



Official Publication of Merrill's Marauders Association, Inc. • November 2014 • No. 118

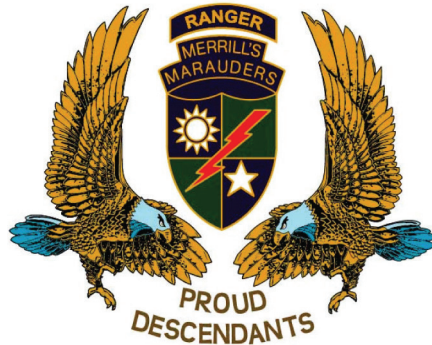


68th Merrill's Marauders Reunion Labor Day Weekend 2014 • Milwaukee, WI

Front Row (L to R): Ernest "Ernie" Hubacker, Ben Jackson, Robert "Bob" Passanisi, Bob Ketcham, Vincent Melillo, Marcos Barelmas, Larue Thompson, Dominic Baracani, Edward "Pat" Brown. Top Row (L to R): Charles Von Gunten, Frank Breyer, Merrill "Pete" Ewing, Keynote Speaker and Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker, David Allan, Gilbert Howland, Marvin Boyenga.



A Message from the MMPD President



Not a single political word was spoken during the Saturday night banquet when our guest speaker was the Governor of the State of Wisconsin, Scott Walker. I had the privilege of greeting him at his car when he arrived and speaking with him in a set up room prior to entering the banquet hall. The first indication that this man did not have politics on his mind was when I pulled a small gift out of my suit jacket pocket and inadvertently and unknowingly dropped my room key on the floor. The next thing that happened was the Governor was bent over picking my key up and handing to me.

At the dinner table he was passing the butter, salad dressings etc. and paying direct attention to each person that spoke to him. And yes, he left that night feeling mighty hungry as he barely had a moment to eat because he answered each and every question fully until the attendee was satisfied.

His speech was entirely directed to the Marauders, heaping endless praise and affection upon them. Afterwards he spent an hour and a half posing for pictures and speaking to each and every single person (110 in attendance). To steal the observation of a friend and lost Marauder Bill Binter, the Gov. is truly a "genuine" person.

Host family, the Binter's, set up a fantastic Friday for everyone. Af-

ter a tour of the Harley-Davidson Museum, which the Boyenga's and Joni Newman didn't get to see (glad you pulled through that nasty fall Carolyn) we were all treated to a lunch of Bratwursts/Fish Fry/Pretzels/Fries/Beer/Soda after an entertaining and informative tour of Lakefront Brewery. It was hard to eat dinner Friday night after stuffing our stomachs there!

Bill Poulter, a Milwaukee resident and veteran of the Korean War showed off his personal Jeep that has been hand painted and decorated with memorials to veterans of all the wars. Bill's Jeep attracted a steady line of onlookers who were in awe of his dedication.

Saturday's Color Guard was presented by former Milwaukee Police Officers and Military Veterans in full uniform and Jonnie Melillo Clasen conducted a tremendous campaign, arranging for 49 of our states to issue an Official Proclamation naming Aug. 10th as Merrill's Marauders Day (the date that the unit was officially deposited) with the lone state giving a "Thumbs Down" being my home state of New Jersey. (That's why nobody moves TO New Jersey). What a breathtaking display that was!

I thank everyone on the MMPD Board for doing a tremendous job putting together another fantastic reunion and to the Binter Family for being such gracious hosts. Wow! What a great time we all had.

Did you notice that I didn't mention which political party Gov. Walker is? That's because it didn't matter. There wasn't a single political word spoken. It was all about the Marauders.

— Bob Menta, Pres. MMPD

Happy 99th Birthday, Ernie! October 16, 2014

Ernest "Ernie" Hubacker was the oldest WW II China-Burma-India veteran attending the 2014 Merrill's Marauders reunion over Labor Day weekend in Milwaukee. Part of Mars Task Force, Hubacker was stationed at Fort Reno, OK, when he traded his "shiny boots" in for a jungle uniform to fight in Burma. He said, "Fort Reno was a place where they kept horses and mules ... it was a remount station. It's where they gave the horses their basic training. The horses and mules outnumbered the men. I was with the 253rd Remount Squadron, Troop A." A native of Michigan, Hubacker has lived for years in Jamestown, ND. At right, he is kissed at an earlier reunion by Sherry Cowling, a daughter of the late Marauder Logan Weston, known as the "Fighting Preacher."





