



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



MailCall No. 2090

January 21, 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

Greetings from Kissimmee!

Monday, January 16, 2012

Good morning. We are enjoying ourselves at the Kissimmee Mini here in Sunny Florida!

We are happy to report that we have with us **Bill and Leila Webb, Phil McSpadden, Hunter and Emmi McDonald, Allan Johnson, Darrell Egner and Dick Seitz**. Assorted family members include **Chris Egner, Keith McDonald Barry, and Boyle Women Babsie, Becky and Finley** (Fin is 5 and Fabulous!). I hear that the Webbs' son and another son of Darrell's is coming tonight for the dinner. **Ponnie Davis** also arrived yesterday; **Joe and Frank Boyle** are coming tonight, as is the Champagne family (Darrell's). I am sure I am missing people but we are all having a great time! Babbie has been enjoying Disney with her family; we had a shopping expedition to the outlets yesterday and another is planned today. The wine and the martinis are flowing and the laughter is great.

We are looking forward to Palm Springs in April, Kansas City in July and then the Operation Dragoon ceremonies in DC right after the reunion. **Darrell Egner** is to receive the Legion of Honor award, so we will certainly be there!

Hugs to all our favorite troopers –

Claire

Wednesday, January 18, 2012

Let me tell you that we had a great time in Kissimmee! I really enjoyed getting to know **Hunter, Emmi and Keith McDonald** and spending time with **Darrell Egner**. **Emmi, Keith and Leila** manned the Hospitality Suite with finesse, and **Chris (Egner)** and Darrell did the all-important beverage run. I



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helped provision as well, and the van I rented sure came in handy! We were well-fed and never thirsty. Dad enjoyed his first martini in a few years and tells me Darrell makes a great one.

Would you believe we had to buy a corkscrew? I have never needed a corkscrew before because **Leo Dean** has always been there!

Ponnie had friends visit; Darrell's family came to the banquet, and so did **Babbie Boyle's** family. **Bill Webb** was on hand to give out right and left; **Dick Seitz** looked fantastic; **Phil McSpadden** drove up from the Villages to join the celebration.

I ran into Becky Boyle in the airport - she had to wait the entire day in the airport to get home to Denver.

What are the dates for Palm Springs? Put Palm Springs on your calendar for April, make your reservations for Kansas City, and here's another one to add: for anyone who can make it, **Darrell Egner** is to receive the Legion of Honor from the French government on or about July 21 at Arlington. We will be there.

Airborne all the way with best regards to my favorite vets –
Claire

Thursday, January 19, 2102

Just wanted to say what a great Reunion we just finished this week. What I learned from this Reunion is that the number of people that attend really doesn't gage the quality or the comradely of the event. The attendance was about half of what we had through the past years which gave us an opportunity to socialize with everyone. The Hospitality room was always well attended at all times. Oh yes, the stories get bigger each year.

Brenda Mortensen did a great job of planning this Reunion despite the fact that her husband has been in ICU for some time. Brenda is with Jim in the hospital full time so she could not attend the event. I went by the hospital and picked up her records on the way to the Reunion. Her planning was so great that ever thing ran smooth as glass. Please say a pray for Jim.

Emme McDonald and her daughter **Keith Barry** purchased the food for the Hospitality room with the help of Claire Giblen, Lelia Webb and the other girls so no one went hungry. One of my sons was in town so he and I made a liquor run. Chris is an expert in this department so I took him along. Thanks girls you did a great job.

The Banquet was fun. As expected **General Seitz** added to the group and our President **Allen Johnson** gave a nice talk. As usual our very own **Ponnie Davis** brought some great raffle items and guess what, all the girls in attendance won a prize. Some say it was rigged. HaHa

When I checked out I had the hotel block the following dates for the 2013 Reunion. January 19 - 22, 2013. Hopefully Jim will be well and Brenda will plan this Reunion also. She did such a good job this year she gets our vote.

Thanks to all of you fine folks that attended.

Darrell Egner



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MailCall News

Dear Bob: please convey to **Maria Gaspar** on behalf of our Belgian friends, a very big thank you for their magnificent continuing efforts to honor those who gave their all for freedom in the Battle of the Bulge.

Sincerely, **Pat Seitz and Alan Greer**

Dear Family Members, those who knew **Floyd Stott**, 517th PRCT Association Members, and those who appreciate our American soldiers,

I hope you are able to open this PDF version of where 1st Lt. Floyd A. STOTT is resting. I also hope you will be able to share this with others of your family as well as anyone who respects what these brave men and women did for all of us.

