



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



MailCall No. 2089

January 14, 2012

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

Website

www.517prct.org

Mail Call

MailCall@517prct.org

Mail Call Archives

www.517prct.org/archives

Roster (from 2008)

www.517prct.org/roster.pdf

Cérémonies du 7 janvier 2012



Cérémonies du 7 janvier 2012 - St Jacques, monument 505th/517th - le récit de la bataille et l'hommage de la première Echevine (adjointe au maire) **Madame Victorine Margreve.**



St Jacques, **Maria GASPAR** is welcoming the assembly.



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



Logbiermé - ceremony of 2012 jan 7th. (the weather was rainy and windy - no snow)



ST JACQUES monument - Mrs Victorine MARGREVE was paying homage.



The flowers at the monument in Logbiermé.. saturday JAN. 07



ST Jacques - flowers at the monument



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Dear Bob,

I just wanted to inform you that a former trooper has made their final jump.

Charles S. Wilmerton Jr. passed on January 10 2012. He was a member of I Co. 3rd BN
He is listed on the 1944 Christmas Roster.

Sincerely
Al Eckart

Operation Dragoon is a annual celebration to honor all the military units that invaded Southern France on August 15, 1944. This event is planned and hosted by **Monika (Retired Captain) and her husband (LTC) Tim Stoy**. This event is a effort to gain some national recognition for the veterans of Operation Dragoon. As most of you know the 517 PRCT played a major roll in this operation. Last year at Operation Dragoon our General, **Dick Seitz** was awarded the Legion of Honour from France. This is the highest decoration in France. The dates this year are July 19 - 22, 2012 in Washington, DC. Monika will send out detailed information regarding this year's event soon.

Bob Barrett and **Helen Beddow** please include Monika's information in E-mail and the Thunder Bolt when you receive it. This is a great event so I would encourage all you 517 vets and your guests to attend.

Darrell Egner

First, Happy new year 2012 to you all !

referring to Maxine question, i will work on it later, but if **Harold Miller** was killed in action on the 18th, it is not on Nice airport area, as at that time (D+3) the 1st and 2nd platoon of 596th was just moving out of the drop zone area, joined on D+2 by the scattered 3rd platoon on the way to fayence - callian area, (north Est of Puget as mentioned on report of events) the first KIA in Le Muy area was **Henry Witkkins**, morning the 15th, the second is probably H. Miller....
we stay in touch Maxine.

J. Mickael and Eric.

"15 Aout 1944" Airborne Museum association. Le Muy France

Re: Nephew of **Andrew J. Murphy**, first KIA of the 517th

Thank you so much, Mr. Barrett. My uncle may have been in training the second half of 1942 and all of 1943. I learned he graduated from high school in 1942. I came across a reference stating that the 517th faired very well in the divisional championships in football and boxing. Hoping there may me more to search on this topic. My family and I very much appreciate any assistance you can offer.

Wishing you well in all things.

Mike Thornton



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

I know all you 'youngins' from the 517th danced these dances before and during the war....any of you care to try it at our next reunion?

phil

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mHANNkKBSNU&feature=related>



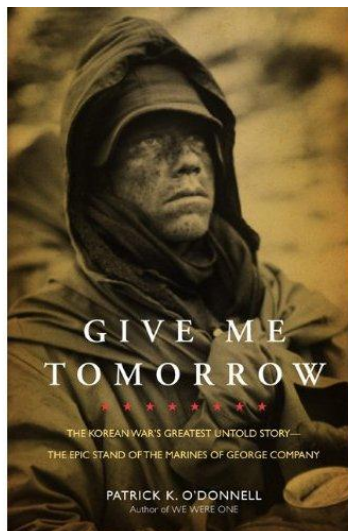
Claire, I think that is a great idea, while you are in Florida maybe you can get some people to volunteer now to man the tables in Kansas City. Have a great mini reunion and give everyone my best for a FUN FUN time in the Florida sunshine. It was 15 degrees here in Salt Lake this morning.