Mark Your Calendar Now!
The 2015 Merrill's Marauders Reunion will be held
in the Dallas-Fort Worth area
Labor Day Weekend—September 3-6, 2015



Quentin Waite Sees 1944 Promotion for First Time in Columbus, GA

Seventy years after he was promoted to sergeant while serving in the China Burma India Theater, Merrill's Marauder Quentin Waite, 93, finally saw the April 17, 1944, special orders number 52 authorizing his promotion. Waite and his wife had traveled from Michigan to attend the Ranger Hall of Fame ceremony and 2014 U.S. Army Ranger Association muster in Columbus, GA, during July.

Waite and fellow Marauder Vincent Melillo, from Columbus were the only WW II veterans at the muster. Waite was looking through Melillo's WW II binder of documents and photographs when he spotted his name. Ironically, his name was directly above Melillo's. "I can't believe this," said Waite. "This is the first time I've ever seen these special orders promoting me to sergeant."



Nation's Governors Proclaim August 10, 2014 National WW II Merrill's Marauder Day

Robert Passanisi, Historian Emeritus of Merrill's Marauders Association, Minnesota Governor Scott Walker, and Jonnie Melillo Clasen stand with one of the proclamations. Jonnie was honored with the MMPD 2014 Volunteer Award for her role in coordinating the Proclamations.

Governors from throughout the United States honored WW II Merrill's Marauders on the 70th anniversary of their unit disbanding by proclaiming August 10, 2014, as **National WW II Merrill's Marauder Day**.

That's the day in 1944 when the short-lived unit from the "forgotten" theater of WW II, the China-Burma-India Theater (CBI,) dissolved in Burma after defeating the Japanese 18th Imperial Division, which vastly outnumbered them, in five major battles and 30 minor engagements.

"This is the first time that Merrill's Marauders have ever been given this kind of national recognition," said Bob Passanisi, 90, Merrill's Marauder's spokesman, historian and outgoing editor of the *Burman News*.

"Our numbers are dwindling, and we are grateful to all the governors who have honored us by keeping our story alive," added Passanisi. "We are also grateful to the efforts of the Merrill's Marauders Proud Descendants—our sons and daughters—who launched this nationwide campaign asking the governors and mayor from the District of Columbia to declare this commemorative day."

Today there are less than 50 original Merrill's Marauders left out of almost 3,000. There are about 250 replacements still living out of the almost 3,000 who were flown into the Myitkyina airfield to reinforce the 5307th CUP before it disbanded.

"National WW II Merrill's Day was also acknowledged in the July 31 congressional statement, thanks to the efforts of Congressman Sanford Bishop from Georgia," said Passanisi.

Proclamation requests had to be submitted by a resident of each state. Merrill's Marauders Proud Descendants responded immediately after Jonnie Melillo Clasen, daughter of Marauder Vincent Melillo, 96, proposed the idea and provided the "whereas" clauses.

However the MMPD was able to cover only about one third of the states. The campaign turned into an amazing collective volunteer effort by the proud descendants and Marauders alongwith volunteers from Army Rangers, Special Forces, Command Sergeants Major Association, National Guard, veterans and supportive citizens.

Everyone from private citizens who were "the friend of a friend" to

generals and those who hadn't even heard of Merrill's Marauders sent in requests for their states.

CBI veterans who waded through bureaucratic mazes to submit requests for their states were Passanisi for New York, Marauder and retired Gen. Sam V. Wilson, 91, for Virginia and Fred Sommerfeld, 88, who was with the 475th, for North Dakota.

New Jersey Governor Chris Christie received the first proclamation request, which was sent in by MMPD president Bob Menta, son of the late Marauder Carmen Menta. Michigan Governor Rick Snyder issued the first proclamation. It was requested by Howard Yamaguchi, son of the late Jimmie N. Yamaguchi, one of 14 Nisei, Japanese American Interpreters assigned to Merrill's Marauders.

The campaign took slightly more than one month to complete. Every state except California, which had technical glitches, issued a proclamation or similar type document. Since the Marauders trained with the British, a request for recognition was sent to the Queen of England. Although the Queen did not reply, two responses from her staff were received by Clasen.

Father Val Bartek: Marauder “Chaplain”

Note from Greg Walker: Fr. Val has touched all of our hearts with his Marauder and Ranger-focused prayers and sermons. He understands that “Rangers Lead the Way” and he believes that Jesus was there in the midst of their strife. GW

I am a farm boy from Nebraska. The first car I owned was a used 1971 SS 396 Camaro that I purchased from my older brother, Many. (He was with me at the 2010 Reunion in MN.) I currently own a 1951 Studebaker “Commander” that I received from my farm neighbor.

