



## *517<sup>th</sup> Parachute Regimental Combat Team*



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

**MailCall No. 2031**

**January 4, 2011**

*517th Parachute Infantry Regiment  
460th Parachute Field Artillery Battalion  
596th Parachute Combat Engineer Company*

Website

[www.517prct.org](http://www.517prct.org)

Mail Call

[MailCall@517prct.org](mailto:MailCall@517prct.org)

Mail Call Archives

[www.517prct.org/archives](http://www.517prct.org/archives)

Roster

[www.517prct.org/roster.pdf](http://www.517prct.org/roster.pdf)

### *January 4-5, 1945*

#### **A Night Near Bergeval -- Recollections of the night January 4-5, 1945**

by Bill Bolin, 1st Sgt., "C" Co., 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

"A" and "C" company left Bergeval shortly before dark to take up defensive positions at higher elevations to protect the village from counter attack. We soon came to a wide stream of water and floating ice. There was no good place to cross since the ice was not strong enough to support our weight. Nearly everybody got wet above the boots.

It was very cold; below zero degrees F. I came from cold country in eastern Oregon in the Idaho Panhandle and had a good sense for that sort of temperature. There were quite a few men from the South in our outfit and they were affected by the severe cold.

"A" Company took the lead out of Bergeval and "C" Company led after the stream crossing. We soon came to a plantation of evergreens. "C" Company separated. "C" Company proceeded into the plantation. The trees were planted in neat rows much like an orchard. It was a very vulnerable place because sniper or machinegun had wonderful lanes of fire and could cover a large area. I believe Col. Boyle was wounded here.

The trees were 15 to 20 feet tall, fully limbed and weighted with soft snow. It was like wading through four feet of snow. It was impossible to keep our weapons free of the snow. We were very exposed in the firing lanes and crossed by crouching low and running. We were soon completely covered by snow.

It was difficult to hold our course as we zigzagged through the plantation. I felt we veered to the right a considerable amount. Our progress was up a rather gentle slope until we came to a road. The road was narrow, but was improved with good ditches on both sides. German communication lines were in the far ditch.



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"C" Co. stopped at the road and Captain La Chaussee and the Operations Sergeant studied the map to orient themselves. Everybody took a break along the road. Captain La Chaussee directed me to set up a temporary CP about 100 feet beyond road. I took the company clerk and three runners. The Operation Sargent and radioman remained with the C.O.

I was cautious about penetrating the thick forest and entered in patrol formation. As I remember Private Coyle was the point. We were soon hand-signaled by the point to stop and take cover. We heard German voices and other noise ahead to our left. The point went ahead alone and soon returned to report an enemy patrol (or stragglers) of about a dozen men moving toward our right on a trail paralleling the road we had just crossed.

It was at this time that I discovered that my weapon was full of snow. I pulled my folding stock carbine from the hip scabbard and it looked like a milky ice sickle. I had to pry some of it off with my trench knife, where it had melted against my body heat. It seemed prudent to withdraw so we all returned to the road to report contact. At this moment a vehicle engine started up to our left and started coming toward us. We left the road and setup the bazookas. We soon saw that it was an American half-track with the white star markings, so we revealed ourselves to it thinking it would stop to talk and exchange information. Not so, it continued through us at slow speed and continued along the road until I was out of sight. We could plainly see the German helmets as it passed within a few feet of our position.

Captain La Chaussee then decided to follow the road to our left toward where the half-track had come from. We soon came to an intersection. No enemy contact was made and Captain La Chaussee chose to dig in below the road to defend the intersection. The terrain was quite flat but sloped slightly upward across the road we had come along. Our position was in an old forest with many large deciduous trees, possibly oak.