Always remember...**Kenton Floyd Immerfall**, Nephew of Floyd A. Stott

Dear Friends
of the
Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery,

The year 2011 is coming to an end and it has been extremely gratifying. We have had the privilege of meeting many relatives and several veterans who have shared with us their memories and documents allowing us to keep on preserving the memory of the thousands of men who have been laid to rest in this cemetery. Passing on the "story" to the next generations has also been one of our priorities. School kids have come for briefings and have also adopted graves of soldiers.

We hope you enjoy watching the retrospect of this year's events and wish to inform you that Memorial Day 2012 ceremony will take place on
Saturday 26th May 2012

* * * * *



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Memorial Day



Memorial Day



Adoption Ceremony



Veterans



Young Visitors



Merry Christmas
and
Happy New Year

from
The Henri-Chapelle Team



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WW2 Veterans to Receive Legion of Honor from France

Updated: Thursday, 12 Jan 2012, 6:51 AM EST
Published : Thursday, 12 Jan 2012, 6:51 AM EST
By MYFOXATLANTA STAFF/myfoxatlanta

ATLANTA - Fifteen World War Two veterans in the southeast are to be honored by France during a ceremony in Atlanta to be held on Thursday.

According to officials with the Consulate General of France in Atlanta, the 15 veterans will be awarded the Legion of Honor, an award established by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1802. Officials say it's the highest honor in France and recognizes "eminent services to the French Republic."

The Consul General of France in Atlanta, Pascal Le Deunff, will bestow the Legion of Honor to the veterans during a ceremony to be held at 2:30 pm at the Lenox Building in Atlanta.

Among the 15 veterans are four Georgians, Rae E. Preston from Athens, Marion W. Mills, also from Athens, John E. Rogalewicz from Atlanta and **Harold Beddow, from Savannah.**

I recently did a quick search of the National Archives WWII records and came across some info about recorded footage which mentions the 517th. It is a 35mm film which includes at least some footage of the 517th in Logbierme. Has anyone seen this? Unfortunately, it is difficult to get a copy from the National Archives. It looks like you have to hire an authorized video company to go to the archives and do it.

Bob Barrett

CAMOUFLAGING BIG GUNS, NEAR GRAND HALLEUX, BELGIUM ; SHELL BURSTS: GERMAN "K" BRIDGE, NEAR LAVAUX (?), BELGIUM ; 517TH PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENT, LOGBIERNE (?), BELGIUM, 01/16/1945

ARC Identifier 16928 / Local Identifier 111-ADC-3125

Item from Record Group 111: Records of the Office of the Chief Signal Officer, 1860 - 1985

Email	Print
Add to My List	

Details	Archived Copies	Hierarchy
Creator(s):	Department of Defense. Department of the Army. Office of the Chief Signal Officer. (09/18/1947 - 02/28/1964)	
Type(s) of Archival Materials:	Moving Images	
Contact(s):	Motion Picture, Sound, and Video Records Section, Special Media Archives Services Division (NWCS-M), National Archives at College Park, 8601 Adelphi Road, College Park, MD, 20740-6001. PHONE: 301-837-3540; FAX: 301-837-3620; EMAIL: mopix@nara.gov .	
Production Date(s):	01/16/1945	
Part Of:	Series: Moving Images Relating to Military Activities, compiled 1947 - 1964	
Specific Records Type(s):	motion pictures (visual works)	
Edit Status:	Unedited	
Variant Control Number(s):	NAIL Control Number: NWDNM(m)-111-ADC-3125	



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RE: C-47 plane markings

Dear Bob, Dear Lory,

Thanks for your email and sorry for the delay. Happy New Year to all the friends of the 517th!

Although I have been extensively researching the battlefields and places where the 517th was in Southern France and the odds and ends of all the equipment and uniforms worn by the 517th at that period, I never got close to the plane markings since I am not interested in the Air Force. Sorry about that.

But... here are a few tips that might help.

A big part of the Air Force archives can be seen on the Footnote.com website. You will not find anything by typing "517th" but try with keywords such as "paratroops", "parachutists", "Southern France" etc. I spent several months researching Critical past and the amount of printed air force material I found about Southern France was such, that i never really took the time to look at it.