My father, Ivan, entered WWII during the last few months in Europe, first as a medical records keeper, then as a motorcycle riding MP after the war. (My sister, Marilyn, and I saw a green Harley-Davidson in the museum at the 2014 Reunion that looked just like the one my father rode.) My brother, Many, served in Vietnam as a mechanic in a remote motor pool base camp. I love my father and brother for who they are and what they did. They helped make my heart ready to honor those on active duty and as well as all veterans, be it on Memorial Day, during a personal visit, or as a chaplain at the last “Pass in Review.”

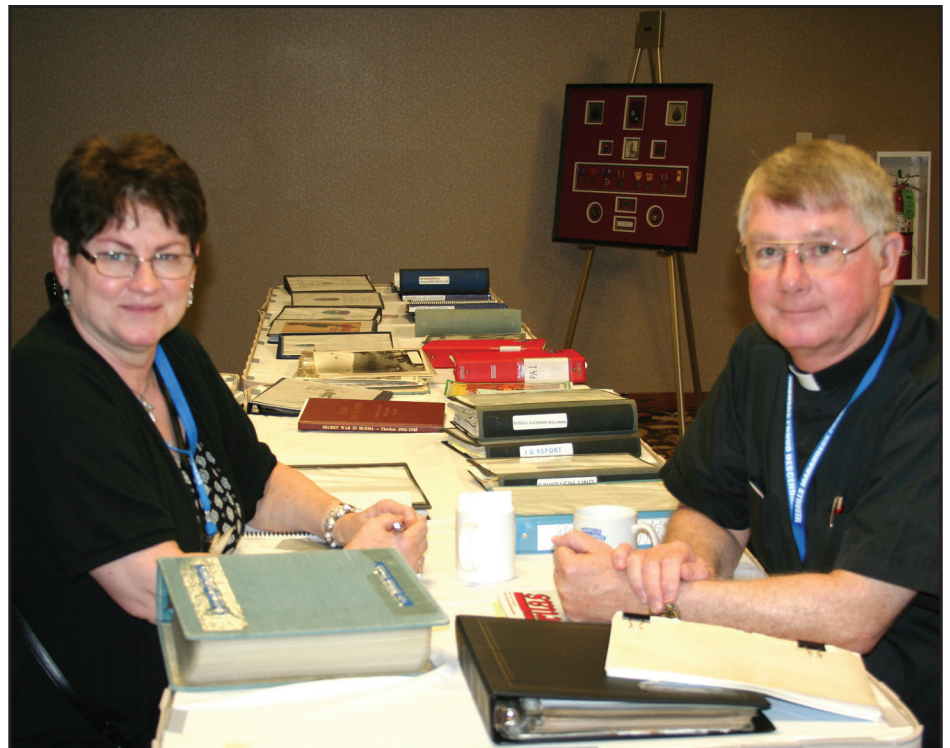
My first school was a one-room schoolhouse, similar to the one in the TV series “Little House on the Prairie.” I later attended the University of Nebraska for a B.S. in Chemical Engineering and a M.S. in Agricultural Engineering. I was planning a career in commercial food production. Some of you football fans might remember the

Nebraska Cornhuskers in the back-to-back National Championships of 1970 and 1971. Did you see me on the middle of the football field? I would have been one of the 20 guys playing trumpet in the Marching Band.

My plans for engineering took a detour when I was invited by my Bishop to attend a seminary in Emmitsburg, MD. I began working for the Church in 1982 as an ordained minister. Most of my work as a pastor has been serving small, rural parishes in southern Nebraska. My first assignment as a pastor in 1986 took me to a small town called Blue Hill, where I met a “Marauder” named Paul Yardley. He carried a BAR, and survived the battle of Nhpum-ga Hill and the taking of Myitkyina.

Paul spoke highly of the men of the Merrill’s Marauders. He invited

me to attend the 2006 Reunion in KY, where Paul introduced me to several of his friends. I felt welcome in my first visit on the first day of my first Reunion. Father Jim Bowman, the Chaplain, spoke to me of the heritage of the Marauder Chaplains, beginning with their days in the Burma Jungle. The chaplains walked with the men, and prayed with them. My favorite story was the rescue of 2nd Battalion by the 3rd Battalion on Easter Sunday morning, April 9, 1944. Father Tom Barrett offered a Mass of Thanksgiving to God later that afternoon for such a miraculous deliverance. I also read Fr. Barrett’s opinion of a chaplain’s place in a war. The chaplain reminds the soldiers that there is more to life than the battle at hand, that there is someone who loves them and who will provide a safe and loving home for them.



Father Val Bartek and his sister, Marilyn Wadum look through historical photos and documents at the 2014 Marauder Reunion.