As we were digging in we were suddenly fired upon with small arms and suffered casualties. Sgt. Starkey was wounded in the arm. He was evacuated to battalion medical by the route we had come along. There was a lull in the fighting after that and the digging intensified. A patrol was sent out to scout for enemy positions. Shortly after the patrol left all hell broke loose and we were completely pinned down by small arms and cannon fire. We soon realized that most of our weapons were frozen and inoperative. A few M-1 rifles, the BAR, and a machine gun were the extent of our firepower. Captain La Chaussee called to battalion H.Q. for help. I will refrain from a personal experience from this point.

Soon afterward a artillery tree-burst killed Sergeant Jacosini and wounded Captain La Chaussee. Captain La Chaussee and other walking wounded were evacuated Lt. Marks took command of "C" Company. He immediately called for help again on the 300 radio. None came that I was aware of. We remained pinned down all night. Ammunition was running very low. The Germans made several attempts to cross the road, but were not successful and seemed to settle down to the night in a sniper mode. They may have been low on ammunition also. At day break we were rescued by somebody who came from our left and swept the area across the road. I thought it was "D" Company at the time. It was a miracle we weren't overrun and captured. The only weapon I had all night was a trench knife.

From: <http://www.thedropzone.org/europe/Bulge/bergeval.html>



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### *December, 1944 – The Beginning of the Bulge Counterattack*

On December 27th, (a few days ago) my thoughts were with the soldiers who were in Manhay for the liberation of my town on December 1944. Actually, all my wishes are for all of you and your family for a Happy New Year 2011 full Joy and Good Health !

A friend from **Manhay - Belgium**

**Eddy Monfort**

PS : All my best Wishes to all correspondents like Mrs Immerfall - Mr Hensleigh - Mrs Gibbons, your family and all others !



Photos of the men of the Company H/517<sup>th</sup>, taken in Manhay on December 1944. These photos were given to Jean-François Dahin from Manhay by a veteran of the 517<sup>th</sup>, when some members of your unit came back in Belgium in 1990. I think that is from **Daniel Chapin H/517<sup>th</sup>**. – Eddy Monfort





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## Cecil Doty

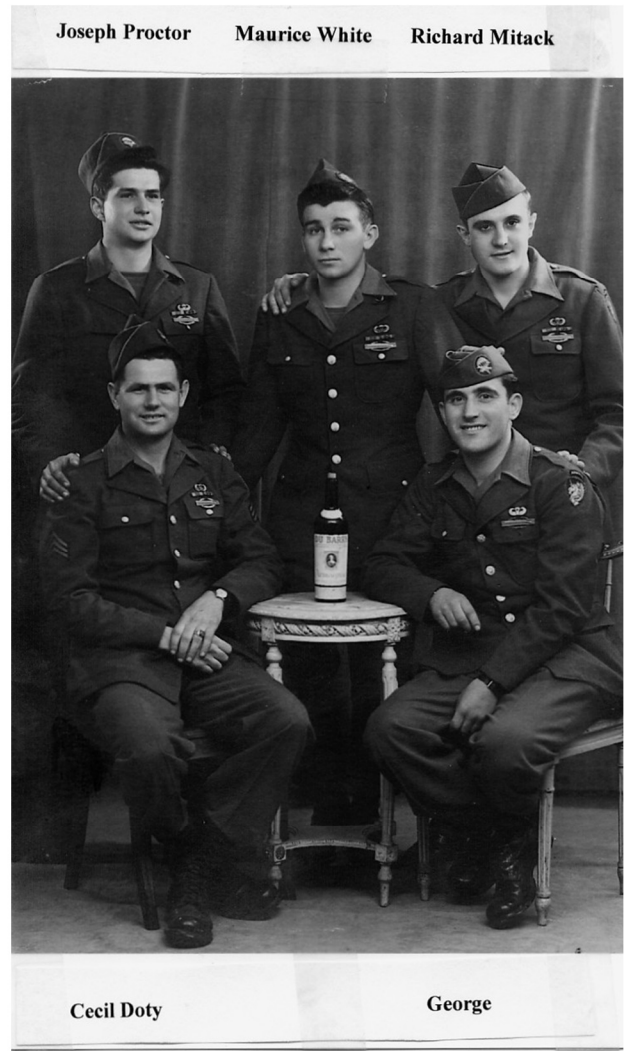


I learned today that **Cecil Doty** passed away on January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2011. It is sad to see yet another veteran pass. He will never be forgotten.

