



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2214

May 18, 2014

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

Website
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2013 Roster (updated!)
Thunderbolt (Winter 2014)

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John Pastalenic, H Company, in the Hornel, NY Evening Tribune

THE EVENING The Tribune

Arkport soldier: War and remembrance

By Al Bruce
The Evening Tribune
Posted May. 10, 2014 @ 9:09 pm

*Pictured is **John Pastalenic** of Arkport in the jump jacket he wore 70 years ago during World War II. The jacket displays his Combat Infantryman's Badge, Purple Heart, parachute wings with stars for a combat jump and decorations for his battles in France and Italy.*
SEAN CURRAN/THE EVENING TRIBUNE

ARKPORT, NY — John M. Pastalenic of Arkport was a combat veteran before he parachuted into southern France and Nazi gunfire at 4 a.m. on a foggy Aug. 15, 1944.



Pastalenic, with about 90 pounds of combat gear, landed on a stone, turned his ankle and hit the ground on his back, “knocking the wind out of me,” while German troopers fired at the American GIs from all directions, he told the Tribune last weekend.



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Enemy soldiers were desperate after being pushed back hundreds of miles through French hedgerows from Normandy and Brittany after D-Day, June 5, almost 70 years ago.

Pastalenic said regrouping with other members of Company H of the legendary 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team “took us about two days.”

On the second day, Pastalenic “began to work my way into a vineyard when a German dashed across the road between the rows. I jumped the opposite way, not having time to fire. I waited a few minutes and began to creep out on my elbows and belly. Before I got to the end of the row a burst from a (Nazi) burp gun turned me over on my back. I knew I was hit hard.”

“Hit hard” was an understatement. The veteran of fighting in Italy described the wound: “The burst (of 9mm bullets) went through my stomach wall, through the right groin and out the right thigh without touching a bone. I crawled back as far as I could, then rolled over on my back and made my peace with the Lord” in a bullet-punctuated French vineyard.

Pastalenic said “In what seemed a short while, I heard (his close friend) Wally Vincent asking about me. All I could do was whistle. He shouted and asked if it was me and I whistled again. The next thing I remember was two medics applying sulfa powder to the wounds and giving me a shot of morphine.”

He blacked out again and “came to on the operating table with one leg over the top of a doctor’s shoulder. He was finishing stitching my stomach wounds. He mentioned to a person standing by his side that I was shot with a burst of about seven” bullets.

Pastalenic’s odyssey of recovery included makeshift Army hospitals in Italy, Morocco, the Azores, Miami, near Pittsburgh and, finally, a real medical facility.

A surgical team at New England General Hospital in Atlantic City repaired Pastalenic’s “messed up femoral nerve. I came out of the operating room with a cast around my waist and down my right leg to the top of the knee. So I was hobbling around on crutches for some time. When the cast was removed I was sent to Ft. Monmouth, N.J., for reconditioning my right foot, which swung abnormally to the right. With therapy, it ultimately returned to normal.”

While he went through physical therapy in New Jersey, “the war ended in Europe and I was eventually sent back to New England General for a medical discharge.”

Before France, Pastalenic trained in Colorado with what became the 10th Mountain Division; graduated from jump school in Ft. Benning, Ga., and took a Liberty Ship across the Atlantic through two storms and nighttime bombardment from what he calls “visitors from the German air force (who made) the night skies look like a Fourth of July” fireworks display.

Combat in Italy included “a plateau where the Germans surprised us, opening up with small arms and pinning us down. We were shelled with mortar rounds and got orders to move back down the hill. As I rounded some brush and rocks, I saw my first casualty. Our machine gunner” suffered a grisly fatal wound from German mortar fire.

Pastalenic is now 90 years old and has been married for 66 years to his wife, Dottie. They have lived for 27 years in Arkport.



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He can still fit into his seven-decades-old jump jacket and proudly displays the Combat Infantryman's Badge, his paratrooper wings with a star for the combat jump, the Purple Heart and medals for World War II campaigns in France and Italy.

Infrequent incidents bring memories of 70 years ago rushing back. A Belgian wrote that his grandmother found Pastalenic's Army identification tags — the metal rectangles that GIs fondly call "Dog tags" — and after correspondence, sent one to Arkport about two years ago. Pastalenic imagines the tags were lost on a French battleground as he fought for his country and then his life.

A Tribune article last week mentioned a fellow World War II paratrooper from the 517th, Leo Dean of Albany. The comrades in arms shared combat reminiscences via telephone.

Pastalenic closed his recollections about combat 70 years ago with these sentences: "I would like to tell everyone I was proud to serve my God and country and I would do it again with the 517th. In the book about the parachute regimental combat team, 'Battling Buzzards,' I am listed as the third man who went down but not out. The writer didn't know how to spell my Polish name."

To learn more, Google '517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team - Pastalenic' for information about the paratrooper's combat experience and his photo. Wally Vincent, the GI who saved his life in France, is standing next to Pastalenic in the top row.

Pause as you read his memoir to look at the photo of young men who were part of what some call "The Greatest Generation" for their sacrifices fighting tyranny.

