



# Geronimo!



VOLUME 3, ISSUE 1

JANUARY 2015

## GOODBYE NICK

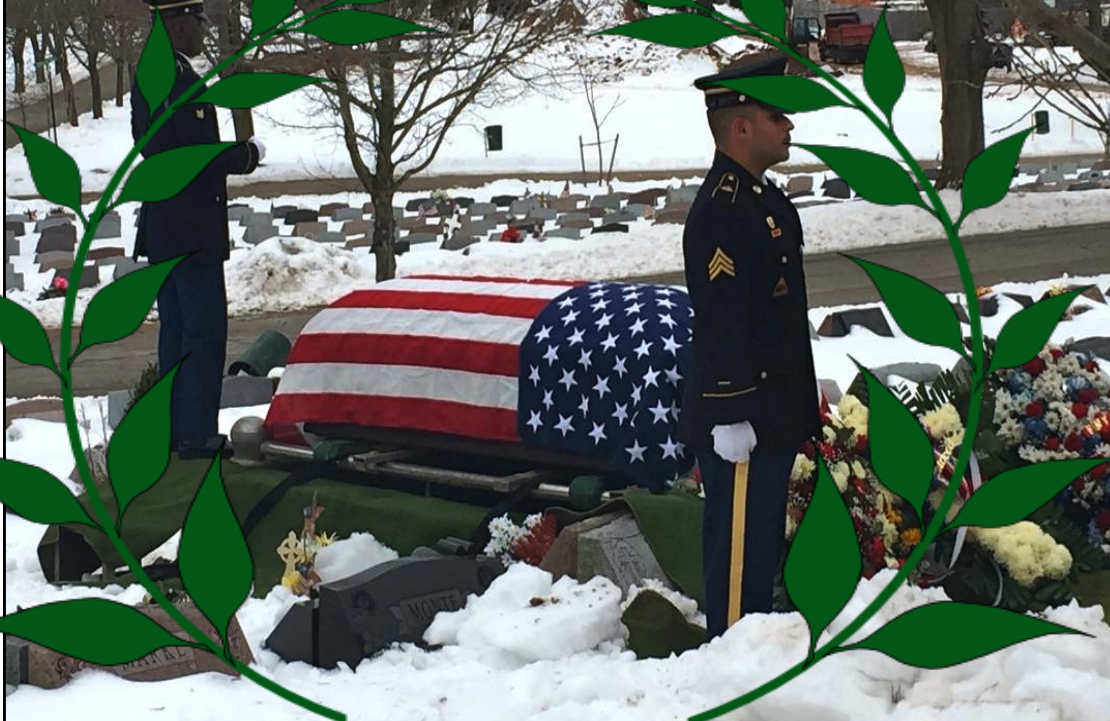
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### SEND E-MAIL ADDRESS TO

[PhilipHeandscomb@msn.com](mailto:PhilipHeandscomb@msn.com)

**AND WE WILL  
SEND YOU A  
COPY OF THE  
NEWSLETTER**



**Sergeant Nicholas DeGaeta was laid to rest on February 6, 2015,** at the Moravian Cemetery. He had an Honor Guard from: the NYFD., the Army, the NY Mayor's Office, and a Rep. of the 509 PIA. Nick was their Sergeant of Arms for life. The 509th also remembers World War II veteran Tom Dunlavy and Todd Beeson. RIP

## 509 MAN OF THE YEAR

The 509 PIA Man of the Year, Col. Darren Wright, will be honored, posthumously, in Atlanta, GA, at the All Airborne Awards, on April 4, 2015. Barry Simpson will represent the 509 PIA at the ceremony, when a member of Col. Wright's family, accepts the award. If anyone would like to attend the All Airborne Awards to show your support for the 509 PIA and Col Wright, please go to pg. 7 of the Newsletter. (use control click on the red Here to fill out an application or to make hotel reservations.)

### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- 3rd 509 WINTER BALL & CHANGE OF COMMAND
- MATT ANDERSON HONORED
- MEMBERSHIP APP
- ATLANTA MAN OF THE YEAR APP
- NICK DEGAETA FAREWELL
- 509 PIA NEWS
- 509TH WEBSITE LINK

<http://509thgeronimo.org/>



**STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. -- Nicholas DeGaeta, 95,** of New Dorp, a highly decorated World War II Army paratrooper who saw duty throughout North Africa and Europe, and an FDNY firefighter whose commitment to his city and colleagues was unstinting, died Monday at home.