Lory

I spend a little time these days checking Facebook. (Not too much, as one could get lost in there.) I made friends and continue to follow a number of 517th members and friends who are on Facebook, especially our younger contacts, reenactors, and our friends in Europe such as J. Michael, Eric, Gilles, Patricia, Frederic, etc.

Another person that I follow and that many of you know is **Patrick O'Donnell**, who writes military history. He spoke at the D.C. Reunion in 2007. Patrick has become a prolific author, including his latest book, published last fall. He is currently working a story about the Huertgen Forest. – Bob B.

Give Me Tomorrow: The Korean War's Greatest Untold Story--The Epic Stand of the Marines of George Company





517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Bob,

As promised, I've scanned and uploaded the collection of photos that Mom had from my dad,
George A. Sullivan (Ltc. Ret.)

There are some familiar ones as well as others that I haven't seen elsewhere.

I'm curious as to who took the pictures? Did the troopers take them and pass around copies of prints? Or were there designated photographers attached to the units who made the prints available to the troops?

Where I could identify my dad, I did. If others recognize other troopers, I'd be happy to label the images accordingly.

Thanks and best regards
Roger Sullivan

Collection: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/8678705@N03/sets/72157627979475107/>

Wow. Nice collection of pictures.

My Dad always told me that the soldiers were not supposed to take any photos. But, as you can tell, lots of the troopers didn't pay much attention to that rule. I have seen many of these pictures before, or at least similar locations. But many are new to me.

#50 is a different and clearer photo than I have seen of "the Mercedes Incident". See:
http://517prct.org/photos/benz_incident.htm

Some of the ones with planes could be training or possibly in Italy getting ready for Operation Dragoon.

Most of the ones in the warmer weather are in Southern France. The ones with palm trees are probably all around Nice.

I recognize the winding Col De Braus road in the mountainous pics.

I'm guessing that's Sospel in 113 and maybe 118.

I have no idea what ship that is on.

I'll just have to let others identify the specifics.

Is it OK for me to copy and put them on the website? If so, is there a way to send me the entire collection, so that I don't have to download them one at a time? I can download any types of files from anywhere, or can take a CD sent to me.

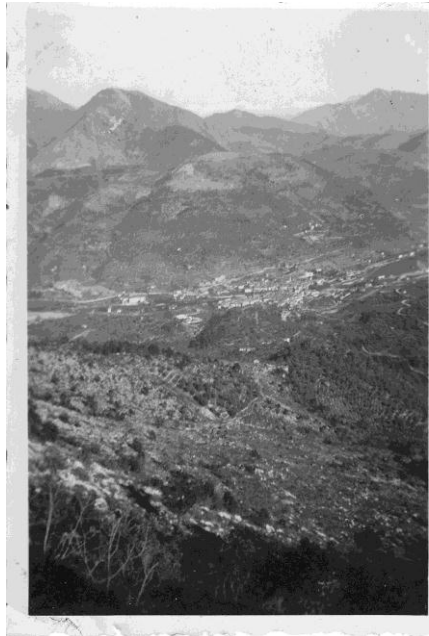
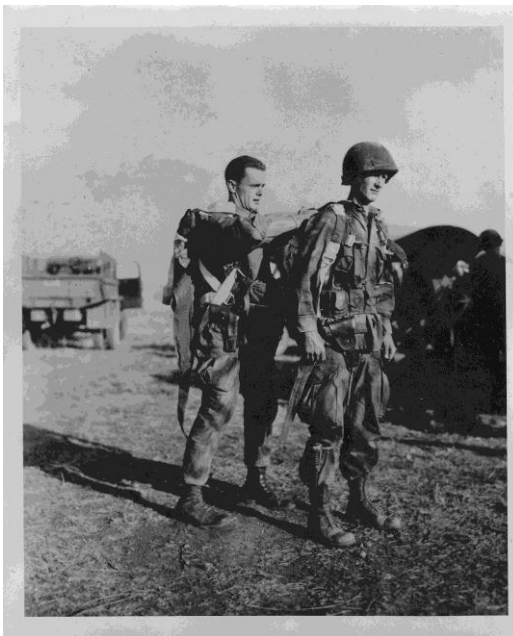
I don't see where you identified your dad or info on any of these. Am I missing that? Are there notes about any of the photos identifying people or places? At least point out a few good ones of your Dad, so I can lead with those.

