

“196th QM Hosts Red Hat Chapter Reunion”

On Friday 20 June, 2008 the 196th Quartermaster Company hosted the Red Hat Chapter Reunion and this is the first auspicious occasion hosted by the 196th at Fort Campbell, Ky. This reunion will be followed by a Ball and Rodeo at Fort Bragg, NC, 22-26 September 2008. The Red Hat Chapter consists of the Department of Defense active duty parachute Riggers, retired parachute Riggers, non-Riggers that have served in a Rigger unit, and other select members. We have members of all ranks within the Chapter from PV2 to General. Members of our chapter have served in every conflict since WWII.

In honor of the Red Hat Chapter, the 196th QM invited the retired veterans to observe an airborne operation on Bastogne drop zone consisting of a personnel drop from a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter. After the airborne operation the Red Hat Chapter was invited to the 196th QM pack shed to observe shop operations, and a barbeque to give the Soldiers a chance to intermingle with the retired (and very experienced) forefathers of their field.

The airborne operation began with sustained airborne training at the Division Parachute Office; this was the first time the Soldiers of the 196th were introduced to members of the Red Hat Chapter. The Red Hat Chapter observed pre-jump given by the primary Jumpmaster SSG Gregory Benson of the 196th. Pre-jump training consisted of actions in the aircraft, hazards on the drop zone, and parachute landing falls. After completion of pre-jump, the Primary Jumpmaster called off the final manifest, which consisted of 42 jumpers from the 196th QM, 160 SOAR, Air Assault School, and 5th Special Forces Group. Before and after pre-jump Chief Warrant Officer 2 Anthony Hall took the Red Hat Chapter on a tour of the 196th's parachute maintenance and heavy drop facilities.

After pre-jump, the soldiers of the 196th QM loaded buses and headed to Bastogne drop-zone, where they were supported by aircraft from B CO, 4/101 CAB. The airborne operation ran smoothly with 60 parachutes being dropped on Bastogne drop zone, resulting in no injuries. After completion of the drop, Soldiers and the Red Hat Chapter bused to 196th QM pack shed to shake-out chutes and to host a barbeque for the Red Hat Chapter.

During the event, the Soldiers of the 196th QM got a chance to talk with members of the Red Hat Chapter, and share some of their experiences with each other. One of the highlights of the afternoon was for PFC Davis, whose grandfather was present as a member of the Red Hat Chapter and a retired rigger with the 82nd Airborne Division, who got a chance to perform during airborne operations with his grandfather watching. We are proud of our heritage... Thanks for letting us host this event.