Born in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, he later lived in Manhattan. He settled in New Dorp in 1955.

Mr. DeGaeta was 22 when he enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1941, choosing to join the fledgling 509th Parachute Battalion, the outfit that later became the 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion and a precursor to special operations troops. He would see combat in the invasion of North Africa, Anzio, Avalino, the Italian mountains and the French Alps, Kasserine Pass and the Rhine, and was one of 48 enlisted men and seven officers still standing when the unit was disbanded in a snowy and bloody field after the Battle of the Bulge. He was awarded the Bronze Star for valor and the Purple Heart with Oak Leaf Clusters.

He was wandering alone in a mismatched uniform when he was captured by friendlies who suspected he was a German who had learned English, but they eventually let him go. Mr. DeGaeta discharged as a sergeant in July 1945.

He could have taken disability, but followed his older brother, Paul, into the ranks of the FDNY, where he spent 35 years. He retired in 1994 from Engine Co. 10, "Ten House," across the street from the World Trade Center. Highlights of his career were being named New York State Firefighter Union Man of the Year in 1979, and making former President Jimmy Carter an honorary FDNY firefighter.

Mr. DeGaeta retired but his connection with the FDNY persisted. He visited burn victims, assisted the families of injured firefighters, and attended more than 50 funerals of brother firefighters after 9/11, several of them from Engine 10. He continued his work with Community Mayors, a group working with disabled children, and each year the FDNY presents the Community Mayors Nicholas DeGaeta Award to someone who demonstrates "commitment to excellence and persistence of duty."

He again was honored in November 2010, when he was appointed a Chevalier (Knight) of the Legion of Honor by French President Nicolas Sarkozy at a ceremony in Manhattan. It is France's highest award, akin to the Medal of Honor. Modest to a fault, he said, simply, "It's an honor."



This is Melissa Russell, her dad, Thomas Jeanes, Hal Persun, & Pres. 509 PIA, at the new Yarborough Hall Museum. They donated some memorabilia from Guy Wesley Jeanes, WWII 509 vet. He is Melissa's Granddad & Thomas's dad. LTC Tackett is presenting them with a 1/509 challenge coin. Thomas offered a few words about his dad's stories he told about his time with the BN during WWII. He said his dad never discussed his service until he was 70 yrs. Old, and indicated that he was very proud of his time with the 509<sup>th</sup>. He thought it was the best unit in the US Army! (See Pictures below)








EUGENE, Ore. - Feb 12, 2015 - A 92-year-old American veteran of World War II received France's highest honor Wednesday. Mike Reuter, 92, received the French Legion of Honor for his service in the Battle of the Bulge. "It's very, very, heartwarming," said Francoise Aylmer, the French consulate. "I know how many American men lost their lives in France for freedom, so to be able to recognize those who came home is very important." Reuter, who turns 93 this June, said he was only 20 years old when he enlisted. He was the leader of the 509th parachute infantry battalion, B Company. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sBn\\_l8PLGEE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sBn_l8PLGEE)





**Hal Persun, President of the 509 PIA , and Barry Simpson of the 509 PIA present outgoing Commander, LTC Patrick S. Altenburg, with a plaque from the 509 Parachute Infantry Association, which Barry had made, and welcome incoming Commander, LTC Matthew J. Hardman on behalf of the 509 PIA.**