Thanks!
Bob Barrett



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Sample pictures:



See all 242 photos at:

http://517prct.org/photos/george_sullivan/george_sullivan.htm

or

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/8678705@N03/sets/72157627979475107/>



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Bob, I was given these disintegrating newspaper articles by my mom. I tried to maintain as much as I could. Thought you might find them interesting.

Don Sliker

PAGE FOUR

Red Cross Man Makes 8 Jumps With Paratroops

By HAL BOYLE

WITH AMERICAN PARATROOPS IN BELGIUM, Jan. 21 (Delayed)—(AP) — Everybody recognized the big spectacled fellow in the front seat as his jeep crawled through the snow past a line of plodding paratroopers.

"Hey, Dave, I am hunting for a toothbrush," one called.

"Hi yuh, Dave, wher'e our doughnut girls?"

"I need some chewin' tobacco."

And at each greeting Big Dave T. De Varona grinned and waved—and the paratroop boys knew that if anybody in the American Army could get up that toothbrush, chewing tobacco—and doughnut girls—Big Dave would.

Dave, Red Cross Field Director for the 517th Parachute Combat Team, is something of a battlefield anomaly. The Army wouldn't take him—so he has adopted as much of the Army as he can.

Back in 1938 he was a star tackle on the "thunder team" of the University of California Golden Bears. But when he tried to enlist after Pearl Harbor the Army, Navy and Marines all turned him down. He had a million-dollar build—and ten cent eyes. Examining physicians took one look at his thick-lensed glasses and shook their heads.

But selling life insurance palled for the six foot, two inch, 195-pound former football star. Dave took a job with the Red Cross and spent 21 months in the cold country up Alaska way. He made landings on both Attu and Kiska.

After six months at home in San

Diego, Calif., Dave was assigned to a parachute unit in Rome. He is the only Red Cross field director ever to jump in combat.

"I have made eight jumps, altogether," he said. "When they got ready for the jump in Southern France last Summer I tagged along too.

"It was a perfect jump we had. I figured if I landed like a piece of raw bacon—completely relaxed—I would be all right. Instead of landing in our jump zone we came down right on the hill which was our objective. That turned out lucky for us. Later we found the area where we had planned to land full of mines and lined with 55-gallon gasoline drums which the Germans were ready to set on fire with machine-gun tracer bullets and roast us alive."

Dave rates high with the men because he moves right up into battle with them. Keeping them supplied with toothbrushes, shaving needs and extra cigarettes takes up most of his time but isn't as interesting as the work he does helping them solve family problems and personal difficulties.

"These kids are younger than men in normal infantry units and have different problems," he said. "They are like college kids with an extra dose of patriotism. They have all the morale in the world.

"They worry chiefly over their girls back home or some trouble in the family."

Dave, who is only 28, and a paratrooper at heart, wouldn't trade his job with "the boys with the big pockets" for any other type of outfit in the world.

"Nobody would fight the way they do just for that extra fifty bucks a month they get," he said. "They are all volunteers—that makes a big difference.

"They've done in three what it took the Marines 17 to do—built up a real fighting condition that means something

NOW IS THE TIME FOR EASTON'S FAVORITE!



(AP WIREphoto)
DELIVERED THE GOODS BY CHUTE. Dave DeVarona (right), Red Cross field director for the 517th parachute combat team, holds parachute he used for leap into France to supply men with toothbrushes, tobacco, etc. With him is Alf Thompson, field supervisor.

22 Of 28 Yanks Killed Or Wounded In Drive Up Hill At Hun Pillboxes; Lieutenant Wins Praise For Work

By HAL BOYLE

WITH THE 517TH PARACHUTE
COMBAT TEAM, WESTERN
FRONT, Jan. 26 (Delayed) (AP) —
"I still feel funny about that hill,"
says Lieut. Dick Spencer. "We

never lost a hill before — and we
never lost once since."

