding his head in his hands and crying like a baby. It was my mother who finally spilled the beans that the scars were made by a Japanese machine gun bullet that broke his collar bone, took off the top of his right lung and then broke his shoulder blade on the way out, then hit the man standing behind him in the elbow.

When I was a teenager, I attended a few Marauder reunions with my parents and got to know a few other Marauder kids, most memorable being the Piazza girls. But it

wasn't until much later that things began to click for me. Dad died in 1978, and I felt no need to attend any further reunions but in 1991 in Richmond VA, I heard that Col. George McGee would be attending. My dad refused to talk about his war experiences, but I was aware that he was a scout for Col. McGee's Headquarters I&R Platoon so I was determined to meet the man.

I approached the Col. in the banquet room and introduced myself simply by saying, “Hello Colonel. My name is Bob Menta.”

His immediate response was, “Your father, Carmen, was the greatest scout I ever had. The day your father got shot I knew my battalion was finished.”

Me, being 40 years old and always thinking of myself as a macho man, burst into some serious tears and fled the room. Later that night the Col. approached me and told

me he had written a book that was unpublished, and he only had a few left, but Carmen's son deserved to have one. He sent me an autographed copy.

I started attending several reunions after that and got to know Herb Clofine, who was a radio man in my dad's squad, and Roy Matsumoto, who was the Nisei with him. I quickly learned that all of his “Just shot my gun a lot” hit many targets. I also began making friends of other children of Marauders, first Linda Burchett, then Randy and Clydette Cooper (Reynolds), and then so many more as the years went on.

It's amazing how you connect with these other descendants and realize how much you have in common with each other, even some like Mike Christner whose dad was also in the same squad as mine.

The reunions are a wonderful place to make friends and learn more about our ancestors. Why don't you come find out for yourself just how much you can learn about them from others who also seek the same information? You might be surprised and meet someone like a Col. McGee who can bring wondrous joy to you. I'm going to the reunion. See you there! ✪

— Bob Menta, MMPD President

THE 209TH COMBAT ENGINEERS' BAPTISM OF BATTLE

Excerpt from Spearhead

The Second Battalion of New Galahad started the attack on their designated front as planned. Progress was careful, conservative, and slow, with a minimum of casualties

as they were learning to destroy Japanese strong points. All went reasonably well with these poorly trained and unexperienced men until 13 June.

Galahad had only two pack-75 howitzers for support, with a minimum of ammunition. Most of the (see 209th Combat Engineers, page 7)



Merrill's Marauders Bridge

This highway bridge pictured above was constructed in 1953 based on a design worked on by Frank D. Merrill, Commissioner of N. H. Highways. He was a graduate of West Point and received a degree in Military Engineering from MIT in 1932. During WW II, he was promoted to Brigadier General and led the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional) in the Burma Campaign, which gained fame for its successful deep penetration behind enemy lines, engagement in five major battles and thirty minor combat operations, while disrupting enemy supply and communication lines and the taking of an airfield in North Burma. The unit became known as "Merrill's Marauders."

In 1998, legislation was passed by the NH General Court to rename the bridge as "Merrill's Marauders Bridge" and on November 11, 1999 was dedicated to this famed unit and its leader.

In 2008 the process of replacing the bridge began as part of the F. E. Everett Turnpike highway expansion. This project included a pedestrian walkway across the Souhegan River. This pedestrian bridge was purchased from the City of Portsmouth and was transported and reconstructed on this site by the N. H. Department of Transportation. The pedestrian walkway under the bridge is part of the Merrimack Heritage Trail.



On Veterans Day, Thursday, November 11, 1999, the State of New Hampshire dedicated the bridge over the Souhegan River on the F. E. Everett Turnpike, now part of the Interstate System, to Merrill's Marauders. The Bridge was a favorite of General Frank D. Merrill when he was the Highway Commissioner of the State of New Hampshire. The dedication was held, honoring Merrill's Marauders for their accomplishments in the Northern Burma campaign in World War II. In conjunction with the NH Department of Transportation, two prominent signs have been placed on both ends of the bridge. These signs contain the Marauder emblem along with the words: "Merrill's Marauders Bridge."