All the 1st Bn Canino Airfield pictures (aka "De Trez pictures") are on footnote.

Note that they are not wearing the invasion flags, nor mae Wests, nor face paint since this lot of pictures were taken in the afternoon of August 14th.

I have seen these same pictures in the **Joe Broudy** archive as well as in the **Don Fraser** archive so I'm pretty sure these pictures (as well as other well-known maritime Alps pictures) were printed out in sets and handed to the troopers at some point.

Now another tip for the plane markings is a contact point and he's the webmaster of www.6juin1944.com

Mr Patrick Elie. You can contact him here <http://www.6juin1944.com/contact.html>

I know he is a very serious historian and has made a tremendous job about finding out chalk numbers and plane markings for the Normandy invasion and his researches allowed him to gather a lot of info about the Southern France invasion. I'm pretty sure Patrick Elie will be a good contact for you and he speaks English.

Incidentally, I was reading the December 31st mailcall and watched several times the tribute to the 596th by **Johnny Privott**... the pictures are amazing!!!! Pictures of the Battle of the Bulge are not too frequent for the 517th and it looks like there are plenty of them in the video! What a treasure!

If Lory needs any help for the uniforms and equipment details, I am at his disposal, I can supply precise info on the colors used to camouflage the uniforms and gear for operation Dragoon.

With Kind regards,
Your friend,

Gilles



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Identifying George Sullivan's photos

Hey, Roger.

I posted all your Dad's photos to the web site at:

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

Let me know if I got the right ones identified for your Dad and **Doc Lecklider**. Or if you want any changes to the page.

Thanks,
Bob Barrett

Thanks for loading the pics. Nice job.

Yes, I'm on LinkedIn and live on the Cape (Yea Patriots!!!)

There are a couple captions that I can add – including some of the photos toward the end that have French notations on the back. I'll copy them for **J.Mikael** with whom I made contact.

What's the best way to get them to you? I was thinking of sending photo number (from the file I sent) with desired caption. Would that work?

Regards,
Roger
Son of **George Sullivan, A Company**

Bob, we have recognized a lot of places in sospel or around on pics of Sullivan. How could we write the place on?

Patricia

To: Roger, Patricia Orengo, Gilles Guignard

I rebuilt the web page for George Sullivan's A Company photos.

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

I reduced the photo sizes to make them easier to scan through, and labeled them so that if anyone can identify a location or people, they can tell us the row and column number. Hope this helps.

And Gilles, I'm going to ask for your expertise again. Do you know if the photos loading the P-47's and inside them – Are those actually getting ready for Operation Dragoon in Italy, or are they just general training photos taken somewhere else? Those all look like they were taken by a professional photographer.

Thanks, all.

Bob Barrett



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Nice job on this, Bob!

As I mentioned to you, there are French language captions on some of the photos that begin in row 53. I will provide the captions to this list so that you may be able to assist in identifying them more specifically.

Best regards,

Roger S.

Hi Roger,

Nice to meet you. If you need help with the French captions, French is my mothertongue so don't hesitate.

Thanks for sharing those amazing pictures!

Kind regards

gilles

Hi Bob,

Yes the A company pics were definitively taken in Italy, on the afternoon of August 14th, that's about the same time **Bud Curtis'** pictures were taken. The A company pics were "official" pics taken by some Signal Corps unit, hence the troopers not having their invasion flags, Mae Wests, nor face paint.

There was also some footage made in color that day. I know of two people who might have the original full length color footage but it's mission impossible to get a copy. I do have extracts and I have put them on youtube on my dogface43 account.

I had a quick look at George Sullivan's pictures and they are great! I do recognize a few pictures, faces and places so I need to have a sharper look tonight when I am at home. One thing that puzzles me is the picture in which troopers are standing under the wing of the C-47, the trooper on the left is identified as "Sullivan" in the Sullivan photo collection but I have always identified him as being my friend **Zoot Snyder!**

Note that each trooper is carrying a mortar round in its cardboard container as per **Bill Boyle's** order!

Kind regards
gilles

A pleasure to make your acquaintance as well, Gilles.

I think what I'll do regarding the captions is to scan front & back of the captioned photos so that you can enlarge them to see more clearly. Some of the notations are a bit tough to make out in normal size. Also and interestingly, the building with the arched entrance in 57-A is the "Grande Poste" in



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Algeria (I matched its caption using Google photos). You'll note also the pictures of what appears to be a mosque and Muslim women. So not all of these photos were of France.