Dick was assistant platoon leader
because he thought he had dis-
graced the paratroopers there. He
ordered his platoon to pull back
after 22 of its 28 men were killed
or wounded trying to storm the
slope and knock out 22 enemy pill-
boxes — a full-sized job for a regi-
ment.

"They had us cold that day" said
the slim little 24-year-old former
University of Iowa journalism stu-
dent. "We had been taught how
to win, but nobody had taught us
how to lose. We didn't know how
because we never expect to — in
the paratroops."

Dick was assistant platoon leader
that day, weeks ago, when they at-
tacked the double-sloped hill at
Col de Braus, France, in the Mari-
time Alps.

"We thought those pillboxes were
empty," said Dick. "I studied them
for 15 minutes through a telescope
and didn't see a sign of any move-
ment. But just as we started up the
hill I felt something was wrong.

Patrols found the first three pill-
boxes empty.

"Then I heard a shout and looked
up and the air was full of hand
grenades and anti-tank grenades,"
Dick said.

One grenade burst at Dick's feet.
His leg was numb and he was bleed-
ing from his mouth and ears. Sev-
eral men were killed or wounded,
but Dick and three others managed
to drag themselves to the nearest
pillbox where Dick set up an aid
station.

Two men trying to bring up
water were killed. Although realiz-
ing he was facing incredible odds,
the young platoon leader — he had
just come back from the hospital
the night before — re-organized for
a second attack.

"The Germans opened up again
and the leader was killed at the
start," Dick said.

Although the Nazis caught them
with burp guns, machine guns,

rifles and grenades, the paratroopers
surged up the hill. Men fell every
few steps. The Germans began
dropping mortar shells behind them
and flames spread in the grass and
brush.

Finally they had to fall back to
where Dick was caring for the
wounded. One German was killed
almost at the entrance to the pill-
box. A paratrooper staggered back
with a wounded man under each
arm. A third wounded man, cling-
ing to his waist, was shot through
the lung. The paratrooper himself
was wounded in the face, arm and
shoulder. He wears the Distin-
guished Service Cross now.

Only six men were unhurt. The
only non-com on his feet was a
sergeant with a bullet wound in his
knee. He looked down at Dick and
said: "What'll we do, sir? We are
being butchered. But we will try
once more if you say so."

The lieutenant gave the order to
pull back. They worked their way
down the hill, with each man help-
ing the wounded as best he could.
Eight paratroopers on another hill
opened fire and routed a column of
200 Germans trying to cut them off.

"All the way back I thought I
would be thrown out of the paratro-
opers for falling back without
orders," Dick recalled.

Instead, he got pats on the back
from the battalion commander, who
had given orders, after the first
attack, for the platoon to with-
draw. But their radio was knocked
out, the platoon never got the order
— and made a second gallant try.

Two days later a battalion and
two companies of paratroopers —
more than 500 men this time — at-
tacked and took the hill, capturing
18 Germans in the first pillbox
alone.

Knew He Was Dad

DES MOINES, Ia., Feb. 1 (P) —
Lieut. Dick Spencer, the Iowan
who learned how to retreat at Col
De Braus, France, went into the
battle for "that hill" knowing he
was a new father, his wife said to-
day.

Mrs. Spencer disclosed her hus-
band had become a father just 23
days before the battle in which
Hal Boyle reported the lieutenant
felt he had disgraced the paratro-
opers.

Spencer jumped into Southern
France Aug. 15, Mrs. Spencer said,
and his daughter, Barbara Jo, was
born two days later. Wounded, her
father didn't know of his new ac-
quisition, and when he rejoined his
unit he hitchhiked 30 miles to see
if any word had arrived.

It had, she said, and he went into
the battle for the hill knowing his
daughter had arrived and that his
wife was fine.