 <p><i>"All The Way"</i></p> 	<p><b>3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 509<sup>th</sup> Infantry (Airborne)</b></p> <p><i>CHANGE OF COMMAND Ceremony</i></p>  <p><b>24 November 2014</b></p> <p><i>Joint Base Elmendorf- Richardson Alaska</i></p>	<p><b>LTC Patrick S. Altenburg (Outgoing Commander)</b></p>  <p>Lieutenant Colonel Patrick S. Altenburg was born in Cincinnati, Ohio and commissioned as an Infantry Second Lieutenant in June 1995.</p> <p>His first station was Camp Bonifas, Korea where he served as an Assistant operations officer in the Joint Security Area in Panmunjom with the UN Command Security Battalion. He then served as a Rifle platoon leader, Scout platoon leader and Headquarters executive officer with 2nd Battalion, 9th Infantry (Mechanized) during his tour in Korea from October 1996 to July 1999.</p> <p>After completing the Infantry Captain's Career Course, LTC Altenburg served as the Brigade planner and A2-504 PIR Company Commander with the 1st Brigade, 82d Airborne Division from March 2006 to September 2003. He deployed as a Brigade assistant Operations Officer to Kandahar, Afghanistan.</p> <p>From 2003 to 2006, LTC Altenburg served as a Battalion Task Force Operations Observer/Controller (OIC), Task Force Logistics OIC and a Company, Team OIC at the Joint Multi-National Readiness Center in Hohenfels, Germany.</p> <p>Upon completion of the Command and General Staff College in 2007 until 2011, LTC Altenburg served as the Battalion XO and Battalion S3 for 3-509 (NABN) and later as the Brigade S3 for 4th Brigade 25th Infantry Division (ABN) in Fort Richardson, Alaska and Patika, Afghanistan.</p> <p>LTC Altenburg holds a Bachelor of Science in Engineering Physics from the United States Military Academy. His military awards and decorations include the Combat Infantryman's badge, two Bronze Stars, the Defense Meritorious Service medal and three Meritorious Service medals. He is a Ranger and Jumpmaster school graduate.</p> <p>LTC Altenburg and his wife, Yumi, have 4 children: Michael, Sean, Sune and Tim.</p>	<p><b>LTC Matthew J. Hardman (Incoming Commander)</b></p>  <p>LTC Matthew J. Hardman was commissioned into the infantry in 1997 upon graduation from Davidson College, North Carolina. He holds a Master of Arts in History from George Washington University, in Washington, DC.</p> <p>He is a graduate of the Infantry Officer Basic and Career Courses, the Combined Arms Service and Staff School, and the Command and General Staff College.</p> <p>LTC Hardman's assignments include Mechanized Infantry Platoon Leader, Support Platoon Leader, Stryker Company Executive Officer and Assistant Battalion S3 in 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry at Ft. Lewis, Washington.</p> <p>After completing the Infantry Captain's Career Course, LTC Hardman served as the Assistant Battalion S3, Battalion S4, and B Company Commander in 2nd Battalion, 50th Parachute Infantry Regiment, Fort Bragg, North Carolina.</p> <p>LTC Hardman then served as a History Instructor and Assistant Professor at the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York. Upon completion of Command and General Staff College, he served as the Assistant Brigade S3 in 1st Brigade, 10th Mountain Division; Battalion S3 in 1st Battalion, 87th Infantry, Brigade XO in 1st Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, Fort Drum, New York.</p> <p>LTC Hardman then served as the XO for the Chief of Staff of the Army's Operation Iraqi Freedom Study Group, Washington, DC. LTC Hardman deployed three times to Operation Enduring Freedom and once to Operation Iraqi Freedom.</p> <p>His awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Defense Meritorious Service Medal as well as the Army Staff, Parachutist, Air Assault, Combat and Expert Infantryman Badges and the Ranger Tab.</p> <p>LTC Hardman is married to Sandy Hardman, a Program Director for CA Technologies, and they have twin six-year olds: Ben and Abby.</p>
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Matt Anderson was presented with The Order of St. Maurice. In attendance for the presentation was: Hal Persun, President of the 509 PIA, Barry Simpson, Special Projects 509 PIA, and John Devanie, Past President and Board of Trustee of the 509 PIA, and a recipient of the Order of St. Maurice.



**Fort Richardson Winter Ball: From Left to right BN S-3 MAJ Newbill and his wife Jerah, BN CSM Beeson and his wife Gisele, BN CDR LTC Altenburg and his wife, Yumi, BN XO Maj Kapla and his wife, Meloni, BN Ops SGM Knight and his wife, Heather. Tryggvi Larum, 509 PIA Special Projects was the Guest Speaker and 509 PIA Representative.**



**Hal Persun, President of the 509 PIA , attended the repositioning ceremony for CSM Young, at Fort Polk, LA, and presented CSM Young with two gifts from the 509 PIA. Pictured below is a picture of the handing over of the BN Flag, and the two gifts that were presented.**







## B/3-509IN (ABN) Bangladesh Commando

UNCLASSIFIED//FOUO



### Week Two Course Results

#### Mission:

B/3-509IN (ABN) sends platoon leader to conduct the Bangladesh Commando Course IOT increase capabilities and foster international relations.