Nobody who reads Pastalenic's combat story will doubt his membership.

Found online at: <http://www.eveningtribune.com/article/20140510/News/140519957>

Other MailCall News

Enjoyed this Mail Call #2212 very much. God bless Leo and Howard! How they continue to inspire and amaze us.

Pat Seitz and Alan Greer

RE: October celebrations for the liberation of Sospel

I did a mistake : the date in Sospel will be saturday 25 and sunday 26th october....

Patricia Orengo

I'm so sorry to hear of the passing of Hal Beddow. What a good man! I'm proud to have met him and spend time talking with him at Taccoa. That was a good trip! He will be missed. Prayer's to Helen! He had a great partner in life with Helen who I also admire greatly!

Rick Sweet



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Hi Bob,

Sorry for my delay in a reply.

I've been gathering letters from family, friends and those who want to THANK A VETERAN. Dad has been selected to go on HERO FLIGHT at the end of this month. Family from all around the US are going to "welcome him home" at the Spokane, WA airport upon his return. I signed him up last year but he wasn't selected until his year; so everyone is happy for him.

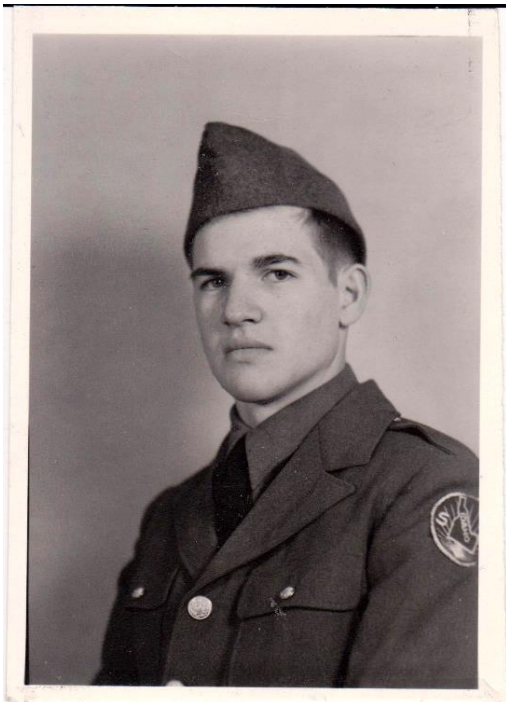
I located two pictures of him, which I've attached. I know I will find more when I "dig deeper" into the tons of scrapbooks in the garage and I recall ones of him jumping out of planes and on the ground with his buddies.

Dad doesn't have his computer up and running at this time. If you emailed the newsletters to me, I could (a) talk to him about the articles when I phone him and (b) print and "snail mail" to him. I'm sure he'd love to read them. I see the link to go back in time and print some previous ones, and I'll do that. And, I know he'd love to receive the Thunderbolt magazine.

With deep appreciation to you,

Sincerely,

Cheri Folk, daughter of **Bob Lewis**, HQ Company





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Just finished reading the last MailCall that had info on Leo's most "recent" jump. I put "recent" in parenthesis since you never know when he's going to do another one! Anyway, attached find the Morning Reports for HQ AND HQ CO. (I will send the scanned documents later) In the Alphabetical listing you will find the name of that great sage, **Leo Dean**; I'd say he had a good day on March 1, 1945 while lounging around Joigny, France! (See the MR entry for 23 Mar 1945)

I am currently scanning B and D Companies, Service Co and the Medical Detachment. LOTS of entries for these four companies. Once scanned, I will be asking on MailCall for assistance in transcribing the MR's to the Excel format. There have been many people who have wanted to assist in this, but I have not wanted to part with the "original" copies; I wanted to get them scanned in first and then the information could be sent to anybody who wants to help. I have to say that the scanning process is very time consuming and that is one of the reasons it has not been completed yet; other "daily living" things have gotten in the way. If anybody knows of a fast scanner, I'm all ears.

We, my lovely bride Rhonda and me, keep reading about all the folks heading for France in August this year and we get anxious to return ourselves! Oh, what a wonderful time we had with Frederick, Anna Sophie! However, due to business activities, we cannot commit at this time. Maybe October is better for us.

Mike Wells

The Morning Report entry for March 23 1945 reads:

"Aptd M/Sgt fr Tec 4, per SO #53, Hq 517thPrcht Inf, dtd VOCO as of 1 Mar 45"

VOCO = Verbal Order Commanding Officer?



May 8th was VE Day!



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Hello Bob,

I think I corresponded with you a couple years ago about finding information regarding my cousin, **Harold MILLER**, that was killed in action. You were so very helpful, and I thank you again. I now have another problem and wonder if you can direct me in the right direction. My husband died 13 Dec 2013. He was a Veteran. (Air Force). We have the "pre-paid" plan here. I have not been able to get a refund from the Veterans.

Thanks so much.

Maxine Whitman-Tuthill

Can anyone help Maxine? Do you know what refund she is trying to get? – BB

Good morning Bob,

I apologize for my delay in replying and I appreciate your patience.

I've been gathering letters from family, friends and those who would like to thank a WWII Veteran for his service.