Gordon Stewart  
WWII Airborne demonstration Team



Sgt. Cecil H. Doty (lying down) and the Mortar Squad, 3rd Platoon HQ Company







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The Hesston Record, Thursday, Feb. 8, 1996, Page 16

## Back Page

*Doty sees plenty of action  
with parachute combat team*

**DOTY, CECIL H. SGT**  
Sept. 22, 1940 to Sept. 22, 1945  
517 Parachute Regimental  
Combat Team  
"Battling Buzzards" (3rd Platoon)  
Sgt. Squad leader of 60 mm Mortar

Ribbons: American Campaign, European Theater (5) stars, Good Conduct, Bronze Star, Purple Heart (Oak Leaf Cluster), WW II Victory, Combat Infantry Badge

By **CHUCK BERRY**

Cecil Doty joined the Kansas National Guard F Company, 137th Infantry, 35th Division Sept. 22, 1940.

Doty lived in Newton at the time with his family. In December, 1940, he went to Camp Robinson, Ark., for one year of training. Nearing the end of training, in December, 1941, Pearl Harbor was bombed and war was declared. Doty said that seven days later, his regiment was sent to Fort Ord, Calif. While there they assisted with beach defense, anti-sabotage and guard duties.

In August, 1943, he was transferred to H Company, 3rd Battalion, 517th Parachute Regiment, 17th Airborne Division. He took his parachute training at Fort Benning, Ga. He received more training at Camp Mackall, N.C., and was involved in the "Tennessee Maneuvers".

On his sixth practice jump, he was attempting to miss a tree and broke his leg and injured his back. He went to the hospital and then was sent back to Newton for recovery.

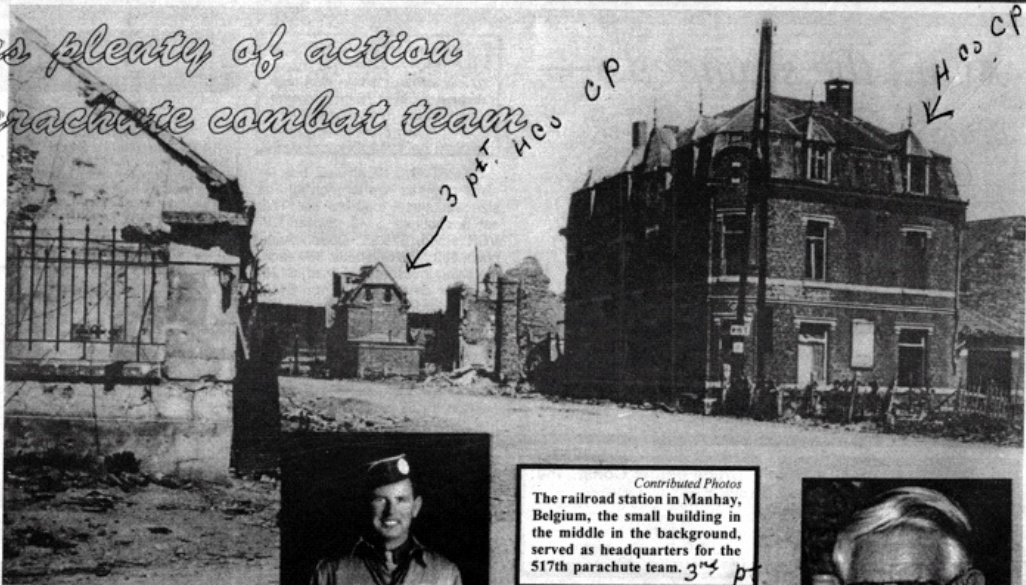
In May, 1944, the unit was sent to Camp Patrick Henry, Va. The unit sailed to Naples, Italy, aboard the SS Santa Rose, arriving May 31, 1944.

