

# 84th Railsplitters Association

## Newsletter

### The Bugler



### Greetings Railsplitters,

Much has transpired since the last update. Many of the events have been uplifting, while others have been discouraging. Let me start off with the positive news.

On 14 June, we hosted a celebration for the Army's 250<sup>th</sup> Birthday and the 84<sup>th</sup> Railsplitters Association 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in conjunction with our **Annual Meeting** at the Horn-Hoepfner Bros. VFW Post 5716 Post, New Berlin, WI. What a day it was, we had 117 in attendance, which is the most attendees in recent history where we enjoyed the delicious food provided by Mission BBQ and live music. At this event we were honored to have MG Kelly Davidson, Commander, 84<sup>th</sup> Training Command, Fort Knox, KY, and Command Sergeant Major Freddy Trejo as our guest speakers.

At the event, it was an honor to call up CSM (Ret) Dave Gramins a pillar of our organization awarding him the Railsplitters President's Award and a challenge coin from MG Davidson of the 84<sup>th</sup> Training Command. In recognition of her contributions during Dave's absence, Nora Gramins was presented with a bouquet of flowers. Sadly, on 1 July Dave lost the battle that he has been fighting for the past few years of renal and chronic lymphatic cancer. Dave had been the Treasurer for the past 15 years, during that time he made sure that our financial books were always accurate to the penny. Dave was rock solid and could always be counted on when there was any question as to whether expenditure was wise or a waste of the association's money. Until we meet again Dave!

At our annual meeting the **Board of Directors Election** took place. We said farewell to CSM (Ret) Clarence Brunner who has held various positions on the board for 25 years. Also, stepping down was LTC (Ret) Thomas Abts from his director position. New to the Board of Directors are SFC (Ret) Bobbi Bast and SFC (Ret) Dennis Davidson. We welcome back CW3 (Ret) Jerry Wold as a director. The following Officers were elected/re-elected:

Goldie Schuh, CXO (Ret) – President  
 CSM (Ret) Michael Simmons – VP, Events/Activities  
 MAJ (Ret) Steve Kassens – VP, Communications  
 SFC (Ret) Bill Krieger – Treasurer  
 COL (Ret) Peter Pochowski – Assistant Treasurer/Senior Advisor  
 SFC (Ret) Tim Vanderboom – Secretary

We continue to strive to get the 84<sup>th</sup> Railsplitters name out in the community. On 19 July we had fifteen members participate in the **Famous Sausages 5K Walk/Run** at American Family Field home of the Milwaukee Brewers. On 3 August, thirty-seven Railsplitters will be enjoying a day at the ballpark with the **Milwaukee Milkmen** taking the field.

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On Saturday, 13 September, we will be hosting the **Annual Steak Fry** at VFW Post 5716, New Berlin. This is our annual fundraiser, so bring your checkbook, bid generously, bid often on silent auction items. Donations are welcome. A matching gift has been pledged—join us in supporting veterans with your contribution.

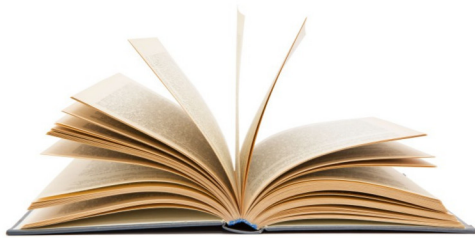


The last event to close out the summer is the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Colonel's Cup on Sunday, 21 September at Brighton Dale Links, 830 248<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Kansasville, WI. Registration must be completed by 12 September. Use the form at the attached link for registration. <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeyrJu5nrWv3sIG0BcHuWYS79514ET6kHMj3JS-2cknylN27g/viewform>.

Recruiting members is foremost in our survivability! At our 14 June event we saw success in bringing in eleven new members. Each member is invited to contact their family and/or friends who have served on the 84<sup>th</sup> and invite them to attend one of our events. We have a referral program, for every member you bring in that signs up, you get one additional year added to your membership agreement. What a deal! Feel free to contact me if you or the interested Soldier have any questions, email: [goldgrl123@hotmail.com](mailto:goldgrl123@hotmail.com).

See you in September!!!