#### Training Conducted Week 1:

- Explosives Training
- Operations Process
- Water Confidence Course Testing
- 6 Mile Equipment Run
- 2 Mile Obstacle Course
- 5 Mile Ridge Run
- Commando PT Test
- 12 Mile Ruck March

1LT Serrato is currently tied # 1 out of 96 course participants and has finished in the top four in all events.

#### Images

**Photo 1:** 1LT Serrato speaks to a vendor at a local market.

**Photo 2:** 1LT Serrato and a classmate prepare for the water confidence course testing.

**Photo 3:** Instructors prepare for the water confidence course testing.



## B/3-509IN (ABN) Trunk or Treat

UNCLASSIFIED//FOUO



**Mission:** B/3-509IN (ABN) families conduct "Trunk or Treat" IOT support the companies children and build family bonds.



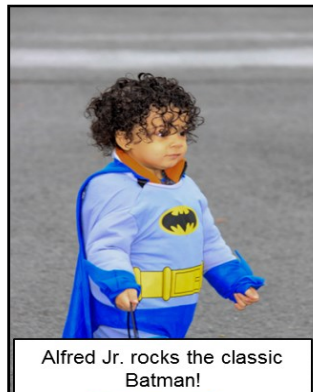
The kids get ready to vote for best kid's costume!  
The Sanchez' Pirate Princess took home the gold!



Mrs. Sneed tries to stay warm while the Martel's "Skeleton" and "Hiccup" boys get candy.



The Hurley's "Milk'n Cookies" welcome treaters!



Alfred Jr. rocks the classic Batman!



SFC "Joe Dirt" Wilson supervises the activities.



Zack decides what candy he wants from Catwoman.





**38th Annual  
AIRBORNE AWARDS FESTIVAL  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA**

**01-04 April 2015**

Registrations are now being accepted for this year's Airborne Awards Festival.  
If you need a copy of the Registration Form, please download by clicking

**HERE**

The Atlanta Airport Marriott Hotel has been a tremendous supporter of the  
**Airborne Awards Festival**  
for many years. They have arranged for discounted rooms for the weekend, but  
you need to  
download this separate form and make your reservations directly with the Ho-  
tel. Room  
reservations cannot be accepted using the Airborne Awards Festival Registra-  
tion Form.  
So please download the form referenced below and follow the instructions in-  
cluded.

**Here: Atlanta Marriott Hotel Reservations Form**

**To All Associations and Organizations**

If you nominate someone to represent your Unit as "Man of the Year", you  
must send a \$35 check (to help defray the cost of the plaque) and the  
name of the recipient, to the address listed on the registration form.

Please make check payable to the "Atlanta All Airborne Chapter"  
Also note that your nominee must be present to receive this Award.

## Organization Dues Statement

January 1-December 31

Annual 509<sup>th</sup> PIA Membership

<b>CHARTER</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>WORLD WAR II VETERAN</b>	<b>LIFETIME MEMBER</b>
<b>LEGACY</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>IMMEDIATE FAMILY OF VETERAN</b>	\$20.00 per year
<b>REGULAR</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>POST WORLD WAR II 509<sup>TH</sup> VETERAN</b>	\$25.00 per year
<b>ASSOCIATE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>NON 509<sup>TH</sup> VETERAN</b>	\$25.00 per year

*Please make check payable to:***509<sup>th</sup> PIA***and send to:*

**509<sup>th</sup> Parachute Infantry Association**  
**47 Washington Ave.**  
**Box 310**  
**Wheeling, WV 26003**

**We Need Your Support**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone No.: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

**509<sup>TH</sup> SERVICE:**

Unit: \_\_\_\_\_ Time Period: \_\_\_\_\_

Combat Tour: \_\_\_\_\_ Time Period: \_\_\_\_\_

**OTHER COMBAT UNIT:**

Combat Tour: \_\_\_\_\_ Time Period: \_\_\_\_\_

*If you do not want your name and information listed in a member directory please check the box*☐