Look for them soon (hopefully in the next couple days).

I'll put them on 'flickr' and send the link to this list.

Regarding your other note on the '**Zoot Snyder vs. George Sullivan**' ID ... When I first discovered the 517th site a couple years ago, I saw this photo and thought to myself, "...this could be Dad." Then, when I was visiting Mom earlier in 2011, I saw the photo album that she had put together for Dad from the pictures he brought back with all these pictures. The 'under-the-wing' photo was on the first page of the album, fairly prominently displayed. I asked her if it was Dad and she immediately replied, "Oh yes."

Having said that... our memories and mementos of that time are precious to each of us – as we each remember them. We all have so little to hold on to from those days and what I have discovered, I've learned from research done well after Dad passed away 13 years ago. So, it may well be faulty. His only comment about war experience to me was regarding the Korean conflict, having been subjected to the first assault by the Chinese. He said, "You haven't lived until you've been chased down the street by a Chinese tank." After that, he transferred to the Army Air Corp and was an artillery spotter for the remainder of the conflict. He never spoke of WWII. I wasn't aware of his Bronze star from the Bulge until after his death.

Having said that, we can agree that whoever the person is (Sullivan or Snyder – either way is OK with me) was enjoying the moment – subtly mugging for the camera with all of the swagger and bravado that was typical of these brave men. I'm sure that you, as I, long for just one more chance to talk to our friends and fathers from that time and ask – knowing them as we do now, "What was it really like for you?" and "Where were you and what were you doing when this photo was taken?"

I served during the Vietnam era, but not in combat and was never was subjected to the difficulties of the veterans of WWII. I simply cannot imagine how they prevailed. As I walk from my heated house to my heated car today and shiver at the 19 degree (F) temperature, I think of enduring worse than that for days and weeks on end and I shudder for different reasons.

Respectfully and with best regards,

Roger S.

All,
Here's the link to the Flickr set with the front & back of the captioned photos.

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/8678705@N03/sets/72157628900905367/detail/>

I have given the file names the same at the matrix that Bob created – e.g. 55 A Front / 55 A Rear
Bob, 56 A is another shot of George Sullivan at Toccoa

Had to do it today, or not until next week sometime ...

Thanks all for helping to improve the collection!

Regards

Roger S.



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There is a bunch of pictures taken with a building in the background with the word "distillerie" on the wall. I'm pretty sure that these pictures were taken in La Colle sur Loup at the end of the Maritime Alps Campaign.

517th was stationed there prior to moving up to Soissons in December 44.

Kind regards
Gilles



I received the confirmation from **Bruce Broudy** and it is definitely **Chopper** and **Captain Broudy** in the picture!

It's just a shame we are all so far away from each other, would be great to sit all together and comment all the pictures.

Best wishes from sunny but snowy Switzerland!

Gilles

I agree – it would be nice to hear the stories as well as meet you all.

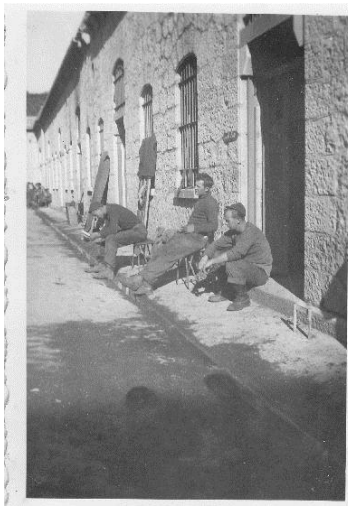
Roger S

I have recognize some places. I will try to take the pictures of the same place now
Best regards and sorry if there are some mistakes in my mail !!

Roland from Sospel

[See web page for Roland's identifications http://517prct.org/photos/george_sullivan/george_sullivan.htm]

Here are shots of the
Fort of Barbonnet
(Sospel) then and now.





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More MailCall News

Hi, the reason that i was writing is that I am writing a book that takes place in southern france during WWII.

I have found some tiny pieces regarding what has been called, the forgotten bunker, aka bunker von hanstein. This is what I know so far, which is not much. It was in Marseille. It was in the trois ponts district. There was a general schaefer (german) associated with this battle.