Now, the Town Center committee in Merrimack NH is working on a trail system that brings a walking trail underneath this bridge and will erect signs with the wording at left. ★



Roy Matsumoto Celebrates His 100th Birthday – May 1, 2013

The Merrill's Marauders and The Proud Descendants Associations presented Roy Matsumoto with a plaque honoring his heroic efforts and his 100th birthday. ★



Honor & Sacrifice

Stourwater Pictures, in association with BIJAC, has just completed HONOR & SACRIFICE, a half-hour documentary film on Roy Matsumoto, a Kibei who served as a soldier-translator with Merrill's Marauders in Burma during WWII. Roy saved his surrounded, starving battalion by crawling through the lines one night and overhearing plans for a dawn attack. He personally turned the subsequent battle by exposing himself to fire and ordering the Japanese troops to charge the American guns. Although born in Los Angeles, he was educated — in Japanese — in his family's ancestral home, Hiroshima. During the war, his family was living there, and three of his brothers fought for the Japanese. Although he assumed the atomic bomb obliterated his family, he learned the truth of its survival when he met his brother and cousin who were prisoners of war in Shanghai.

The story is told by Roy's daughter (and BIJAC Board of Trustees' member) Karen Matsumoto through her discovery of her father's work in the Military Intelligence Service (MIS) which he had kept secret for 50 years. The film portrays Karen's story of her father and his family using recently discovered panoramic photographs taken by Roy's father of California and Hiroshima. Most of these photos are being seen for the first time in this film.

Few members of Merrill's Marauders still survive — Roy Matsumoto turned 100 on May 1st. For more information check with Karen Matsumoto at: kwrenm@gmail.com. ★

Minnesota National Guard Honor Guard *Camp Ripley, Minnesota*

The Minnesota National Guard Honor Guard team consists of 25 dedicated members from Minnesota who provide Military Funeral Honors within the State of Minnesota for honorably discharged veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States of America. They provide these services at 5000 funerals a year. Additionally, they represent the Armed Forces throughout Minnesota at public ceremonies and special events.

The Minnesota National Guard Honor Guard took first place at the 2009 Army National Guard Honor Guard Competition at Fort Myer, VA, which took place Sept. 13-17, 2009. The competition, which included eight finalists, tested the skills of the team members on their drill and ceremony knowledge, performance of military funeral honors, and attention to detail in wearing the Army uniform. ★

Merrill's Marauder Vincent Melillo Awarded WWII and Korean War Medals at Ranger Graduation

WWII Merrill's Marauder and Korean War veteran Vincent Melillo, 94, was presented with seven additional awards for both wars April 28, 2013 during a Ranger graduation ceremony at Ft. Benning.

Melillo and his late wife, Frankie, had tried for decades to get an updated list of his medals only to be repeatedly told the documents had been destroyed in the St. Louis fire. His daughter resumed the quest last year. After Melillo was sent a list of the additional medals due him COL Kyle Lear, Ranger Training Brigade commander, suggested having the awards presentation during a Ranger graduation.

162 new Rangers of graduating class 5-13 stood when Melillo was escorted to receive the medals. Best Ranger competition winners SF C Timothy S. Briggs and SF C Raymond M. Santiago stood near Melillo during the presentation.

Melillo had requested that Ranger Brian Baumgartner, whose late, great uncle, Ed Zaino, was a Merrill's Marauder, be present to represent WWII and that Ranger Hall of Fame member Joe Gagnon, be present for the Korean War, since both men served with the 5th Regimental Combat Team.

BG David Haight, commandant U.S. Army Infantry School, pinned the medals to Melillo's jacket. They included Bronze Star Medal (one oak leaf cluster), Purple Heart (one oak leaf cluster), World War II Victory Medal, National Defense Service Medal (one bronze service star), Korean Defense Service Medal and Presidential Unit

Citation. Baumgartner pinned on the Ranger Tab.

Haight pinning the medals on Melillo made the ceremony more personal since his father was also a China-Burma-India veteran who took part in the bitter battle for the town of Myitkyina.