Goldie M. Schuh, Command Executive Officer (Retired)  
President, 84<sup>th</sup> Railsplitters Association, LTD



SFC (Ret) Roger Rickert  
Published Author

*The Recurring Dream:  
A Soldier's Journey Through War and Redemption*

One of our 84<sup>th</sup> Railsplitters has become a published author. He has written a book on his experiences while assigned to duty in Vietnam as a 17-year-old and the lasting effects 50 years later.

## Sunshine Club

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the families of those who recently passed away:

**CSM Donald Dennett and CSM David Gramins**

Get Well Wishes for:

**COL Dean Orley, LTC Lori Kunstman, CSM Frank Parker,  
Kathy Schiller, wife of SFC Pete Schiller**

Remember to send any information, or correspondence for Get Well, Encouragement, Sympathy, etc. to:  
Mary Orley at (414) 425-0256 or email, [maryo\\_44@yahoo.com](mailto:maryo_44@yahoo.com)



## **Command Sergeant Major David Gramins** **United States Army (Retired)**



**CSM David Gramins and his wife, Nora at the Annual Meeting this past June.**

I first met David Gramins when I was a young Lieutenant Colonel and was assigned as the battalion commander of a tank training unit. Dave was the Command Sergeant Major (CSM). Right away I noticed his outstanding command presence. He had spit-shined boots and a pressed BDU uniform that looked like he had been dipped in starch. And he was handsome, as if he was drawn from central casting. Even more impressive was his complete understanding of the unit, its senior NCO's, and the problems we faced. Clearly, he had studied the unit and our soldiers. I knew I would enjoy working with this man.

That was 1985. I have now known Dave for forty years, and he only disappointed me once. After only a few months with me, he was offered an assignment that was too good to pass up: the CSM of a railroad unit. Dave was not a trained tanker, and he had a hard time accepting that his soldiers were better prepared for the unit's mission than he was. Also, this unit often trained in Hawaii. We offered Ft. McCoy, Wisconsin. See how wise he was?

Years later our paths crossed again, but this time as retired soldiers serving on the Board of Directors of the 84<sup>th</sup> Division Alumni Association. Dave accepted the challenging duties of Treasurer. Along with his wife Nora, they kept our books for over fifteen years. In light of so many stories we read about board officers cooking the books or outright stealing, "Team Gramins" kept us solvent, out of the papers and out of jail! Dave's reward came just a few weeks ago at our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner (and the Army's 250<sup>th</sup> Birthday) when Major General Kelly Dickerson, the Commanding General of the 84<sup>th</sup> Training Command, presented Dave a 2-star coin for his service. Nora was also recognized and presented with a bouquet of flowers by our Association President Goldie Schuh.

As Board members, I learned that Dave was a golfer. So, with Colonels Bill McKeown and Gary Davis, and a retired First Sergeant named Jim Butler, we joined a golf league. A few years later we lost Bill McKeown to cancer and Dave joined our team. I have played with Dave every week for nearly five years, and I grew to admire and respect him more every week. Never more so than when his health began to fail, and he bravely struggled on. I mention the importance of golf in Dave's life because you tell a lot about a person on the golf course. Golf has been known as "gentleman's" sport (and ladies, as well) meaning the rules of the game are often self-enforced. Without integrity, the game would be a farce. Dave followed the rules of course, and he cleared his throat when he saw a violation that was about to be ignored. He made sure no one in his group would taint the game he loved so much.

In his life Dave Gramins was a volunteer fire fighter, a mail man, a postmaster for a Wisconsin community, a golf course ranger, Commandant of a Drill Sergeant School, and a Command Sergeant Major in several different assignments. You can search long and hard and not find a comparable resume. Above all, everywhere he worked he made it a better place. He accomplished everything with grace, dignity, and honor.

Dave Gramins died on July 1, 2025. Now, two of the finest gentlemen I have ever met, Bill McKeown and Dave Gramins, are reunited once again. I bet they will do "18" every morning and afternoon, in a place where there are no winters, or rainouts, or slow players ahead of them. The game of golf, the U.S. Army, and our country are better, just because he was here. And I am a better man.

Colonel Peter (Skip) Pochowski

## Former Railsplitter, Henry Kissinger

The 84th Railsplitters Association was recently contacted about a picture of Henry Kissinger for an upcoming documentary. He was assigned to 335th Inf Regt, 84th Infantry Division. The following is an excerpt from Warfare History Network, WWII History, *Henry Kissinger's World War II*, by Tim Miller, June 2018.