Apparently the germans were trapped in these bunkers, even crawling in aeration pipes. It was supposedly referred to in other stuff as garrison of Fort Saint Nicholas, which dominates the canebiere.

Might you know of anyone who would know anything about this whatsoever. I know schaefer was the commander of the 244 german division. It was in E. Marseille. Also it says in another blog that German General Boie, 3 colonels, 7 officers and 1156 non-commissioned officers or the privates were captured by men led by Captain Duparmeur.

Any thing you might know or in your connections? I would certainly give credit to whatever you might give me once the book is published. I am hoping to bring back the spirit of our country to inspire our hope at the present time.

Many thanks, anne

Hello Anne,

Offhand, I don't recall anything about this in the 517 histories. I don't think they were involved, but I'm not the expert. I will pass on your question to members and friends of the 517th through our weekly email newsletter. We have a few historians in southern France, who might be able to help. I'll let you know if I hear anything back.

I'm sure you've done your research already, but my guess tells me that the French will know more about this. See: http://www.veterans.fr/1939-1945/liberation_de_Marseille.pdf

Regards,

Bob Barrett
MailCall@517prct.org

“If at first you don't succeed, then skydiving probably isn't for you.”



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In case this was too hard to read in the last MailCall, here is another version.

67 years ago today

Stars and Stripes

January 21, 1945:

LEAVES FROM A WAR

CORRESPONDENT'S NOTEBOOK

—by Hal Boyle—



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

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

"Hi yuh, Dave, where's our doughnut girls?"

"I need some chewin' tobacco."

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—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 tack-

Civil Service Examinations

Dictating Machine Transcribers will be interested in the new poster announcement issued by the United States Civil Service Commission to recruit transcribers for war service jobs in government agencies in Washington, D. C. The salary is \$1970 a year including overtime pay.

Dictating Machine Transcribers in the Federal Service contribute to the speedy and efficient production of thousands of necessary letters, digests, and other pieces of correspondence which flow out of Washington each day.

Applicants must have reached the age of 17½ years. They will be given a written test and must have had 6 months of experience or present an acceptable certificate of proficiency in dictating machine transcription.

The Commission is also recruiting Substitute Railway Postal Clerks for war service positions through-

le on the University of California Bears. But when he tried to enlist in 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.

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.

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 into southern France last summer I tagged along too.

"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 was 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 peckets" for any other type of outfit in the world.

"They've done in three years what it took the Marines 178 years to do—built up a real fighting tradition that means something."



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A Tribute on behalf of **Jean Michel Soldi** and **Eric Renoux**, founders of the Airborne Museum de la Liberation of Le Muy in France and joint presidents of the Association " 15 Août 1944 ".

Peter Matthews was one of the best supporters of our action to paying free tribute to the legacy of the Airborne in Operation Dragoon.

Peter was one of those brave paratroopers who landed as part of the Southern France "D" day. He had been parachuted early on the morning of 15th of August 1944 dropping on the hill of les Belligues between Le Muy and La Motte with the 4th Battalion of the British Parachute Regiment.

The most popular British Veteran known in Provence, proud to have never missed a liberation ceremony since the first time he came back to inaugurate the Museum in 1994, including again in August 2011 in spite of the sickness he was fighting against.

Awarded the Legion of Honor by the French Government in August 2004, Peter had always supported our action including, with his daughter Sue, his son in law Alan, and his friend Chris Compton, to request the help of the Parachute Regiment of the British Army during the terrible flood in Provence of June 15th 2010, which destroyed the Museum.

18 years of fidelity in the ceremonies of La Motte, Le Muy, Trans and also the Draguignan American Cemetery.

His kindness will stay for ever in our hearts. It will always be there with us but the next liberation ceremony in August will not be the same any more without him.

Once again this last summer Peter had asked us not to give up, to rebuild, and to promise to him, that one day we will find a good place for a new Airborne Museum, in an appropriate building, and without risk to be destroyed once again by a flood, and in the Drop Zone he had never left since that morning of the 15th of August 1944.

We will uphold that promise for the memory of 1944, for Peter especially, but also the other veteran friends who left us.... **Michael Compton, George Christie, Baron Thomas Foran, Gary Davis, Lud Gibbons, Ben Barrett, Carl Kieffer, Ed Jordan, Henri Parlarieu** and hundreds of others that we welcomed for over 20 years.

For all those, who had made for the country of France and for freedom, the sacrifice of their life.