Their first combat mission was as infantry on the Rome-Aron Front near Grossetta, Italy, north of Rome. They were engaged in combat about 14 days. They were then brought back to Rome in a staging area to prepare for the Dragoon/Anvil Operation (invasion of southern France) Aug. 15, 1944. On Aug. 15, Doty made his first combat parachute jump in southern France. At about 0500 in the morning, they jumped from the plane into a very foggy darkness.

They were to jump 15 miles behind enemy lines. He said when they landed, they discovered that they had missed their drop zone by 35 miles and were 50 miles behind enemy lines.

At first, they only had about five of the men from his plane. It took 279 planes to transport 5,600 troops in the 517th to their drop zone. By the end of the day, they had found about 100 men, both British and American.

Doty said that they had landed north of their objective and had to fight their way back to it. They would hide in the trees and attack small groups of Germans when they encountered them. They would then run back into the trees and hide. He said that as they moved back toward their objective, they kept collecting more men so they were able to attack larger groups of the enemy. It took them three days to get back to



their objective. When they did return, they saw the tanks of the 36th and 45th Divisions coming toward them from the beach area. (Cpl. Wilber Vogt was a member of the tank units supporting the 36th Infantry Division.)

He said that they were then sent to the French-Italian border near Col de Braus and Peira-Cava. They spent the next 100 days there in a defensive position.

Doty said he was awarded a Bronze Star for his actions Nov. 14, 1944, in the area of Sospel, France. He had just returned from the hospital after recovering from back problems from his practice jump injuries.

When he reached the command post, he was told that his unit was up on the side of a mountain in a forward position. His commanding officer asked him if he wanted to rejoin his unit. He said he did.

His unit was in need of supplies and he was asked to take three pack mules loaded with supplies up to the forward units and then stay with his unit.

Before he was able to leave the area, an enemy 88mm shell fell in the command area and killed one of the mules. He then took the other two pack mules of supplies up the mountain and reached his platoon without any more problems.

During the night the Germans moved a heavy combat patrol up and around his platoon. The next morning the Germans attacked the platoon with 30 men. The Germans had moved a machine gun to the right flank of the platoon and had the entire platoon pinned down.

Doty said platoon members figured that it was all over for them as they could not even move due to the heavy fire.

With no regard to his own personal safety, Doty took a mortar tube and six rounds and moved to a better advantage point. He said there was no flat ground where he was, so he had to hold the mortar tube between his legs and fired the mortars.

The first mortar shell fell past the German machine gun. The next fell short of their position. He said that



Contributed Photos  
The railroad station in Manhay, Belgium, the small building in the middle in the background, served as headquarters for the 517th parachute team. 3rd p



with one rifle company missing to retake the town.

Doty said that before they went into the town at 0215 on Dec. 26, 1945, artillery shelled the city with 5,000 rounds. He said that they were so close to the artillery, the ground shook when the round hit.

I Company of the 517th was struck by allied shelling while trying to advance toward the city. Within 15 minutes, they had taken the city from the Germans. There were 50 Germans killed and 29 captured during the incident.

The 517th then set up defense positions as it knew the Germans would soon counterattack. Doty's squad set up its defenses in the basement of a railroad station.

Before they went into the basement, they called out to anyone in the basement to come out. After throwing two hand grenades into the basement, they entered it. They found two SS troops in a small room far back from the entrance and took them prisoner.

The Americans held the city for the next week until the 75th Infantry Division returned.

Doty said they found, in the city, two other people. One was an old woman who told them she was not going to be driven from her town by anyone. They also found an American soldier who was hiding in a chimney of a ruined house. He had been there since the Germans took the town.