Dad is scheduled to go on HERO FLIGHT at the end of this month.

I've contacted family members who haven't connected with one another for years asking them to jot to dad &/or come to the Spokane airport to welcome him home upon return from DC/Hero Flight on 5/28 (7 PM)

Dad would love to receive the newsletter but his computer isn't up and running yet. His address is:

RH Bob Lewis

c/o Fairwinds Assisted Living
520 E. Holland Ave -- Apt. W 107
Spokane, WA 99218

I will scan the photos I found and send to you no later than Sunday.

Thank you,

Cheri Folk

Hi Cheri,

No hurry at all on the photos. I have added **Bob Lewis** to the mailing list for the Thunderbolt publication.

Please wish him well on his trip to DC, and give him my best wishes on behalf of his 517th family. Send me a picture of that trip as well that I can use for the newsletter.

Bob B.



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Dear Mr. Barrett, I looked at www.517prct.org/ and you said for information from the French go to http://www.veterans.fr/1939-1945/liberation_de_Marseille.pdf

Unfortunately I think the address is no longer valid.

Here's my question, I am writing a book and trying to do some research about the Bunker Von Hainstein and Notre Dame, in Marseille.

I found some information on the topics on internet, but one referece in Notre Dame has a reference to an American helping out at Notre Dame, and he said only that he was 'Division St. Louis'.

I am not well versed on military matters, but wondered what division this is, more than likely infantry, under who and what regiment?

Also is there anyone you know that give me some help on the France invasion.

Will be glad to list you on my reference page. Any help you can give, is so greatly appreciate,

best regards, Anne

Hi Anne,

I don't think I got any response to my initial inquiry about his event. I'm sure that the 517th wasn't involved at all, as they landed closer to Nice near Le Muy/Trans-en-Provence/Les Arcs on August 12, 1944 and headed east from there. But I will forward your inquiry again to a few people in So. France that might have some knowledge.

I did find these:

<http://www.citizenside.com/fr/photos/grand-angle/1944-08-28/65553/liberation-de-marseille-lhistoire-du-bunker-oublie.html#f=0/533202>

<http://www.ciq3ponts.com/histoires/liberation.php>

I will let you know if I get any info on the "Division St. Louis" near Marseille.

Bob B.

Mr. Barrett, I did hear back from one of our servicemen in Germany, what a nice connection. He suggested that Division st. louis, might have been National Guard. I went to their website and it does show them to have been in the European theatre, although the only one in Southern France was the 3rd infantry division.

Now I am trying to find out if in 1944, was there in St. Louis training or a base for the third infantry who were in the national guard.

Any thoughts you might have will be helpful. Haven't been able to get exact on this so far.

And again, thanks for helping me out. I'll send you a book when I get it finished and published, Anne



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Hello

Division Saint Louis was first armored division of free french army

Hugs from Sospel
Roland Orengo

[1re division blindée \(France\) — Wikipédia](#)

[a 1re division blindée est une unité historique de l'armée française durant la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Elle est aus...](#)

Hi Bob

She can try asking this question on the following french forum that is specialised in events in southern France: <http://sudwall.superforum.fr/>

Jean-Loup Gassend

Dear Roland

You can't imagine how happy I was to receive this information from you. I have looked everywhere. I am putting this division in the book that I am writing and with this information, it's now complete, thanks to you and of course Mr. Barrett for making the connection.

I am listing 'special' references in my book and hopefully when published, will send each a copy. How would you like me to list your name or organization?

I am so happy to find a good contact regarding the 'French'. I knew there were no American troops that went into Marseille, for it was the French Commanders that were there, so it didn't make sense. I just didn't know about Division St. Louis being French.

Many thanks and good wishes to you.

-Blessings, Anne

P.S. do you live in France?

You got it done for me Bob. I appreciate it more than I can tell you with all of your contacts. I have looked at Sudwall before, but couldn't find any mention of it. But this is the answer, I am sure.

Want to reference you in my book, hopefully it will be a best seller, but in sometime would also like to send a copy to all of the 'personal' references I have made, and there are many who have helped me on so much.

Let me know how you want to be listed, or if you don't that's ok too.

Again, Thanks a bundle. Many blessings to you, Anne



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RE: **Darrel Egner**

I just got off the phone with Darrell and he wanted to let everyone know why he has not been active on Mail Call for a while.

I had told everyone one several months ago Darrell was having terrible back issues and had to go to rehab for a while. They have done some shots in his back and it is a little better but not much.

Darrell is now going through an issue with cancer of the tongue. His daughter told me they did a biopsy and they found cancer similar to skin cancer. The area that they did the biopsy on has not healed and is causing terrible problems for Darrell to eat (he weighs 138 lbs now).

Two weeks ago they started to give Darrell chemo once a week. At this point they do not know if the chemo is working and I do not know how long it will take for them to determine that. He does not have cancer of the throat but talking for any length of time is painful to him.

Rick and I are going to Jacksonville to visit with him in the next 2 weeks.

I just wanted to make everyone was aware of what was going on.