Marauder Marty Martin Represents Marauders at “National Memories” Photo Exhibit in Beijing

Arriving in Beijing we were greeted by a driver and a butler at the airport. They remained at our beck and call throughout our visit, providing whatever we (me and my daughter Monique) might require. I was not permitted to pay for anything, and in fact, was given 2000 yuan for incidentals.

We expected the smog to be heavy, but were shocked at the density. That did not detract from the experience, however. I must say the city was very busy at all times, very clean. Every building, no matter the age, was well maintained. The people greeted us with ready smiles and bouquets of beautiful flowers.

The hotel (Xing Bo Hotel) was beautiful and the staff very accommodating. The meals were interesting. I had the pleasure of sharing breakfast with Gen. Stilwell's grandson, Col. John Easterbrook several times. He is a wonderful conversationalist and a gentleman through and through. I had the opportunity of attending a State dinner with John where President Jimmy Carter was the speaker.

The museum was immense and displayed ancient military weaponry up to modern. I delivered my speech at the opening ceremony with the assistance of an interpreter and it was well received. There were many new experiences to follow. A film crew was assigned to us and reporters crowded me constantly. I presented the museum with a Merrill's Marauders challenger coin in a U.S. Army presentation box, a signed copy of Gavin Mortimer's book, and some of my Burma experiences I had written. I had the plea-

sure of meeting 4 Chinese survivors of the Burma Campaign.

Hating Liping, the assistant museum manager, directed my attention to a blown up picture on the museum wall of me and a Chinese soldier inspecting each other rifle on a Burma trail (the one in many of the books). It seems this is the only picture of a Marauder interacting with a Chinese soldier and they were thrilled I was there in person. Liping ask if I knew his name and of course I did not. She asked if I knew who took the picture and I told her David Quaid was the photographer. I was told that I was a Chinese National Treasure.

We were escorted to splendid palaces, the Forbidden City, and the Great Wall. Until you actually visit the Great Wall, you cannot even

imagine the true engineering effort. That was something I had wanted to see all my life.

Sadly and embarrassingly, I fell in the full marble bathroom (no bath mats) and my visit was shortened by 2 days. I was rushed to the hospital and it was determined there was nothing broken, just deep tissue trauma (bruise). I am fully recovered and back at the gym 3 times a week.

The Chinese supplied first class accommodations all the way and a life time of memories. The Marauders are well displayed and recognized and I was honored to be able to represent us.

We were given pictures which somehow disappeared from both our luggage on the flight home. Big Mystery!





Final Roll Call

Melvin Clinton, 92, Aug. 5, 2014 in Mt. Vernon, IL. Galahad, Khaki Cmbt Tm/Co I 5307th

Jack Luttrell, 92, Oct. 16, 2014 in Xenia, OH Co. I 5307th

James Corbett Sodowsky, 91, Sept. 21, 2014 in Arkansas City, KS. Orange Combat Team

MARTIN'S SPEECH

I am honored to be here.

In 1943, I answered our President Franklin D. Roosevelt's call for a secret "dangerous and hazardous" mission from Guadalcanal where I was a combat high speed code radio communication operator, not knowing where, what or how long. Nor did I know more than 85 percent casualties were expected. We were almost 3000 volunteers, from mostly unruly, troubled, and insubordinate elements of society. We landed in Bombay, India on October 31, 1943 in unnamed units 1688 A, B, & C. In January 1, 1944 we were officially designated, the 5307th Composite Unit Provisional, code-named "Galahad" and later nicknamed Merrill's Marauders by the press after our commander, Gen. Frank D. Merrill.

With only what we could carry on our backs or pack on mules, we were the first American ground troops to fight the Japanese in Asia. I maintained my position as radio communications operator as well as machine gunner. We walked almost 1000 miles, farther than any other WWII fighting force, trudging behind enemy lines up the foothills of the Himalayas and into the jungles of northern Burma, during monsoon season. Our mission was to capture the only all weather airstrip at Myitkyina, crushing Japan's control of the sky. We accomplished this May 17, 1944, enabling the Allies to airlift supplies into Burma so the Ledo and Burma roads could be connected. This was opening a crucial pathway into China.

We were heavily outnumbered in five major battles and 30 minor engagements. We fought exhausted, extremely ill, starving, and next to death. We had defeated the Japanese 18th Imperial Division. Only 300 of the approximate 1300 remaining Merrill's Marauders were in various degrees of fighting condition. There are about 50 original Merrill's Marauders remaining.

I salute our Chinese military brothers! We took an area and they held it. The communication barrier disappeared in battle and in the determination to succeed, WE BECAME ONE! Thank you!

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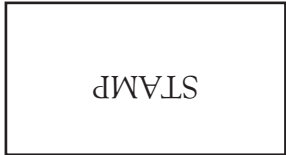


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November 2014