In his remarks, Haight said "Melillo answered our nation's call to service in wartime not once, but twice." As an original member of the 5307th Composite Unit Provisional — known as Merrill's Marauders — he was one of about 3,000 young men who volunteered for what was described as a dangerous and hazardous mission. That mission turned out to be a march through the jungles of Burma to disrupt Japanese supply and communication lines, and to capture the Japanese airfield at the town of Myitkyina.

Haight said that in slightly more than five months of combat, the Marauders had advanced through some of the harshest jungle terrain in the world. They fought in five major battles and engaged in combat with the Japanese Army on 32 separate occasions, including two conventional defensive battles with enemy forces for which the force had not been intended nor equipped.

In addition to battling Japanese soldiers, they were hungry, inadequately resupplied, and had to battle tropical diseases as well as the jungle itself. These men traversed more jungle terrain on their long-range missions than any other U.S. Army formation during World War II.



While they were only operational for those six months, the impact they had on our Army can be seen in the Rangers and soon-to-be Rangers who are here today. The need for soldiers and units that will display such gallantry, determination, and 'esprit de corps' in accomplishing its mission under extremely difficult and hazardous conditions as to set it apart and above other units was the start of the 7511 Ranger Regiment.

Even after his remarkable time with the Marauders, during which he survived malaria and dysentery, Melillo still wasn't done serving. In a training accident in 1945, he suffered punctured eardrums, temporary blindness, and split open his hand. He was discharged with 50 percent disability, but waived it in order to reenlist in 1949. He served three tours in Korea, volunteering to go back to combat after he was injured there and eventually retired from the Army as a master sergeant (E7) in 1965. ★

Excerpt from the NRMA, Anet.
Editor's Note: M/Sgt. Vincent Melillo is the 24th Merrill's Marauder to be inducted into the Ranger Hall Of Fame.

Voyage into the Wind

Col. Lloyd Osborne's Story of Escape from the Philippines and His 3,000 Mile Trip to Australia

Col. Osborne was Commander of Merrill's Marauders 1st Battalion, the 475th Infantry Regiment, and the 124th Cavalry Regiment Dismounted. Osborne tells how he and LT Damon Gause escaped from the Philippines in a small boat and a National Geographic map, making a 3,000 mile journey to Australia. The book *Voyage into the Wind* published by his daughter, Patty Osborne, is now available at Amazon.com and Barnes and Noble. (Kindle and Nook editions now available, print book forthcoming.) ✪



Marauders Online Resources

If you are looking for general information, reunion registration forms, past newsletters, or have a question about something and aren't sure whom to contact, visit: <http://www.merrillsmarauderspd.org>

The original Merrill's Marauders website is <http://www.marauder.org>.

Merrill's Marauders Proud Descendants also have a Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/crea8ivjr/>. Please visit the page and ask to be added to the group to get breaking news about the Marauders. ✪

By The Numbers

Many Marauders have asked how many of the original group are left. It is not possible to tell about the other units, for we don't have enough data, but of the original 5307th, I calculate there are 89 of us. *God Bless the other 88.* ✪

— Robert E. Passanisi

Looking For Help

My stepfather Capt. at the time, John J. Dunn, served with Merrill's Marauders in Burma during WW II. His family believes he performed certain heroic achievements for which he deserves the Medal of Honor posthumously. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for meritorious service for one of his heroic events. However, the family has heard stories and believes there is much more that has not been considered to date that would warrant upgrading the DSC to the MOH. But, we will need specifics to present.

Capt. Dunn's nephew, Pat Dunn, says Capt. Dunn used to tell the story of his unit being under attack by machine gun fire and in the midst of fire dragging wounded soldiers to safety. Next, he went behind enemy lines and found and destroyed gun nest, to prevent massacre of his men.

Anyone with information on Capt. Dunn, please contact Blaine McCaleb at 678-281-1042. ✪

(209th Combat Engineers, continued from page 2)

artillery was under the control of the Myitkyina task force headquarters, which was supporting the Chinese with mutable batteries of artillery.

A platoon of K Company was hit very hard by the Japanese on 13 June. Most of the company withdrew back to L Company's line. Under the leadership of two men with an automatic weapon and a machine gun, a few stayed in place and drove off the Japanese. This action took place near the river. To the west the Japanese were driven off with grenades and rifle fire. After the initial setback, the green troops had held against the veteran and aggressive enemy.