Henry Kissinger, future U.S. Secretary of State, was assigned to Company G, 335th Infantry Regiment, 84th Division while serving in the U.S. Army at Camp Claiborne, Louisiana.

"In November 1944, a young American soldier wrote back to his parents in the Washington Heights neighborhood of Manhattan. Six years earlier, he and his family had fled Germany for the United States, only weeks before Kristallnacht, the infamous Night of Broken Glass.

"Now here he was, having returned to the place where, had they stayed, he and his family may well have already perished. "So I am back where I wanted to be," the young man wrote. "I think of the cruelty and barbarism those people out there in the ruins showed when they were on top. And then I feel proud and happy to be able to enter here as a free American soldier."

"Long before his stint as yet another Harvard intellectual; long before he was thought to be the inspiration for Stanley Kubrick's Dr. Strangelove; long

before his advisory roles in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations and support for Nelson Rockefeller's bids for the presidency; and long before he became President Richard Nixon's Secretary of State and, by turns, was either one of the most admired men in the country, or condemned as a war criminal—Henry Kissinger was a recent immigrant serving in the United States Army. But it was his experience in the war—without which he may have merely ended up as an accountant—that made him.

"As he later wrote, "High office teaches decision making, not substance. It consumes intellectual capital; it does not create it. Most high officials leave office with the perceptions and insights with which they entered; they learn how to make decisions but not what decisions to make." The man who became so respected or reviled, and who was said to be "musically attuned to history," became so by witnessing history, including the Holocaust, firsthand."



Notice the Railsplitter patch!

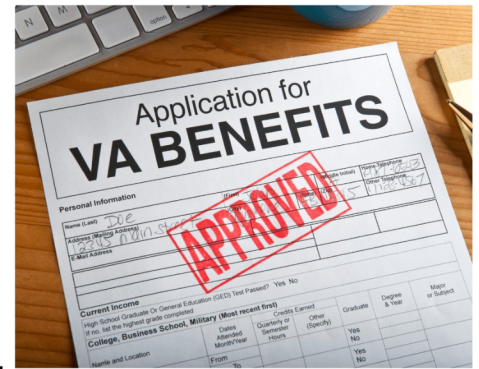




## VA Disability and The Army Reserve

Can Army Reservists receive VA Disability benefits? After retiring in 2014 after serving for 34 years, I came to believe that it was possible but exceedingly difficult to obtain benefits to include a VA Disability rating for an injury or illness related specifically to inactive duty training. Over the course of the past couple of years, I have learned that with the right amount of due diligence prior to submitting a claim, an Army Reservist can receive a VA disability rating related to inactive duty training.

Within the last year, I have received VA disability ratings for my foot, leg and shoulder that tied directly to my inactive duty training. Below you will find the excerpt from the VA related to my claim specifically to preparing for the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) that Reservist had to take twice a year, just like those on active duty. As we all know, the same amount of readiness prep is required whether you are on active duty or in preparation for the test on a drill weekend.



*Your VA examiner opined that it is at least as likely as not your right foot degenerative arthritis is due to the claimed in-service injury, event, or illness. Your examiner provided the following rationale: Veteran served 34 years in service that required continuous physical activity. Veteran had no issues related to the claimed rt foot degenerative arthritis prior to military service. The current diagnosis of right foot degenerative arthritis/Army is related to the Veteran who served 34 years in service that required continuous physical activity. There is evidence of chronicity, and a nexus has been established. Veteran served 34 years in the service that required continuous physical activity. This repeated stress on the foot more than likely caused this. According to the Mayo Clinic (2021) one of the risk factors for arthritis is repeated stress on the joint. If your job or a sport you play places repetitive stress on a joint, that joint might eventually develop osteoarthritis.*

# TOP ARMY INVENTIONS



- 2. Computer
- 3. Electric Razor
- 4. Super Glue
- 5. Duct Tape
- 6. Food Preserves
- 7. Pringles
- 8. Two-way radio