Chris Lindner

Breaking news:

I am happy to report that a fabulous birthday celebration took place today in upstate New York: **Leo Dean** did a tandem jump to celebrate his 90th birthday! To make it even more special, **Mimsey Boyle**, daughter of **Col. "Wild Bill" Boyle**, also did her very first jump.

Although I couldn't be there today, I did enjoy getting the bulletins from the staging area and the DZ. Mimsey jumped carrying a photo of her father and said that she was honored to be there. She jumped in honor of her father "and all the men of the 517th." What an incredible tribute!!

Albany news stations were there, including Fox News and either Channel 10 or 12 (can't remember), but I don't see the footage yet.

More news as I get it!

Claire Giblin



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Hi Ben

I am very happy to say, after all these years of work, that the English edition of my book about the Liberation of Southern France, 'Autopsy of a Battle, the Liberation of the French Riviera', is now finished, and available in English. It can be bought on amazon, and elsewhere on the internet.

The book has a chapter overviewing the airborne aspect of operation dragoon, then goes into great detail about the liberation of the French Riviera, between August 15th and September 7th 1944, when the Allied troops stopped advancing east, and started a sort of trench warfare at col de Braus and at the Italian border.

The book is for the most part based on first hand oral accounts by Allied soldiers, as well as German soldiers, and local French civilians and résistants. The 517th is very well represented, firstly because they were heavily involved in the fighting, and secondly because the excellent website you and your father set up greatly assisted getting in touch with veterans of the 517th to interview.

Concerning the 517th PRCT, the book has detailed chapters about the fighting at Seillans, Fayence, Callian, Montauroux, St Cézaire, la Roquette sur Var, and at Col de Braus. Some of the veterans interviewed (or who left written accounts that were used) include **Lt Howard Hensleigh, Col Dalrymple, Gen Seitz, Capt Newberry, Louis Holzworth, Marvin Moles, Frank Dallas, Guy Carr, Eugene Brissey, Henry Filipczak, Richard Hammel, Ray Helms, Don Fraser, Federico Martinez, Walter Ammermon, William Webb, Lt Ed Athey, Melvin Biddle, Claude Rickards, Allan Johnson, Bob Cooper, Ralph Nelson, Walter Perkowski, Ignatius Bail, Mirle Traver**, as well as numerous others. Unfortunately, most of these witnesses have since passed on, but I hope the few survivors, as well as the family members of those who are no longer with us, will appreciate the book.

The book not only goes into detail about the Allied operations, but also presents the German point of view, with details and photos of German soldiers who were killed in the encounters, German witness accounts, etc.

I really put a huge effort into making this book, and I don't think many people who buy it will be disappointed.

I have set up a little internet site with information about the book for anybody who wants to know more: <http://autopsyofabattle.blogspot.com/>

The book is about 550 pages, A4 format, with around 800 photos, including many photos and short biographies of 517th troopers who were killed during the studied timeframe.

I would be very happy to hear any feedback from any readers. **Howard Hensleigh** has already read some of the chapters, and wrote a foreword for the book, so may want to chime in with his thoughts.

As attachments, I am sending the covers to the French and English versions of the book, as well as an example page.

Regards

Jean-Loup



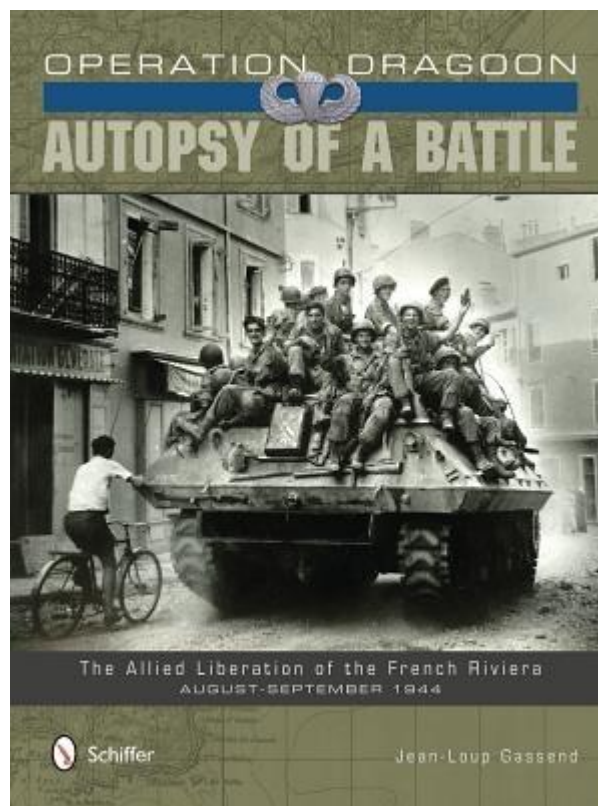
517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Autopsy of a Battle. The Allied Liberation of the French Riviera in August and September 1944.

By Jean-Loup Gassend (jean-loup@gassend.com)

English edition now available. Disponible en français à partir de juillet 2014.

