



FROM THE MICHIGAN CHAPTER

Keith Sousa, Chapter President

Aloha from the “mitten” state. Our chapter is taking the summer off so that our members can vacation and enjoy some of the Michigan weather (while it’s not snowing or sleeting). As a result, our “lunch bunch” does not meet during the months of July and August. We will meet September 13-15 for our annual chapter reunion, which will be held at Fenton, Michigan. The chapter is looking for other locations to hold our reunion in 2020, which will be voted on during the 2019 reunion. We will conduct our next “lunch bunch” on September 18th. The chapter is vying to have the National Association reunion in Grand Rapids, Michigan in August of 2020, which will be voted upon during the annual reunion this year in Colorado Springs. The reunion will be held at the AMWAY Grand Hotel, which is a wonderful facility in downtown, and within walking distance of the Gerald Ford Presidential library and museum. We are hoping to showcase what the city of Grand Rapids, and the surrounding area, has to offer. The 2014 national reunion was held at the AMWAY Grand Hotel and was a resounding success. I’m devoting this newsletter to our seven WWII Veterans who normally attend our “lunch bunch”, and our state reunions. They are Valentino Colussi, Edward Hallo, Calvin Hanawalt, Herman Kasoff, Dr. Henry Malic, John Malejan and Al Roe. Of course, all of these gentlemen are in their nineties, and Ed Hallo just turned ninety-nine in July. Valentino Colussi served with the 3/502d Infantry. He jumped into Normandy prior to D-Day, and Holland during Operation Market Garden. He remained with the 502d and fought in Bastogne. Ed Hallo served with the 501st Infantry. He missed jumping into Normandy because he had broken his leg in a practice jump, but later joined the rest of the unit in France. He also fought in Holland and Bastogne. Calvin Hanawalt served with the 11th Airborne Division and participated in battles in Europe as well as the Philippines. Herman Kasoff was originally assigned to the 3d Ranger Battalion, but due to the number of casualties the battalion received in Italy, he was re-assigned to the First Special Services Force, which was comprised of American and Canadian Soldiers. The First Special Services Force went on to successfully fight in Italy and throughout the European Theater until the end of the war. Much of the training and operational techniques utilized by the First Special Services Force are still used by special operations units today. In fact, the Canadian Government is honoring the First Special Services Force by unveiling a plaque to this unit in September 2019, and Mr. Kasoff will be a part of this ceremony. Dr. Henry Malic served with General Patton’s 3d Army in WWII, and was part of the relief force that relieved the 101st at Bastogne. After the war ended, he was assigned as a Military Policeman and became a guard during the Nuremburg trials. He personally met many of the high ranking German officers who were on trial, to include Herman Goering. He suffered a back injury during the war, which bothered him severely. Someone recommended that he see a chiropractor, which was quite uncommon during the 1940’s. He was so impressed by his treatment that he went to school and became a chiropractor. He practiced for many years until just recently. John Malejan was a member of the 11th Airborne Division during, WWII. He participated in the “Los Banos’ raid, which was located in the Philippines. Los Banos’ was an internment camp, which included military and civilian men women and children detainees. There were rumors that the Japanese were going to assassinate all of the prisoners. The 11th Airborne was sent in to rescue all of the captives and provided the surprise element, while ground forces also attacked the perimeter of the compound. They successfully freed several thousand prisoners. He had lied about his age to get into the military, and was only 17 years old when he jumped into the vicinity of the POW camp and helped free the captives. John received a commission and was later activated for the

Korean War, while serving as a company commander in the 46th Infantry Division. However, he was sent home after the Army realized that he was already married and had children. Al Roe was also a member of the 11th Airborne Division and saw action in the Philippines. Our chapter was founded by WWII Veterans who originally began meeting in the city of Detroit, and were known as the “Nuts” club. It eventually changed locations to metro Detroit and was re-named as the “lunch bunch”. So, it is an honor to still have these five WWII Veterans who are still willing and able to attend our “lunch bunch”, and to share their knowledge and wisdom with the rest of us. Unfortunately, we recently lost one of our members to cancer, Bob Bakowski. Bob was a long time member who served in Vietnam with an airborne unit which was part of the 1st Cavalry Division. While in Vietnam, Bob was a demolitions specialist. He was flown all over the country to destroy bridges and other targets which the enemy could utilize. After he got out of the military, he served for over thirty years with the Customs and Border Patrol (which later became the Department of Homeland Security). The Department of Homeland Security provided the honor detail for Bob’s funeral. He was a great husband, family man, and overall good guy, who contributed significantly to our chapter. He will be missed. I’m looking forward to our reunion in September, and in resuming our monthly “lunch bunch” gatherings.