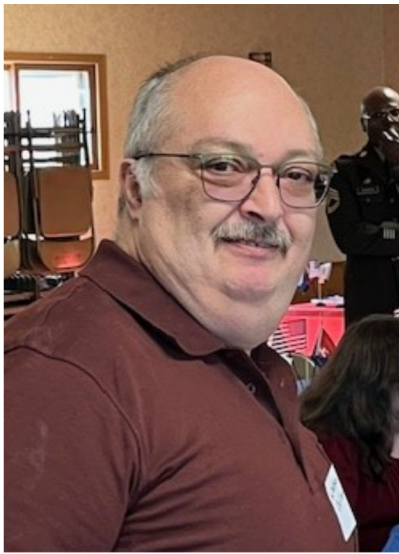
U.S. ARMY  
Can you guess the top Army invention?  
Answer on page 7.

When I retired, I had a 40% disability for injuries received during my deployment in 2010-2011. As you may know, if you are not at least 50% disabled, DFAS takes back the 40% disability from your monthly retirement. I have increased my VA disability since my deployment and subsequent retirement through claims not related to my deployment but my years of Reserve duty.

As with almost all claims not tied to active duty, the VA Regional Offices almost always deny the claim. I have won three higher level appeals (informal telephone conference) for my feet, legs, shoulder and back with the Veterans Administration. I have collaborated with multiple Veterans over the course of the past year, helping them either obtain an initial disability rating or increase their current rating. If you are interested, I would be glad to assist any former member of the 84<sup>th</sup> Division with a VA claim. I offer my assistance to Veterans completely as a volunteer and take no payment for any assistance. I can be reached at [Rebeldad14@gmail.com](mailto:Rebeldad14@gmail.com) or 317-691-4387.

Joe Banich  
COL, US Army, Retired





84th Railsplitters Association's  
25th Anniversary Celebration and  
250th Birthday of US Army  
14 June 2025



Newest members of the 84th  
Railsplitters Association:

**Walter Collazo**  
**Keith Cowan**  
**Dennis Davidson**  
**Kelly Dickerson**  
**Paul Gezvain**  
**Andy Griffith**  
**Howard Griffith**  
**Craig Johnson**  
**Ron Kuta**  
**Gerald Lefever**  
**Raymond Littmann**  
**Charles Mitchell**  
**Freddy Trejo**





↑ Trouble 1, Trouble 2, and Trouble 3 ↓





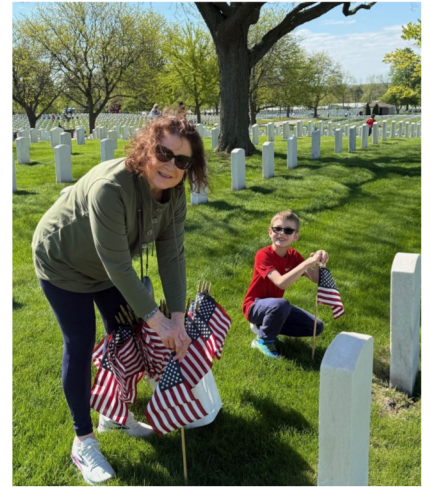




# Memorial Day 2025



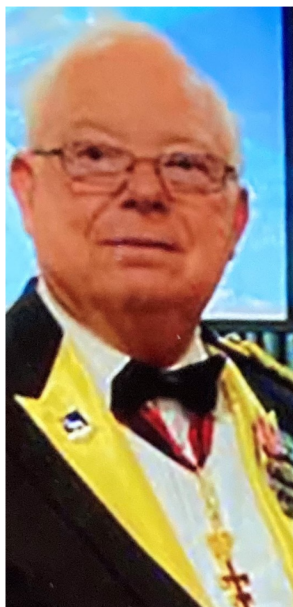
Mike Malloy, Sandra Heim and Marcel deRidder (and family) placed flags at the VA this past Memorial Day!



Two more Railsplitters took the Honor Flight!  
Please send pictures of your Honor Flight!



Larry Kritz and his son and guardian, Kyle on Honor Flight #80.



Bill Vanasse went on an Honor Flight in June.



The #1 Army invention is the Jeep (according to the US Army's Facebook page)!

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## Humor noun

hu·mor | \ 'hyü-mər, 'yü- \

#### Definition of *humor*

**1a:** that quality which appeals to a sense of the ludicrous or absurdly incongruous : a funny or amusing quality // Try to appreciate the *humor of the situation*.