Hearing English voices, he finally decided to risk coming out. The Germans had set up tanks covering the main roads of the town.

Doty said that if you went anywhere you had to run as fast as you could to keep from being killed. Time Magazine called Manhay "the town of running men".

He said that after Manhay, they fought their way to Bergstein, Germany, in an area known as Huertergen Forest. The area was well known to American troops because four American divisions had taken 21,900 casualties there since September, 1944.

Doty said they were ordered to se-

ture a dam on the river Roer. The unit was so badly in need of manpower that Gen. Dwight Eisenhower himself came to see why the unit was not moving forward.

He said that H and G companies were down to 18 able fighting men in each battalion. The unit was pulled out and sent to Joigny, France, for new troops.

Doty said they were then sent back to a landing strip in northern France. They were ordered to jump into concentration camps to liberate them. He said they never got to the camps because Patton's tank units were moving so fast that they liberated the camps first.

Doty said that while they were in northern France, Germany surrendered and the 517th made its final jump for V-E day.

When Doty got out of the Army Sept. 22, 1945, and returned to Newton, he worked for KG&E for 35 years, living in El Dorado, Wichita and Pittsburg.

He retired from KG&E in 1981 and moved to Hesston in 1985.

Doty received two Purple Hearts for injuries he received in combat during the "Battle of the Bulge". There are two books written about the 517th Parachute Ombat Team, the "Champagne Campaign" and "Paratrooper's Odyssey".

Doty returned with his unit to Europe in 1989 to revisit all the areas where they had fought. They also erected a monument to the 517th Parachute Team at Wanne, Belgium.

He said the railroad station in Manhay, Belgium, was made into a museum about the war.



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### MailCall News

#### *Japanese Surrender - Amazing Footage Sept 2, 1945*

ACTUAL VOICE OF GENERAL McARTHUR NEVER BEEN SHOWN TO GENERAL PUBLIC BEFORE.

Please click on to Japanese Surrender below. A keeper.

This is a 'must see' for the WWII history buff or anyone interested in history.

Interesting the other signers to the document, from New Zealand/Australia to Europe/Russia. This is an actual film made of the surrender ceremony of the Japs to McArthur in Tokyo Bay in September 1945.

Actual voice of the General. Never been shown to the general public before.

We always saw the "stills" but never the film itself.

Click here: [Japanese Surrender](#)

From **Phil McSpadden**

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-----Original Message-----

From: tabitha.brookes@yahoo.com [mailto:tabitha.brookes@yahoo.com]

Sent: Monday, January 03, 2011 3:09 PM

To: webmaster@517prct.org

Subject: your WWII links page

Hiya,

I just wanted to thank you for putting together these great links:

<http://www.517prct.org/wwii.htm> My class is learning about World War II this year and I've found some great teaching points from your suggested resources. But I thought I'd share a page you don't have listed:

<http://www.onlineschools.org/guide-to-world-war-ii/>

It has a lot of great references about World War II. My school put it on the teacher's section of Blackboard. It might be a nice addition to your site. I hope I could help!

-Tabby Brookes

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\*Ms. Brookes' Class\*

<http://www.teacherpage.com/msbrookes>

Room 226

x7981





## 517<sup>th</sup> Parachute Regimental Combat Team

### Guestbook Entries

#### Submitted by

Name: **Chris Walters**  
From: Dallas, TX  
E-mail:  
[cwchrisw@hotmail.com](mailto:cwchrisw@hotmail.com)

#### Comments:

Will Jessie Ellington Jr. please contact me? You recently submitted photos of your father. In the photo of the 2 men standing in front of a car, which one is your father? The man on the right looks a lot like my grandfather. They both were in A Company and both from Ohio.  
Chris Walters

Added: January 1, 2010

### In the Army

*I served in a parachute regiment. During a nighttime exercise, I was seated next to a young officer. He was looking a bit pale, so I asked, "Scared, lieutenant?"*

*"No," he replied. "Apprehensive."*

*"What's the difference?"*

*"That means I'm scared, but with a university education."*





## 517<sup>th</sup> Parachute Regimental Combat Team

### Morning Reports

**From:** RHONDA and MIKE WELLS [mailto:wells\_860@msn.com]

**Subject:** MailCall - Morning Reports and FACEBOOK

BOB:

Hope the New Year's Eve events have worn off and that 2011 will be a good one for all; with the National Reunion coming up, 2011's GOT to be a GREAT year!