By 17 June, the Second Battalion of Galahad controlled the Maingna Ferry Road and a clear passage to the Irrawaddy River. They were one mile closer to the town than they had been on 13 June. The engineers and the rest of Galahad now also controlled the Myitkyina-MogaungSumprabum road junction.

When his platoon leader was killed, Pvt. Howard T. Smith had taken charge of the platoon and single-handedly knocked out a Japanese pillbox. Pfc. Willard J. D. Lilly destroyed an enemy machine gun that was firing into his position. 1st. Lt. Melvin D. Blair rescued a wounded man and knocked out a machine gun while under fire. These three heroes were veteran Marauders. T/Sgt. Richard E. Roe of New Galahad was killed when he crawled forward to grenade a Japanese machine gun that was causing heavy casualties. These three heroes were veteran Marauders. T/Sgt. Richard E. Roe of New Galahad was killed when he crawled forward to grenade a Japanese machine gun that was causing heavy casualties.

On this hot, humid day during a monsoon shower the 209th Engineer Combat Battalion went into their second major action. They were just two weeks off of their road-building job and a year or more away from basic training. After the 209th Engineers advanced four hundred yards, the Japanese closed in back of A Company—which had led the advance. 1st Lt. Henrich was killed, Bucky Morris was listed as missing, and there were numerous other casualties.

During this same attack, B Company was under fire for an hour from mortars and machine guns. Slater and Rainwater were injured by enemy fire, and. This was the first time A and B Companies had taken offensive action against Japanese who were so well entrenched. Fortunately the two companies were able to withdraw back to their original line. ★

Our Heroes Forever

T/5 ANDREW J. BATEMAN, 5307/475/2/HQ, 11 Par lane #3, Branson, MO 65737, From Widow Peggy, Final Roll Call May 1, 2013.

SGT RICHARD M. BENFER, 475/3/I, Lancaster, PA From Son Richard, Final Roll Call October 12, 2012.

PVT. WILLIAM J. BINTER, 5307/2/MEDIC, 2524 N 86 ST, Milwaukee, WI 53226, From Greg Walker, Final Roll Call March 12, 2013.

T/5 ROYLAND BRESSETE, 475/3/L, 70 W. C. 478, Webster, FL 33597-7734, From Widow Gienna, Final Roll Call March 24, 2013.

SGT EDWARD DENZLER, 475/3/K, From daughter Terry Denzler Tiemann, Fianl Roll Call May 28, 2013.

PFC HOWARD A. HOMES, 5307/3/K, 2240 240th Ave, Mora, MN, From Jonnie, Clasen, Final Roll Call April 9, 2013.

PFC DUDLEY P. JONES, 475/2/HQ, From Greg Walker, Final Roll Call March 23, 2013.

CPL RALPH B. LAWSON, 5307/3/K KHAKI, From Obit, Final Roll Call November 13, 2012.

T/5 GLENN MADDEN, 5307/2/F GCT, From return mail, Final Roll Call July 29, 2012.

SGT MELVIN E. MEYERHOFF, 5307/3/K KHA-KI, Final Roll Call October 11, 2011.

SGT WALTER J. MIKOLAJCZIK, 5307/3/L KCT, 625 Sangamon St, Chicago, IL, Final Roll Call June 13, 2012.

T/5 CLYDE E. MILLER, 5307, From Gil Balis, Final Roll Call February 24, 2013.

CPL HURBERT H. MINDERMAN, 5307/3/K KCT, From a friend, Final Roll Call January 28, 2009.

PFC FRANCIS E. PONDER, 5307/475/3/I, 9405 Kingston Dr. Bradenton, FL 34210, From daughter Jerrie Daly, jerriedaly@gmail.com, Final Roll Call April 21, 2013.

PFC ROBERT D. SWIGERT, 5307/3/K KHAKI, from Jonnie Clasen, Final Roll Call January 15, 2013.

S/SGT CHARLES W. YINGER, 5307/1/HQ, From A. Wolcott, annyban08@aol.com, Final Roll Call April 17, 2013.

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