

Skies are not the Limit: World War II veteran celebrates 90th birthday with a tandem jump at USAHEC

Staff Sgt. Corey Baltos, USAWC Public Affairs

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[See "Red" Falvey's tandem jump](#)

April 13, 2011 - "It was absolutely wonderful," said Richard "Red" Falvey. "I can't think of a better way to spend my 90th birthday," said Falvey after he celebrated his 90th birthday with a tandem jump at the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center today. The jump was Falvey's 26th jump.

"I am living the dream," he said.

Falvey, a World War II veteran of the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment made his first combat jump on D-Day.

"Everything was helter-skelter," said Falvey. "13,000 men jumped into Normandy that morning, and we had an eleven minute window to jump everyone. As I prepared to step out of the plane I saw one plane explode in a ball of fire and another spiral down to the ground. I thought, 'Those men never had a chance, please God, give me a fighting chance.'"

Falvey is also a veteran of Operation Market Garden, an Allied military operation fought in the Netherlands and Holland in Sept. 1944, and the Battle of the Bulge, which was the last major German offensive of World War II.

"Red" Falvey, a World War II veteran of the 506th

Parachute Infantry Regiment, celebrates his 90th birthday with a tandem jump onto the USAHEC

grounds on Aug. 13. Photo by Staff Sgt. Corey Baltos.

Even though Falvey's birthday isn't until Aug. 21, he wanted to jump on the thirteenth because the number has significance to him.

“The number 13, has always been significant to me,” said Falvey, as he prepared to make his 26th airplane jump on Aug. 13.

“I made my 13th jump on Dec. 13, 1943 in England, I first stepped onto German soil on April 13, 1945, and the worst day of my life was June 13, 1944. I was at Carentan, a bomb picked me up and threw me to the ground. As I heard a Soldier cry out for his Mother, I remember pulling grass from my face so I could get lower. I thought I was going to die.”

After the war, Falvey returned to the New York State railroad where he worked as a conductor until his retirement in 1982. In 1994, on the 50th anniversary of D-Day, Falvey returned to Normandy to participate in a ceremonial jump with fellow veterans of the war.

Falvey tandem jumped with Mike Elliot, a member of Ranger Group LLC.



Tom Corbett, the Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, congratulates “Red” Falvey after his successful tandem jump onto the USAHEC grounds.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Corey Baltos.



Mike Elliot, a member of Ranger Group LLC, and Falvey execute a perfect landing at the USAHEC, after freefalling nearly 14,000 feet. *Photo by Staff Sgt. Corey Baltos.*



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