Anyway, just wanted to update everyone on a few things:

#### MORNING REPORTS:

We've got the following company Morning Reports scanned into PDF - **F, G, H, I, HQ Co 2nd BN, Reg't HQ Co**. So, I'll be contacting those that have volunteered to help transcribe these documents into the Excel Spreadsheet format and see how fast we can get this project completed. If there are others who would like to help, they are welcome; they just need to contact me. We still have MR's, to convert to PDF, for: A, B, C, ,D, E, HQ Co 3rd BN, Service Co, Medical Detachment.

#### FACEBOOK:

The Reunion Committee and Auxiliary have talked about getting a presence on FaceBook. Seems like it is THE place to be nowadays but, as with anything, there seems to be "good" and "bad" with doing this. So, a daughter is going to help me get a FaceBook page set up; we'll do it as the Auxiliary. We think it will be a BIG help in finding folks who are interested in the 517th; members who haven't been in touch for many years, family of Troopers looking for more information, and to help the Auxiliary perform its function, etc. The FaceBook site will also direct people to the web page for information. We will continually evaluate the page to determine if it is meeting our goals or if the bad outweighs the good. If the page doesn't work well, we'll shut it down. (\*\* see below)

#### REUNION:

For those reading this, it is not too early to MAKE YOUR DECISION TO ATTEND and make your plans to get time off work, or do whatever you need to do to be able to be with us in Atlanta! I'm JAZZED UP (Yes, a reference to the Utah Jazz!) about the reunion and hope those who are "considering" attending, will, and those that haven't considered attending, will.

#### SKIING:

Ski resorts here are going great guns as a result of the last few storms to hit the area; sun is shining and it will be a great day for playing in the white powder; snowmobiling, downhill and cross country skiing, snowball fights, you name it. Yes, a blatant attempt to advertise THE GREATEST SNOW ON EARTH! and where it can be found. (No, Dorothy, it's not in Colorado!) And, Bob, if you don't want to put interstate rivalry dialogue on MailCall, that is perfectly understandable! :)

May God Bless!

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**\*\* Note:** Actually someone (who?) already created Facebook pages for the 460<sup>th</sup>, 596<sup>th</sup> and 517<sup>th</sup>:

460<sup>th</sup>: <http://tinyurl.com/34tcm4l> 596<sup>th</sup>: <http://tinyurl.com/35sao5k> 517<sup>th</sup>: <http://tinyurl.com/36oa7zr>





# 517<sup>th</sup> Parachute Regimental Combat Team

## Administrivia

- If you miss any MailCalls, they are all available online at <http://www.517prct.org/mailcall/>
- At any time, if you want to be added or removed from the MailCall list, just let me know.
- Send any news, stories, or feedback to: [MailCall@517prct.org](mailto:MailCall@517prct.org)
- If you send me email that you do not want included in MailCall, just label it as FYEO.
- I now understand how Ben could get confused about what he already posted and what he didn't. If I miss something, please just send it again.
- Donations for any programs involving the 517th should be sent to our treasurer:

Leo Dean  
14 Stonehenge Lane  
Albany, NY 12203

### *Reunions - Save the Dates!*

[Florida Mini-Reunion](#)  
**January 15-17, 2011**  
[Register now!](#)

**Annual 517th Reunion (Probably the Last)**  
July 13-18, 2011, Atlanta, GA  
with visits to  
Camp Toccoa and Fort Benning



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM