



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2274

June 7, 2015

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

517th PRCT 2015 Annual Reunion



2015 National Reunion

New Orleans, LA June 25-28, 2015

[Program Info](#) [Hotel Information](#)

[Event Registration](#) [Hotel Reservation](#)

Great news, we have 51 people registered for the reunion in New Orleans, with 39 going on the bus to the World War II museum and 26 signed up for the city bus tour. If you are coming to the reunion, now is the time to register!

Lory Curtis

Greetings to my favorite troopers!

We are now at the point where there are only weeks until we gather in New Orleans, but there is still time to arrange to attend!

Your friends old and new are waiting!

Call me or Lory Curtis with any questions or concerns. If you had problems but have been able to free yourself up at the last minute, make it happen and come! It'll be a great party!

Claire Giblin

daughter **Allan Johnson**, 596
908 963 3528



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Mail Call News



I forgot to post **Steve Markle's** annotated photo of A Company at Toccoa, in which **Roger Sullivan** and **Gene Snyder** and others identified many of the troopers. It is now added on the website at:

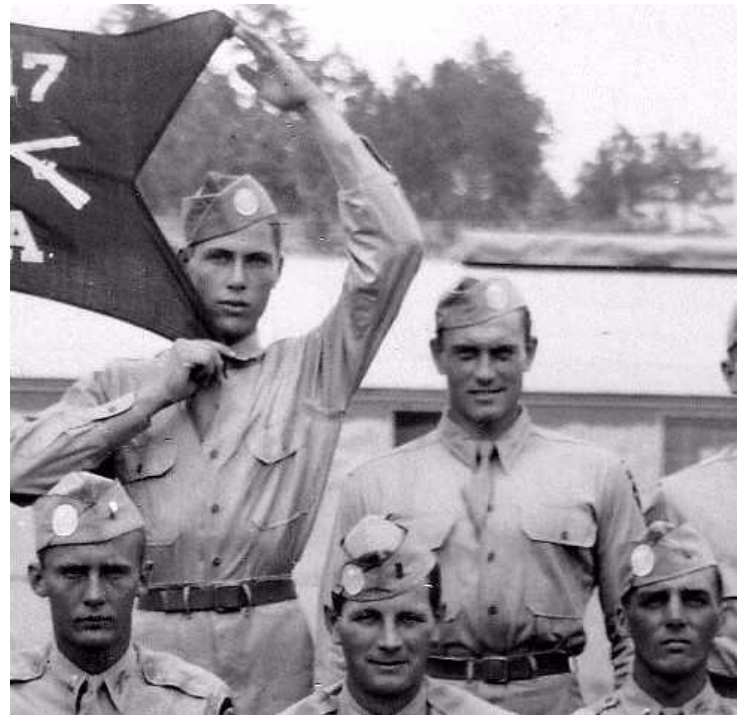
http://517prct.org/photos/a_co_toccoa/a_company_camp_toccoa_1943.htm

1 JACK W. DALLES	11 LESLIE KIRKPATRICK	21 SGT GEORGE HOPKINS	31 RALPH W. HARRADY	41 CHIEF	51 GEORGE M. FLEGER	61
2 WILLIAM PAUL BRANNAN	12 RED NALDRETT	22 LOUIS A. PEPPITO	32 ROBERT E. DAVIS	42 BUCK	52 DENARD W. VAUGHAN	62
3 JOSEPH (BOB) DIMAHURE	13 CHAS. KIEFER	23 NELSON	33 HU. WEBB	43	53 DENARD W. VAUGHAN	63
4 EDWARD (BOB) COCHRAN	14 NOLTE	24 ROBERT F. COB	34 CHESTER DODOSHIMAN	44	54 CHARLES CRITCHFIELD	64
5 HAROLD R. GAMACHE	15 MARSHALL	25 DL. BOW	35 GEORGE P. SULLIVAN	45 ROBERT (BOB) STEEL	55 FRANK GRONICH	65
6 GLEN MINNER	16	26 L. JARRETT	36 PAUL LEFKOWITZ	46 DONALD L. KNAPP	56 MARTIN	66
7 JACK PARR	17 PAT CROSS	27 EDLIE	37 HARRY R. GUMMINS	47 GUSTAFSEN	57 O'HALLORAN	67
8 BILLY E. DAILEY	18	28 RICHARD COLLISTER	38 VIRGIL F. DUNLEVY	48 ERNEST	58	68
9 JOHNNIE C. MOORE	19 ROLAND LANSING	29 ZOLTAN A. KOLLAT	39 DONALD A. EASTMAN	49 JACK BOOT	59	69
10 WILLIAM E. WILHOIT	20 JACK B. SMOTHERS	30 WILLIAM (BOB) HATTEN	40 GLEN (GUM) DORMEYER	50 ARLO E. MILDENSTEIN	60	70

PS: I did just notice that on **Mel Trenary's** annotated version, Mel identified the man to the right of the center flag-bearer as "We called him Tarzan". **Gene Snyder's** team at the 2010 reunion later identified him as "Carroll".

Zoot Snyder is the person on the left holding the flag next to him.

Mel or Gene: Is there a story to this "Tarzan"?



Seen this in the latest Mail Call (#2273). I would like a copy of the whole numbered photo if possible. My grandfather is #38 and on the right end. His name is written in.

Can you get me in touch with Steve Markle to request a printable copy?

Thanks in advance for any help.

Hope to make it to the reunion.

Chris Walters, grandson of **Virgil F. Dunlevy**



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We are back from South Africa (great trip) and looking forward to the New Orleans reunion. We are sorry we will be late arriving but I also have to be at The Florida Bar convention which is at the same time (am a past president). Wish we had a "beam me up Scotty button".

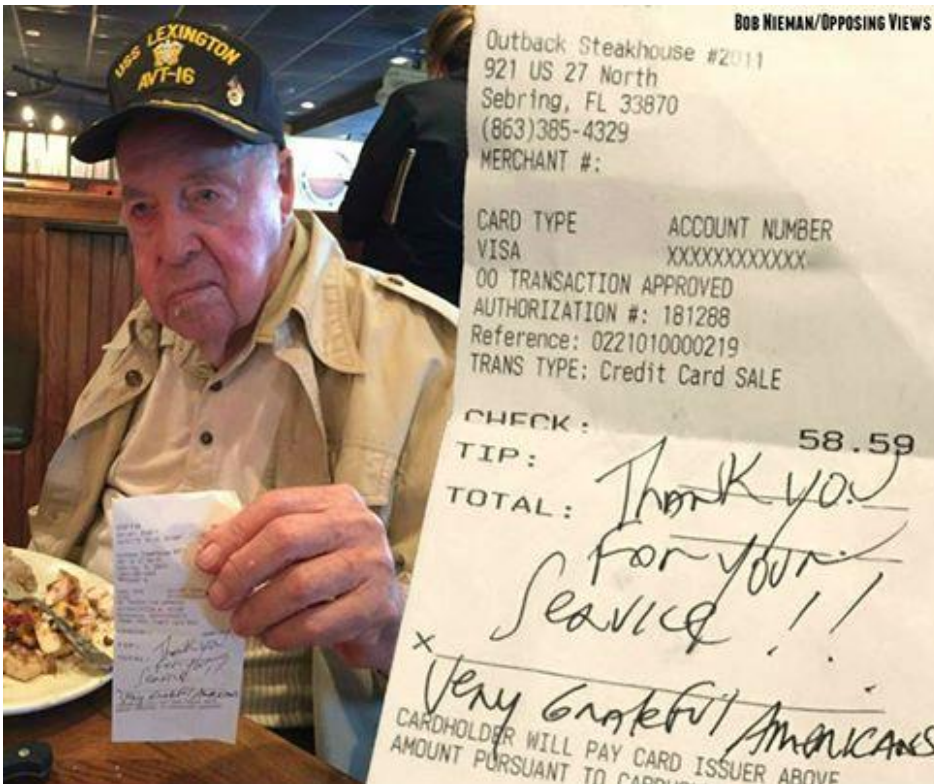
Was so sorry to read that Ann Pugh died. What a fabulous gal she was. How blessed we all were to have her touch our lives.

Congratulations to Patricia and Roland on their recognition. It is so fitting and we are so grateful for their dedication and many kindnesses.

Pat Seitz

Dear Joanne: thank you for your excellent summary of your session with Cody about the Association's options for the future. These are tough decisions and I know it seems like a lot for most people, but you have made it very comprehensible and have provided a guide for decision making. Is there a plan as to how we will discuss them especially if there are very few attendees at the reunion? Alan and I will be arriving in New Orleans Friday afternoon around 1:20.

Bob -- what a treat to see pictures of Irma in Belgium in her Spring attire! Pat



This should happen more often:

A patriotic patron at an Outback Steakhouse in Florida noticed this 92-year-old veteran and picked up his & his son's tab! SHOW YOUR LOVE!



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Back in March **Jean Loup** gave my name to a Jason Morrow as someone who knew **Phil Kennamer**. Jason writes books about sessional murders that receive national attention. He sent me a copy of Chapter 27 which related to Kennamer's military training. Today I received an email from Jason saying he sent me a copy of the book. The subtitle is "*The High Society Murder that Created Hysteria in the Heartland.*" I will bring the material with me later this month.

Merle McMorrow

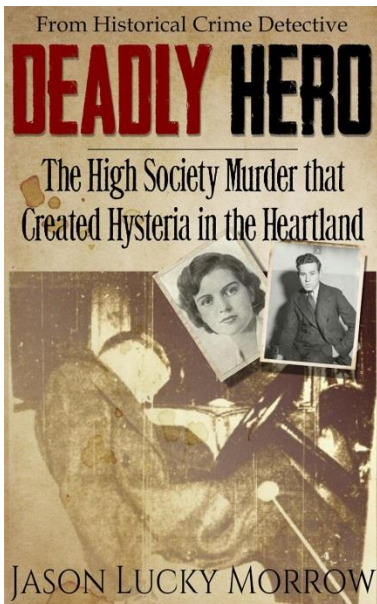
So Morrow interviewed you as a source for info about Kennamer's training? Is the whole book about Kennamer and the murder?

Also, why is this FYEO? I think this is notable to mention in the next MailCall. Can I include your note, and a few other photos and info about Kenamer?

Wow, I didn't realize there was so much out there about that story. If you just google Phil Kennamer, you get a lot of hits about the story, which is unusual considering that it all happened 50+ years before the internet existed.

I may have to borrow some photos and articles for a MailCall story. See you in a few weeks.

Bob B.



Jason Morrow's book about Kennamer is on Amazon at:

http://www.amazon.com/Deadly-Hero-Society-Hysteria-Heartland-ebook/dp/B00XLSKNI2/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1433515558&sr=1-1&keywords=The+High+Society+Murder+that+Created+Hysteria+in+the+Heartland

You probably recall I made mention of Phil's criminal charges in the two books I published about our service time. I recall his trip home to testify at another trial. He came back with a pocket full of money; more than I had ever seen in one place. His comment was you need to know the right people. Nothing more was ever said and we never did know what he meant by his comment.

Merle



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I'll have to re-read Merle's recollections of Kennamer. I first became aware of Kennamer's story in Jean-Loup Gassend's recent book.

http://www.amazon.com/Operation-Dragoon-Autopsy-Liberation-August-September/dp/076434580X/ref=la_B00J0JDI60_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1411907530&sr=1-1

Here is part of that story:

However, Philip Kennamer's destiny, like so many others, was unexpectedly changed by the war, and in 1943, he was paroled out of prison in order to join the army. One of the 1934 articles had described Kennamer as a boy who "had wrecked cars; he had jumped from windows, he had walked around the edge at the top of a tall building, he had discussed joining revolutions." Another article told of "stunts," such as "walking around the 16th floor ledge of the Mayo Hotel and leaping from one automobile to another while travelling 50 miles an hour." In other words, Kennamer was a promising paratrooper candidate, and it was as a member of the 460th PFAB that he jumped into southern France August 15th. Kennamer spent the night before the jump with his army buddy Milton Rogers, who later wrote:

My outfit was made up mostly of young guys, most of them right out of high school - or in some cases reform school. I was one of the older ones. Phil Kennamer, of the Oklahoma State Penitentiary (...), was three or four years older than I was, and partly due to our advanced years we had become pretty good buddies. We couldn't sleep as well as those young kids without nerves, so we sat up and talked till time to load in the planes. We were out of about everything to talk about, and finally got to religion. He said he didn't believe in God, didn't believe in much of anything. I said, "You mean you think that if you get shot tomorrow it's all over?" He said, "Yep, that's what I think."

After parachuting out of their aircraft, the group of men Kennamer was with got pinned down by a German machine gun near the village of Trans en Provence. Philip Kennamer and Lt Harry Moore volunteered to eliminate the opposition and rushed forward. Unfortunately, both men were gunned down by automatic fire and killed.

Here are a few photos of Phil Kennamer found at: <http://www.historicalcrimedetective.com/deadly-hero-photo-gallery/>



Phil Kennamer is escorted to the Oklahoma State Penitentiary in McAlester by Sheriff Burkdoll and wild west showman "Pawnee Bill."



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OKLAHOMA STATE PENITENTIARY

Institution — OKLAHOMA STATE PENITENTIARY

Located at — McALESTER, OKLAHOMA.



Received 3-4-35
 From Pawnee
 Crime mansl. lst. dg.
 Sentence 25 yrs. mos. days
 Date of sentence
 Sentence begins 3-4-35
 Sentence expires 3-3-60
 Good time sentence expires 12-21-46
 Date of birth Occupation salesman
 Birthplace Okla. Nationality amer.
 Age 19 Com. med.
 Height 5-11 Eyes bro.
 Weight 161 Hair bro
 Build med.

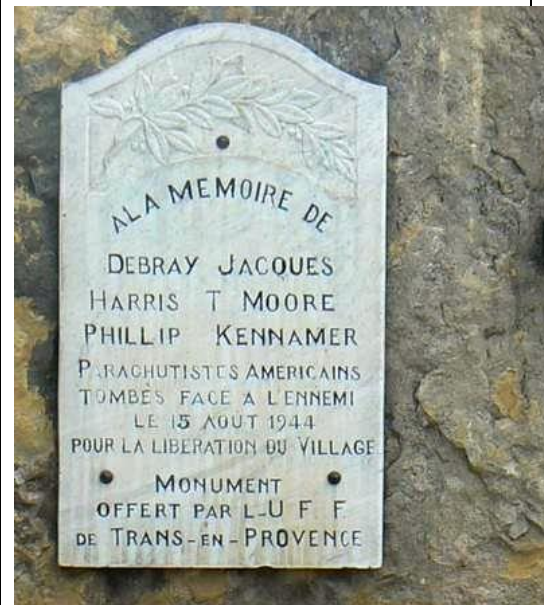
A prison mug shot of a disheveled looking Phil Kennamer. Note that his sentence, with good time, expires on 12-21-1946—less than half of his 25 year sentence.



Private First Class Phil Kennamer during a trip home for a legal hearing regarding another case.



Phil Kennamer, the dashing paratrooper.



The war memorial for Jacques Debray, Second-Lieutenant Harris Moore, and PFC Philip Kennamer. It is located between Trans en Provence, and Draguignan, France,





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Here is some of the conversation between **Jason Morrow**, the author of the book about **Phil Kennamer**, and **Merle McMorrow**. It's a little long, but I found it interesting. You troopers might know all this info, but I learned a few things about the training and the C-47 trips. I hope I got all tis in the right order. -- BB

From: Jason Morrow
Sent: March 02, 2015 2:02 PM
Subject: Phil Kennamer

Hello Mr. McMorrow,

My name is Jason Morrow and Jean gave me your name as someone who knew Phil Kennamer. I am writing a book about a 1934 murder in Tulsa in which Phil Kennamer was sentenced to 25 years in prison for manslaughter. He was later paroled in April 1943 on condition he join the army.

The final chapter of my book is short, but focuses on his time in the military, and his death on the morning of August 15, 1944, during Operation Dragoon.

I am already aware of many of the facts of that day, but I would like to interview you, either by email or telephone, to learn a little more about Phil Kennamer, and possibly how he died.

Again, I am not writing a book about military history, and the information I am seeking is very specific.

Please tell me if you would like to proceed, and if you prefer that I telephone you, or to send you my questions by email.

Thank you in advance.

Sincerely,

Jason Morrow

Sent: March 06, 2015 10:41 AM
Subject: One more question

Hi Merle,

I have another question if you don't mind. What was the exact sequence for the red and green lights for paratroopers on the C47.

Was it solid red, then red flashing, then green? Or something else, and either way, what did each one of them mean and what was the amount of time between each light?

Thank you again,

Jason



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Jason:

Pathfinders went in 30 minutes ahead of the main force to set up radio signals and beams to zero in on.

With a couple of large bundles in front of the door to be pushed out by the first man and 16 men with all their equipment on, the plane always seemed to be full. The red light would come on when we were three minutes from the drop zone. This was determined by the pilot. That is when we stood up, hooked our static line to the

overhead cable running the length of the plane and checked the man's chute ahead of and then sounded off for equipment check. Sixteen okay fifteen okay etc.. Three minutes after the red light came on the light would turn green and the command go would be given by the number one man in the open doorway.

As to Nature's Call this was never a problem. If it was no one ever mentioned it. I think in the excitement all systems shut down.

Merle

Hi Merle,

Thank you for your reply. What about the noise in the plane? Was it loud? And did it get cold because the side door was removed?

Also, what was your rank at the time? PFC?

I was watching some youtube videos of paratroopers and I was amazed by how fast they got out of the plane. They actually seemed to be running out of the plane, almost.

Is that how it was? You guys could get the equipment and men out in about what, 15-20 seconds?

Thank you again,

Jason

Jason:

The noise was great enough to prevent you from talking to one another. If you had something to say you got next to the fellow and shouted in his ear.

Most men tried to sleep on the way over. It was August and hot on the ground. At 2,000 feet it was refreshing. Exit height was 800-1,000 feet to try to get on the ground as soon as possible.

PFC is correct.

When exiting the plane each man is pushing on the man ahead of him so we were probably running.



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Here again, are some more questions I have. = I am trying to build the scene before he jumped out of the plane. I am using bits and pieces from my time in the army to make it real, as well as what you told me.

Did you have a special name for the door that you jumped out of?

Were you allowed to smoke cigarettes while you were in the plane? I saw a youtube video where that was what men did.

You wrote that C battery jumped at 0430, however, in the after action report, it says everyone jumped around 0450 or 0453. Do you know for sure?

It was my understanding that Phil went through basic training at Camp Toccoa, then Ft. Benning for jump school, and then he/you/C-Battery, were stationed at Camp

Mackall before you left for Italy. However, You wrote that you were with him during basic training and that was at Camp Mackall, so now I am confused.

*What was your nickname for the c47? Did you call it a **gooney bird**?*

I would like you to read the final chapter of my book to make sure I am as accurate as can be. I hope you don't mind. I can send it to you as a pdf file.

Thank you,

Jason

Everyone coming into the paratroops came through Camp Toccoa for a week getting clothing and being assigned to a Unit. The infantry stayed at Toccoa for basic training and the artillery and engineers were shipped to Camp Mackall at the end of the week. Except for jump school when we were at Fort Benning from August 12-19, 1943, the rest of the time(April 1943-May 1944) we spent at Camp Mackall. We were in Tennessee for maneuvers in February 1944 for a few weeks but because of the heavy

losses at Anzio, Italy we were called back to Mackall for shipment to Italy as replacements. We got to Mackall in March, prepared the artillery pieces for shipment, got shots, were given some furloughs and left for Camp Patrick Henry near Newport news, Va. We shipped out on May 17, 1944.

You could smoke in the plane and nearly every one did.

The scheduled invasion time was 4:30 but from the front end of those 4 serial to the end was nearly 100 miles so you can see not every one of the 180 planes could

arrive at 4:30.

Merle



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Thank you for this. I think I am almost done with my questions.

What time should I write in my book that Kennamer jumped out? What would be a safe guess?

Also, was Lt. Harry Moore his platoon commander?

Capitan Louis Vogel, head of C Battery had assembled 3/4 of his Battery and two guns and was ready to fire at 0900. This At this point in the unit's History it is

mentioned that two Artillery men were killed trying to rush an enemy position. This took place 300 yards outside Trans, France. I assume this was Moore & Kennamer.

I would guess between 4:30 and 5:00 was Kennamer's exit.. Col.Cato had 4 guns ready for firing by 8:00 so the artillery men were in some of the first to land.

Phil was on a gun crew and S/Sgt headed those. I don't remember what Lt. Moore was in charge of.

Merle

I already have the after action report, and the unit history, but thank you. According to Milton Rogers, Kennamer was in a machine gun crew with Lark Washburn.

I think I have enough information. Would you mind reviewing my chapter for accuracy?

Thank you so much for all your help.

Sincerely,

Jason

I have a picture of Washburn's 50 Cal Machine gun crew. Cook, Anderson, Yankalov, and Lofstead but no Kennamer. It more than likely was taken after Phil's death.

I will review your final chapter,

Hi Merle,

Thank you again for all your help and information, and for agreeing to read the final chapter of my book.

Is it okay for you if I send the final chapter as a PDF file?

Thank you again,
Jason



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I am 92 years old. I don't know what a PDF file is

Hi Merle,

I have uploaded that chapter to a temporary web page which you can read by clicking on this link here:
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

I have made the font size extra large for easy reading.

I just need you to tell me if what I wrote is accurate, and if not, where is it not accurate and how.

Any suggestions for improving the accuracy are also appreciated.

Thank you for reading this.

Jason

Jason

Well written. Early in the chapter you describe all the training but no mention is made of the 75 howitzer artillery training which was the primary reason for the Battalion.

It was nice to see the names of the Utah fellows. We had quite a group from there. Are they still alive. I heard Washburn hit it rich in uranium after the war.

I have had two books about my army life published.

Hi Merle,

Thank you for pointing out the 75 howitzer training. I wasn't sure if everyone did that.

I am not sure but I don't believe those other gentlemen are still with us.

I saw your two books on Amazon. They look very interesting. This book about Phil Kennamer is my third book on historical true crime.

I will add in the 75 info, and add your name to the Special Acknowledgements section. I will also mail you a book when it comes out, if you would like to read it.

Sincerely,
Jason

PS My grandfather's name was Murl Morrow.



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Could you send me a good quality version of that map with photos that **Mr Bajczyk** sent you. He says the original is three feet, so I suspect the photos must be pretty clear. On the mal call version, the photos are very blurry. There are several unknown ones, and I would like to try to figure out where they were taken.

Thanks

Jean-Loup G.

Hello Jean-Loup,

Here is the original message from **Mary Fennig**, with the full-size scan. Pictures were still not scanned in very well, but you can zoom in on this version. You can see that it is from some book – I think I've seen this before but I don't remember the source book.

I bet the photos are just copies of photos that were already in other books, probably the *Paratroopers' Odyssey*. One of these days I will scan in all those pages – I never completed the full scan of the *Odyssey* -- as well as the photos from the 13th Airborne book. I've been told that when people donated photos to those books, especially the 13th Airborne, that the photos were never returned to them, so these books may be the best source we have. If there are any photos you want, let me know and I will look at those 2 sources and I can scan in somewhat better images.

Bob B.

Thanks for the large quality scan. The photo of la Roquette is the first photo of that town I have ever seen from a 517th source. It is not very interesting however as it shows the town in postcard style, with no troopers.

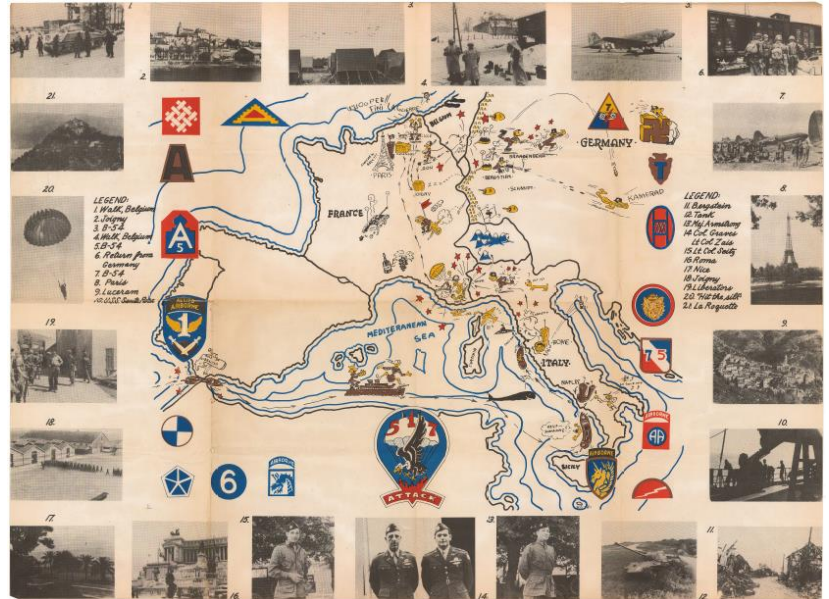
I am looking for obscure photos of southern France such as the number 19 in this series, in the hopes of finding yet unknown photos of St Cezaire, la Roquette, etc. There are several such potential photos in the 517th booklet, but they are so small that nothing can be identified properly. Photo 19 here is clearly taken in August in some small town, and finding out which one would make the photo much more interesting.

One such revelation was photo on page 108 of my book. Finding out was taken at the Callian crossroads puts it into context, and a blurred uninteresting photo because one piece of a large puzzle.

Shelly Azeff has now provided us with a good quality version of that photo.

I did not know there were any photos in *paratrooper odyssey* or in the 13th airborne book. If you could make quick scans, or even just photos of pages that include photos of southern France, I would be very interested, as there may be a few pearls mixed in.

Jean-Loup





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The Fallen of WWII

From **Nila Gott**:

Here is an incredible video which analyzes the number of military and civilian deaths in WWII and compares them to other wars. This is the best graphic presentation I have seen about civilian and military deaths in WWII. Russia and Poland suffered staggering losses. The last decade's War on Terror came at a terrible price for lots of American families, but it's eye opening to see there are multiple individual days in WWII when we lost more troops than we have in the last 10 years of conflict.

The Fallen of WWII: <https://vimeo.com/128373915>

An animated data-driven documentary about war and peace, The Fallen of World War II looks at the human cost of the second World War and sizes up the numbers to other wars in history, including trends in recent conflicts.

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, 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 Miriam Boyle Kelly
19 Oriole Court
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

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MailCall Archives	www.517prct.org/archives
2015 Roster (updated!)	www.517prct.org/roster.pdf
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