On the night of August 14-15, 1944, the First Airborne Task Force, which included the U.S. 509th, 517th and 551st Parachute Infantry Regiments, jumped into enemy held territory spearheading Operation Dragoon, the Allied invasion of southern France. Based on interviews from all combatant units, battlefield archaeology, period photos, letters and reports, this book provides an outstandingly detailed hour-by-hour account of the advance through southern France, as seen through the eyes of those who lived through it, bringing to light the tragic and gruesome realities of what was later to become known as the "Champagne Campaign."



Jean-Loup Gassend is a medical doctor specializing in forensics. Over the past ten years he has extensively explored the battlefields of the French Riviera, recovering many lost artifacts as well as the bodies of missing soldiers. Jean-Loup Gassend has French and Canadian citizenships, is fluent in both English and French, and has working knowledge of German, which enabled him to discover many previously unexplored sources for the writing of this book. He is always seeking for new information and documents about the war on the French Riviera, the First Airborne Task Force and Reserve Division 148, and can be contacted at jean-loup@gassend.com

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- Publication date: 11/28/2013
- Pages: 432



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The Operation Dragoon Parachute Drops

We sat out by our equipment and brought the division in at approximately 6 o'clock in the morning, and at 8 o'clock we brought the gliders in. We laid the yellow silks down to mark out the landing zones for the gliders. After that, we brought supplies in and then we joined up with the division and we did any job they wanted us to do. I must say, it was a very efficient and good operation. It was one of the most successful operations ever done. The British forces did their job well. They were in the right place. We did have a part of the 5th Battalion that went astray, but it had nothing to do with us. We were on the right spot and we pulled them in, but their radar wasn't working in the plane, so they tried to break away, but a lot of their flight just followed them and they landed some 36 miles away. But it had nothing to do with us, we were on the right spot and our radars were working correctly.

Jim Chimenden's pathfinder team had been particularly successful, but this was not the case of all the pathfinder units. On the night of August 14 to 15, 1944, the area the paratroopers were supposed to jump in was covered by exceptionally thick fog, causing several pathfinder teams of the 509th PIB and 517th PIR to be dropped hopelessly off target. The entire 3rd Battalion of the 517th, along with most of the Scottish 5th Battalion, landed in the Fayence-Montanaronx area, approximately 20 to 30km to the northeast of their planned drop zone. The story of these men will be described in depth in the next two chapters. As for B and C companies of the 509th PIB, they jumped approximately 30km south of their drop zone, near the coastal town of St Tropez. We will mention them further on in this text.

For the moment, we will concentrate on the men who were actually dropped close to their intended drop zones, in the region

of le Muy. The essence of being a paratrooper is to feel lost behind enemy lines, and this is how most men felt as they reached the ground. The thick fog restricted vision and gave many the impression that they were over the sea as they were descending. **Bud Curtis**, of the Headquarters (HQ) of the 1st Battalion of the 517th PIR, told of his impressions of the jump in a letter written to his mother August 22nd:

We boarded C-47s in Italy (Chiteviccia [sic]) about 2:30 a.m. and had a nice pleasant ride, with no opposition at all. Most of us were asleep until almost time to jump. They woke us up and said we would be over the field in eight minutes. That was about 5:00 a.m. We stood up and hooked up. It seemed like years went by as those last minutes ticked off. I was number 13 man. The green light came on and guys began to disappear in front of me. Then there I was at the door. I had a hell of a body position. I went out the door like I was throwing a flying block with my right shoulder at somebody. I was heading down nose first when "wham," she opened and jacked me back up right. I looked up to make sure my chute was open and then I looked around. We must have jumped awfully high, because I thought I was never going to come down. There was a low fog about 100 feet off the ground and it looked just like water. I really thought my number was up for sure. I was cursing the Air Corps and all their ancestors for 17 generations back.

When I sank through the mist, I was just beginning to figure it all out when "thud," I hit the ground. I will never forget that morning. I was miles away from the jump field. Later, I found out that it was a good thing I didn't land on the jump field, as the Germans had it all ready for us with mines, machine guns, and flame throwers. All I could



Men of Company A, 517th PIR wait under the wing of their Dakota aircraft. Note that although the uniforms and equipment of these soldiers have been spray painted for camouflaging purposes, they did not use camouflaging paint on their faces. NARA/ Bruce Broady Collection.



Trooper Bud Curtis shows off all of his equipment before embarking for southern France. Curtis Family collection/517prct.org.



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Memories with Hal Beddow

I will miss Hal dearly, he was a great man, and was at every reunion I attended. He was a great inspiration to me and I admired him greatly. The last time I got to see Hal was at Camp Toccoa last June 2013. He and Helen came to help us celebrate the 70th anniversary of the organization of the 517th in March 1943. Hal got to speak at a ceremony in Toccoa and he gave the most wonderful speech about his experiences. He truly loved the men of the 517th, and I know he was very proud of his service. Attached are some pictures I took of him at Toccoa and other reunions.

My deepest sympathies to Helen and family

Lory Curtis, son of Bud Curtis, HQ, 1st Bn





517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team





517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

American Military Historical
Company

We're in our 2nd day in Carlisle, PA
at the AHEC Army Heritage Days.
Come out and see us if you're in
the area! We're portraying F/517
PRCT. (Sunday, 5-18-14)

[https://www.facebook.com/WW2A
BHistoricalCo?fref=nf](https://www.facebook.com/WW2ABHistoricalCo?fref=nf)



Administrivia

- If you miss any MailCalls, they are all available online at <http://www.517prct.org/mailcall/>

At any time, if you

- 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, or just click on the unsubscribe link on the email.
- 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 Donations, In Memory of... etc.) and make all checks payable to:

517 PRCT Association, Inc.
c/o Joanne Barrett
70 Pleasant Street
Cohasset, MA 02025

Army Life, as told by PFC William B. Houston (Part 4)

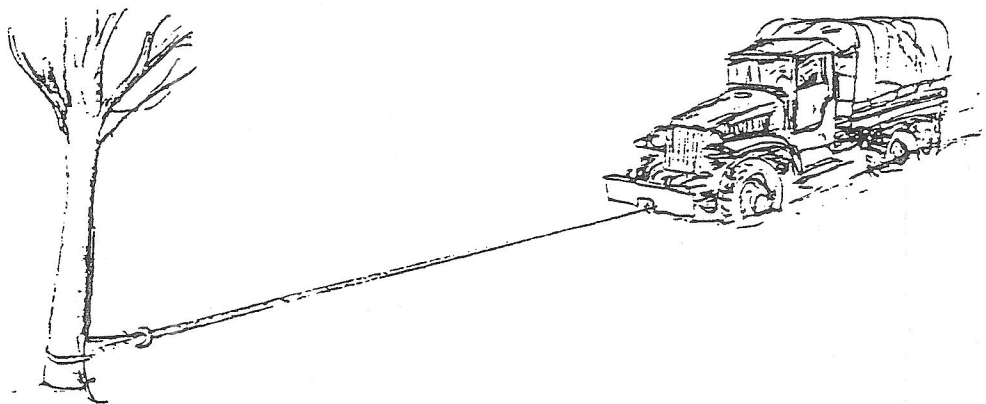
Another chapter from **William Houston's** biography is on the following pages.
This chapter covers "**Tennessee Maneuvers**" from **February 1944**.

Next week: ***Last Stay at MacKall***

TENNESSEE MANEUVERS

On February 6th I wrote to my sister Marion and complained that the "maneuver weather" had beat us to Tennessee. It was raining when we got off the train and it rained through the night. With tongue in cheek I described our barracks; only two men to a room, no floors to sweep, no fires or stoves to attend - in fact, "no nothing" because we were in tents. During the night someone had tripped over the rope holding the front of our tent so, to make sure it would not happen again, we dug two holes, one on each side of the rope and about a yard away. That should stop any accidents which would cause us to rebuild our tent.

The mud in Tennessee was terrible. Trucks and jeeps were having a hard time, even on the roads. Today we filled in about 150 yards of mud with branches of trees to give the trucks some traction and keep them from sinking too deep. And they call these mud-holes roads? One tactic used to get vehicles out of the mud was to reel the wench out and wrap



the cable around a sturdy tree then wind the cable in while trying to drive the truck out of the mud. Usually it works, that is if there is a sturdy tree close enough to attach the cable.

Our little tent city may have to go soon. Such a shame too, since it had almost everything. Just across the street are signs that read, "LITTLE LEAVENWORTH", "THE BRASS BAR - OPEN ALL NIGHT" and "U.S.O. UPSTAIRS ^". There are signs pointing to Minnesota, Texas, California and even No. 10 Downing Street. Still another sign notifies us that "Prill's Grill is now open under new management" and will be known as "Hess' Mess".

On February 13th, a Friday, we were in another area but still in Tennessee. It was better because the mud froze at night and was firm at least part of the morning of the following day. One reason that I was warm at night is that I discovered that four blankets were not enough but sixteen proved to be adequate.

The following Sunday I spent much on the day chopping wood. The meals were good that day - breakfast consisted of three fried eggs and bacon. At noon we had chicken but the best meal was in the evening and featured rice with gravy, beef, string beans, bread and butter, cocoa and blueberry pie without a crust - just the filling. It was a great meal in spite of the lack of pie crust.

"It doesn't look as if we will be jumping while on maneuvers", I wrote in a letter

home. I was writing that letter while sitting in the cab of a truck while the battery commander and a second lieutenant stood outside eating their dinner. Each was using a fender of the truck for a table. Shortly afterward darkness set in and I had to give up the writing for that day.

I heard from Peg - she was sorry that my three day pass had been canceled. I just let the matter go at that.

The first phase of our maneuvers was over and it was pretty rugged. Not only did I lose my pen again but I wore out two pair of socks and a pair of feet. On the ninth, Monday, we left Portland in the evening and moved to a position near Statesville the following morning. We had a wonderful breakfast, before starting out from Portland, which consisted of ham, eggs and bread. Lunch was pretty sad - two sandwiches, an apple and half of a cup of coffee. Monday evening we had nothing. Tuesday morning things got better and we had three fried eggs, bread and jelly. However, the lunch was a carbon copy of Monday's lunch and supper was identical to the lunch except that the apple was replaced by an orange.

At 2000 hours on the tenth of February we started out on a hike which ended fifty miles down the road and on the other side of the mountain. The first nine hours of the march was slow going and we only covered 9.3 miles over mountain trails. We had to wrestle the 1,365 pound gun over rocky trails where, at times, we had to lift the gun over rocks on several occasions. Most of the trail was over flat rocks like slate which were slippery from the rain. Where there were no rocks there was mud, mud just as slick as the wet rocks. The remaining 40.7 miles were not as rough and we made the distance in thirteen hours. The entire distance required twenty-two continuous hours of walking, with the five minute break every hour, and discounting the forty-five minute wait at noon on Wednesday for an armored anti-aircraft unit to join us. Not only was the hike hard on us but again I wore out two pair of socks, fresh new socks at that. I learned some things about Tennessee during the hike. I learned of the mountains of stone and that some roads forge streams and rivers rather than pass over them by means of a bridge. I learned that most of the fences were made of stone and I even saw a humpback cow. It may be said that we took the G.I. shortcut which is always the most indirect route between two points. It could be compared to following the shoreline of Lake Of The Isles rather than taking a canoe straight across. But that is S.O.P. in the army.

Wednesday morning I was a wreck - it was raining, we only had about an hour of sleep Tuesday night, and we didn't get anything to eat until 1945 after which we tried to get some sleep on a hill so steep that it was like standing upright.

Our first problem was complete by February 22nd and we went to a rest camp. It was a rest camp in name only. We lived in pup tents pitched in a field, stood reveille and retreat, had inspections and did every thing but sleep.

The weather in Tennessee seemed to have a pattern, rain two days, clear one day, rain two more days etc. I didn't care for the weather but the country was as beautiful as any place, save our own Minnesota.

The people of Tennessee are really great - they come out and invite you in for coffee or a meal, offer you a room in their home in which to sleep or the hay loft, porch or garage - anything to get you in out of the rain. Last night it was raining hard and a farmer opened up his house to us and when that was full he offered the barn. After all of that there were some G.I.s left over so he moved his car out of the garage to make room for the rest of us.

There was a tank-destroyer outfit next to us so I had a chance to look over some of their equipment. Those guys have it nice, they ride all of the time and when they want to write a letter at night they simply go inside the tank, close the hatch and turn on the

electric light. When they fire their gun, a 105mm rifle, it makes our little 75mm sound rather puny. As the 105s were fired they left a perfect smoke ring about six feet in diameter which floated nearly one hundred yards before dissipating.

I will have to conserve film, the supply is getting short and I have not been able buy any at Mackall since September. According to Edee the 620 size can be used in a 120 size camera. The difference is in the diameter of the spool on which the film is wound. For this reason the film from the 120 will not fit in the 620.

It seems that poor Bud has been captured by the "enemy" and may be doing K.P. in their camp at this very moment. We left him behind, with three others, to pick up some wire yesterday morning and we have not seen or heard from him since. Our mail (disorderly, Cameron Gauthier, was with Bud and probably has been captured too. At the time I could not imagine how that would make any difference in the mail delivery.

Somehow the subject of fur coats came up in the letters from home. I commented that it was not cold enough for such a coat in Tennessee and that I had not seen a family wealthy enough to buy such a coat. The part of the state that we were in may not have been typical of how people lived in all of the state but it appeared to be a very low income area.

We went to a "rest camp" on February 26th with our sore feet. For once it did not rain in the morning so we got a long ride in open trucks. For the first time I saw the beauty of Tennessee and feel that it is the most beautiful state I have been in since joining the army. At that time we were only a few miles from Rome, Tennessee but, at that time I did not know where Rome was located in the state.

We only had one week more of week of maneuvers then, rumor had it, we would be going back to Mackall.

Sometime while in the service, possibly on maneuvers, I recall a truck ride on a cold night. While riding in the back of an enclosed 2 1/2 ton truck we decided that it would be more comfortable if we created a little heat by burning "Dubbing". Dubbing was a paste product that came in a can and, and when applied to boots or shoes, waterproofed them. We lit a can of the wax-like substance, placed it on the floor and huddled over the small fire - little did we realize that a black soot was produced. When we emerged from the truck the next morning we looked like part of a minstrel show with our black faces.

Bud had returned from his captivity with some interesting and humorous tales to tell. When we left him behind the "enemy" must have been right behind us because Bud and the other three had only enough time to roll about a mile of wire before they stopped at a farmhouse for a chicken dinner. By the time they had finished eating the enemy had occupied all the surrounding area as far as a town about two miles down the road. Since the four C battery men had not been detected by the enemy, the four decided to get out of the house and sleep in the barn before trying to make their way back to the rest of the battery. When they woke up the following morning they discovered that a tank battalion had parked in the farmer's yard which made their getaway all the more difficult. After a successful escape they started down the road and the fun began. They found some of the enemy's telephone lines so hooked their test phones to it. An officer of a field artillery outfit was sending firing commands back to the gun position and every time the officer tried to give the coordinates our men would rub two bare wires together and create so much static that the commands could not be understood. After tiring of this they stuck a pin through the wires to short them out. Then they moved on and, as they moved along, cut the wires at about one hundred yard intervals. After cutting wires for most of the day the four men were captured by the enemy, this is when they began to harass the field artillery captain.