LESS ALWAYS

E DEAL

MARKET

SPECIAL
FOR
FRIDAY

n, Pa.

CENTER SLICED

BACON
21c 1/2 lb

SLICED SWISS
CHEESE 15c 1/4 LB

OUR
MAKE
PORK
SAGE

5c
lb.

Shoulders
LEAN
PORK

32c
lb.

FRESH MADE
LIVER
PUDDING 27c LB.

ALL LEAN
HAMBURGER
28c lb

A. M. to 6 P. M.

... AN INVESTMENT IN VICTORY ★

at's



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

68th Anniversary Commemoration of Operation Dragoon

Dear friends,

The **68th anniversary commemoration of Operation Dragoon**, the landings in Southern France, has been set for **19 to 22 July in Arlington, VA**. This commemorative event included Historical Seminars, a Memorial Service at Arlington National Cemetery, a Banquet and French Legion of Honor Medal presentation ceremony. Lieutenant General Seitz confirmed his attendance at this event and would like to see you there!

Darrel Egner will receive the French Legion of Honor Medal during this event. Please, come and celebrate with him

If any of your WW II veterans have not received the French Legion of Honor Medal but served in France, PLEASE, CONTACT Monika Stoy ASAP.

Monika Stoy's contact info:

6531 Milva Lane Springfield, VA 22150

monikastoy@yahoo.com

Tel: 703-912-4218

Airborne!

Dear friends,

Please, review the attached concept paper for this year's Operation Dragoon events. Please, pass this info and see you all in July.

Rock of the Marne! Airborne! Monika

[See Next Page]



Operation Dragoon - The "Forgotten D-Day"
The Allied Landings in Southern France and the Southern France Campaign
15 August 1944-14 September 1944

Outpost Europe, Society of the 3rd Infantry Division
The Embassy of France to the United States



When: 19-22 July 2012 (Thursday-Sunday)

Where: Sheraton National Hotel, 900 South Orme Street, Arlington, VA 22204

Who: Veterans of the 6th Army Group; 7th Army; 6th Corps; 3rd, 36th, and 45th Infantry Divisions; 1st Allied Airborne Task Force; 1st Special Service Force; US Army Air Corps; US Navy and Coast Guard, and their families; French Army Veterans; Veterans from Poland, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Greece, Canada, and France who served in the supporting Air Forces and Navy; and their friends and families. [List of participating veterans includes: Medal of Honor recipients Colonel Van T. Barfoot, MSG Wilburn K. Ross, T5 Robert D. Maxwell, LTG Richard Seitz, LTG David Grange, MG Lloyd Ramsey, COL Morton Katz, COL Henry Bodson, Bill Davis, and Darryl Egner.](#)



What: 19 July: 1 to 3 PM – registration; 5 to 8 PM – historical seminar
20 July: 9 AM to 5 PM – historical seminars and veterans' remembrances
21 July: 8:30 to 1200 AM – ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery
5 to 9:30 PM – Banquet
22 July: 8:30 to 11 AM – historical seminars

Why: To honor the veterans of the Forgotten D-Day, to preserve history, to educate the public, and to pass on the torch of their proud legacy.

Room Reservations: Price - \$89 per night, one day prior to event and one day after. Reservations: 1-888-627-8210
Reservation Group Name: Operation Dragoon
Cut off date for reservations: Friday, 6 July 2012

Point of Contact: Monika Stoy, President, Outpost Europe, Society of the 3rd Infantry Division, monikastoy@yahoo.com, PH: (001) 703 912 4218
6531 Milva Lane, Springfield, VA. 22150 USA
RSVP by 30 June 2012

REGISTRATION: Event registration - \$30. Banquet - \$35. (Free for Dragoon Vets)



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



“Sir, do ya hafta draw fire while yer insprin’ us?”

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
- 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 new Association Treasurer: Identify the purpose of any donation (Annual Dues, etc.) and make all checks payable to:

517 PRCT Association, Inc.

c/o Joanne Barrett
70 Pleasant Street
Cohasset, MA 02025