We will miss you Peter, one of our spiritual fathers, we will never forget.





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Hello Claire

Sorry I haven't been in touch sooner.

Dad's funeral was of course a sad occasion, but what a fantastic send off for him. The Parachute Regiment sent the Regimental Colonel, the 4th Battalion Colonel and RSM, and 9 serving soldiers from the 4th Battalion. Over 200 people turned up including some young ex Para's who just wanted to pay their respects. What camaraderie.

Jean Michael and Eric along with Francois and his daughter Karine came over from France and we have had tributes from various Mayors past and present and also from the President of the French Resistance Veterans. All very touching indeed.

The funeral (outside the church) was televised live on BBC Bristol News and shown later in other regions.

I have attached the order of service and some press coverage which I thought you and your father might like to see. I've also included the French tribute which Alan had to step in to read out on behalf of Jean Mi and Eric who were just too upset to say anything.

Dad wanted some of his ashes scattered in France and so in August we will uphold his wish. Will you be going this year?

Alan is going over to France in April with Chis Compton to meet up with Jean Mi and Eric to get a better understanding of the plans for the new Museum and to ensure all the veterans and their families, here in the UK and over there in the US, are kept informed and remain involved.

I would be most grateful if you would please pass on the families thanks to all you are in contact with who knew dad in the US. He often spoke about, as he put it, "his American mates !"

Keep in touch

Very best

Sue



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24 hours

Current high-ranking officers will attend funeral as mark of respect



Second World War hero Peter Matthews, above and below, who fought at the bloody battle of Monte Cassino, right

Hero of Second World War has died aged 86

Daniel Evans

d.evans@brpp.co.uk

A BRAVE Second World War veteran who helped liberate southern France has died, aged 86.

At a young age Peter Matthews was involved in bloody conflicts across Europe, Africa and Asia with 4th Battalion Parachute Regiment.

He was so highly regarded that current high-ranking officers will attend his funeral in Westminster on January 5.

Parachute Regimental Colonel Lt Col Martyn Wills, 4th Battalion Commanding Officer, Lt Col John Boyd, and Regimental Sergeant Major Joe

Scrivener will all be in attendance while the hearse party will be made up of serving 4 Para soldiers.

Mr Matthews' B Company Commander, retired Major Dick Hargreaves, now 89, will be reading one of the eulogies.

Born in Hampshire on February 30, 1925, Mr Matthews joined the London Irish Rifles Light Infantry in September 1941, aged just 16. Less than a year later, in June 1942, he was selected to join the Army Air Corps - an elite parachute regiment.

After training he was deployed as part of the newly-formed 4th Battalion to Africa and Iran.

In September 1943, he fought in



Italy and he was at the bloody battle of Monte Cassino in 1944.

By June that year, the battalion began training for the then top-secret Operation Dragoon, the invasion of Southern France often referred to as "the forgotten D-Day".

In August 1944, ahead of an American seaborne invasion, British paratroopers dropped deep behind enemy lines. Although only in the country for a few weeks, many towns and villages were liberated from enemy occupation and



the operation remains one of the most successful ever mounted by the Parachute Regiment.

By September 1944, the regiment was back in Italy, from where they fought up through Grosco, heady in Yugoslavia, and back to Grosco before returning to Italy once more, then getting much-needed leave after being away from home for more than two and a half years.

In January 1946, Mr Matthews, a private, signed on for another two years and immediately saw action in

Palestine. He demobbed in January 1948 and went on to run several pubs and clubs in Bristol, including the Conservative club on Nevil Road, Bishopston, and the Holy Cross in Dean Lane, Bedminster.

Mr Matthews leaves wife Enid, children Ken, Sue and Rick, Enid's daughters Lynn and Janet, 10 grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren.

For many years he lived in Chalcraft House, Ashton, before passing away in hospital, from bronchial pneumonia on December 12.

He was highly decorated for his military service and his medals included the Legion d'Honneur, presented by the French government

in 2004. Mr Matthews retained an affinity with southern France and returned every August for the last 16 years for the liberation ceremonies in the village of La Motte and town of Le Muy, which were the first to be liberated by the British.

Several French friends are travelling over for the funeral and tributes have been received from the mayors of La Motte and Le Muy together with tributes from French resistance veterans' associations.

The funeral starts at 12.30pm at St Francis Church on North Street next Thursday.

Comment: Page 10



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The prince and the pauper

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