About twenty-five 517th men and ten 460th men had been captured and, first thing off, the captain informed them that he knew they would try to escape, but it would do them on good. This was a challenge that could not be passed up and before long most of the men had escaped. After escaping our men spent most of the night jumping guards before making their way back to our area. Bud even brought back some prisoners.

B battery had a grand time - they got tired of walking so set out to find some transportation. It was not long before they had everything from jeeps to four ton trucks and even a 105mm gun. Things went well until they began to run out of gas and finally became desperate. They were lucky to find an Air Corps tanker and filled up from it. As they explained it, the tanker had red flags on it so they "captured" some enemy gas, that is gas from a red army truck. It made no difference that all trucks carrying gasoline or ammunition displayed red warning flags. The men claimed that the jeeps demonstrated unusual pick-up when running on aviation gas.

I'm tired of walking. Last week it was a fifty mile hike and this week we have had two twenty-five mile hikes and a thirty mile one. I have had enough!

Our final problem on maneuvers was one which was supposed to teach us how to cope with the environment of a mosquito infested area. It seemed rather silly to wear mosquito nets over our face all day long, then have a mosquito net in place on our tent while we wore overshoes and almost froze at the same time.

Three of the guys thought there was not enough action during maneuvers so they created some. They walked into the headquarters of a red army infantry regiment and "shot" a colonel, two majors and a captain, then they tried to leave the headquarters area. They got to the edge of the camp and were captured. When asked how they had penetrated the defense they answered that they had just walked in and nobody had challenged them or tried to stop them.

Wouldn't you know - leap year. What rotten luck. When they threw in an extra day this year and it had to be a year that I was in the army. As I see it that will extend my army career by an extra day.

On the first day of March we were near Hartsville but I had no idea how far from the town or in which direction. I did get the Star-Journal, published by Donaldsons, from Bets. It was a miniature of the Minneapolis Star-Journal. As I recall it was about 6 1/4 X 7 3/4 inches, and was an abbreviated edition probably put out weekly. The paper looked like the actual paper and was sort of a digest of the week's news. It did have pictures but no advertising.

We had a tent city made up of the 460th field artillery, three 517th infantry regiments and the 596th engineer company which reached as far as you could see, well almost.

If you got sick or were injured in the field it wasn't too bad, help was close by. First your medic took care of you at the first aid station where there were two medics per battery, then if necessary, you were sent to the battalion aid station and after that there was the division aid station. If more help was necessary you were sent to an embarkation point, then on to a hospital. This sounds like a long way around but it often takes less than an hour. In serious cases you may skip one or more stops and go directly to the hospital. When in a rest camp you would probably go directly to the battalion aid station and on to the hospital. Actually the system worked pretty well.

During our rest periods our kitchen was right with us but when we were in the field on a problem the mess-truck was never near on a march or in daylight hours. It does come up close under cover of darkness but leaves before daybreak. The mess-truck is a 2 1/2 ton 6X6

and pretty well equipped but it is crowded. There were six men who manned the kitchen who worked in a 8 X 12 space in the back of the truck. In those cramped quarters they prepared meals for 130 men. It was considered dangerous to have the truck with the battalion because trucks make noise, leave tracks and often create smoke while cooking. Often the men gathered around the truck which made a good target for artillery.

We filled a jeep to more than capacity on the last day of maneuvers, maybe even set some kind of unofficial record. We were on a march when the problem suddenly ended so we climbed aboard the nearest jeep. The one I boarded already had the back filled with equipment to the level of the top of the backs of the front seats but we managed to get three men in the front and four in the back. It was crowded, especially with the top up. In spite of the crowded conditions we got cold so hung some blankets up on the sides. I don't know if it really made it any warmer but we thought it did. Added to this load was a half ton trailer loaded to capacity - you can plainly see that the jeep was overloaded.

Maneuvers were a thing of the past by the middle of the first week of March so we started back to Mackall. We had to hike about two miles back to our bivouac area and to the train at Cooksville. We arrived at about 1800 and left our equipment on the baseball field of the Tennessee Technical School. Then Lt. Col. Anderson announced that half of the battery could go into town until 2000 hours, then the other half could go until 2200. Bud and I were in the first group so we went directly to the U.S.O. to get something to eat.

We returned at 2000 hours and went over to the gym where there was a girls' basketball game in progress, which we watched. This was followed by the mens' team which was playing for the county championship so we watched most of that game. One team was from York, a school in the hometown of Sgt. York, and was named after him. It was a fun night and left us with good memories of Tennessee.

We rode in military style Pullman cars back to Camp Mackall. These cars are more like boxcars with regular army bunks mounted crosswise in them. In the morning the porter woke us up at 0900 by putting candy bars and cigarettes on our pillow. We did have to get up for breakfast though. We went through Ashville, North Carolina and made good time getting back to Mackall.