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Band of Brothers in Abilene

Four members of Easy Company, 406th Regiment, 101st Airborne, the famed Band of Brothers, will be in Abilene for Eisenhower Day events.

Lynn "Buck" Compton, Forrest Guth, Don Malarkey, and William Wingett, along with his brother, Kenneth Wingett, who later served with his brother in the 82nd Airborne, will attend "Ike Day" at 9:30 on October 14 - a tribute to President Eisenhower by 3000 area school children; the Eisenhower Birthday Dinner on the evening of October 15; and the Military Wreath Laying Ceremony at 10:30 on October 16.

"We are honored to have these veterans of WW II be a part of our Eisenhower Day festivities," says Kim Barbieri, Education Specialist at the Eisenhower Library and Museum. "Our theme this year is 'Heroes,' and these men, who are real-life heroes, represent all of the men and women who left their homes during WW II, traveled to far away places, and laid down their lives for the cause of freedom."

A native of Los Angeles, 2nd Lieutenant Lynn "Buck" Compton was a standout baseball and football player at UCLA, where he played on the baseball team with the great Jackie Robinson before going to Officer Candidate School. He completed jump training at Fort Benning, Georgia, and joined Easy Company as a 2nd Lieutenant in Aldbourne, England, in December 1943 for more paratrooper training.

On D-Day, Compton and other paratroopers from his unit were assigned the task of securing a causeway over swampland near Omaha Beach. Three months after D-Day, in Holland, enemy shrapnel wounded Compton. He recovered in a hospital in Oxford, England, before returning to action three months later. Buck's post-war career included 20 years in the Los Angeles district attorney's office. In 1969, he helped prosecute Robert Kennedy's assassin, Sirhan Sirhan. A year later, he was named a California appellate court justice, retiring from the bench in 1986.

Tech. Sgt. Don Malarkey, a native of Astoria, Oregon, was in his first semester at the University of Oregon in the fall of 1941. After Pearl Harbor, he tried to enlist in the Marines but was turned down because of dental problems. He was discouraged from joining the Army Air Corps because he lacked the requisite high school math courses. When he was drafted in July 1942, Malarkey volunteered for the paratroopers and joined Easy Company at Camp Toccoa. Malarkey saw more days of combat than any member of Easy Company, but missed the biggest day of all - the capturing of Hitler's Eagles Nest -

due to a sickness that caused him to be hospitalized at that time. Several years ago, writer Stephen Ambrose got Malarkey and a number of his war buddies together in the basement of Malarkey's Salem home, and from their stories of survival wrote "Band of Brothers," a best selling book about Easy Company in World War II.

Corporal Forrest "Goody" Guth was born in the small town of Fogelsville, Pennsylvania. He enlisted in the paratroopers with two other childhood friends. The three friends trained together, fought overseas together and returned home together. In Normandy, Guth chose to disregard the order against taking cameras into Normandy and snapped photographs throughout the Normandy Campaign, leaving him with many outstanding images. When he returned home after the war, he went to Penn State University and became a social studies teacher. Guth is the subject of Cpl. Forrest Guth: 'E' Company, 506th PIR, 101st Airborne (WWII American Paratroopers Portrait Series, No. 1), a coffee table picture book that tells the story of one man's duty in WW II.

William Wingett was born in Spokane, Washington and raised in California. He followed a family tradition when he joined the army in August of 1942. His father was activated in the National Guard in 1939 and was sent into active duty after Pearl Harbor. His brother, Kenneth, who will accompany him on his trip to Abilene, joined the Merchant Marines at age 16 and went to the South Pacific. An older brother was injured in Italy, and another younger brother served in the 4th Infantry.

William went directly into the 101st as a paratrooper as a PFC and stayed with Easy Company throughout his tour of duty. He reenlisted into the 82nd Airborne in 1946, where his younger brother Kenneth, who had reached enlistment age, joined him. They served together in the 82nd until 1948, when William returned to civilian life. He now lives in Salem, Oregon where he owns his own carpentry business. Kenneth continued in the Army, serving three tours of duty in Korea. He remains active in veteran's organizations, and has served as National Commander of the Disabled American Veterans.

Screenings of the Emmy Award-winning series A Band of Brothers, based on Stephen Ambrose's book by the same name, will be held at the Eisenhower Library's Visitor Center Auditorium on Tuesday, September 28; Thursday, September 30; Tuesday, October 5th, Thursday, October 7th, and Tuesday, October 12. Screenings are free and open to the public.

For additional information on A Band of Brothers screenings or Eisenhower Day events, call 1-877 RING IKE.