



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



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2320  
April 17, 2016

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

## MailCall News

Rechercher

Operation Dagoon and the Champagne Campaign

Accueil Opération Dagoon ~ Champagne Campaign ~ Blog L'auteur ~

En savoir plus

The website "Operation Dagoon and the Champagne Campaign", formerly First Airborne Task Force; the Forgotten Paratroopers' today makeover! Discover its new design and new pages speaking of the 7th Army and the VI US Army Corps and the 1st Airborne Task Force during the liberation of southern France, from the Cavalaire beaches to le Dramont until the liberation of Grenoble and the entry of US troops in eastern France. The site will be offered with new scalable functionality, and of course, new pages that will be updated.

The webmaster is looking for contact with veterans, friends, families or veteran's neighbors who fought in Southern France or in Sicily or Italy.

Le site internet "Operation Dagoon and the Champagne Campaign", anciennement 'First Airborne Task Force ; the Forgotten Paratroopers' fait aujourd'hui peau neuve ! Découvrez son nouveau design et ses nouvelles pages parlant de la 7th Army et du VI Corps ainsi que de la 1st Airborne Task Force lors de la libération du sud de la France, des plages de Cavalaire au Dramont et ce jusqu'à la libération de Grenoble et de l'entrée des troupes américaines dans l'est de la France. Le site est proposé avec de nouvelles fonctionnalités évolutives et bien évidemment de nouvelles pages qui seront mises en ligne au fur et à mesure.

Le webmaster est à la recherche de tout contact avec des vétérans, des amis, des familles ou des voisins de vétéran ayant combattu dans le sud de la France ou bien en Sicile et en Italie.

<http://1stabtf.com/>



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Some of you may remember Dick Field of the 551<sup>st</sup> and his daughter, Ginni, who joined out troopers for many of the ceremonies in Southern France and Belgium in 2013 and 2014..

So many are asking so I wanted to give our friends an update on my Dad, [Richard Field](#). Sadly, Dad's kidney disease has accelerated and he is in tough shape. He is resting at home with 24 hour care. Always the GOYA, he is hanging on despite dismal numbers that frankly, would take a "normal" guy. He cannot have visitors, or talk on the telephone, but I am telling him when our friends or family are asking for him. I know how many love him and I think many believed he would never pass...that he is "superman." That part makes my heart full and I am grateful. Please keep Dad and our family in prayer at this difficult time. We are very grateful for the love he's been shown over the years. I will let you all know when the time has come.



# Amazing Parachute Facts & Stories

### When was the First Parachute and was it ever Jumped!



DaVinci sketched the design for the first parachute in 1485. On June 26, 2000--over 500 years later, Adrian Nicholas jumped an exact replica of it...and it worked! The chute was built under the watchful eye of Dr. Martin Kemp, a Oxford University DaVinci expert. It was made of wood, canvas and rope. Its weight was 187 pounds. it was jumped from a balloon at 10,000 feet. Nicholas rode it to 7,000 feet when he cut away from it and used a traditional parachute for landing. (SkyXtreme magazine of the skydive world, vol #10, July 2000)





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## Who was the First American Leader to recognize the value of Airborne Warfare!

Benjamin Franklin, America's versatile commissioner in Paris, was so enthused by the success of hot air balloons in 1784 that he posed this interesting military question. "Where is the prince who can afford to cover his country with troops for its defense as that ten thousand men descend from the clouds might not in many places do an infinite deal of mischief?". He was to describe what Airborne is all about....back in 1784 (*Airborne Warfare 1918-1945*)

## Who proposed the First American combat jump?



The plan to drop the U.S. 1st Infantry Division from a Handley-Page Bomber on the German controlled city of Metz was devised by a young officer on General Billy Mitchell's staff named Lewis H. Brereton . He presented the plan to General Billy Mitchell who supported it and took it to General "Black Jack" Pershing. The time was October 1918 and the armistice was less then 3 weeks away. General Pershing shelved the idea. (*Airborne Warfare 1918-1945 Barry Gregory/John Batchelor*)



The 1st Infantry was to be the first to use Airborne!

## What were the Special "Phantom" Airborne Divisions of W.W.II?

These are official U.S. Army Airborne Divisions that existed on paper. They had personnel wear these patches around and in towns. The object was to convince the spies in England that the American had had more Airborne Divisions than they really had. It worked.

6th Airborne	9th Airborne	18th Airborne	21st Airborne	135th Airborne





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## What is the Highest Parachute Jump?

From the very edge of space itself, almost **102,800 feet above the earth**. This drop included a free fall lasting more than an incredible 4 1/2 minutes, during which Captain Kittinger reached a **falling speed of 714 miles per hour** before his parachute finally opened at 18,000 feet. (*Life Mag, Aug 1960*) & [www.wpafb.af.mil/museum/eagles/kittinger.htm](http://www.wpafb.af.mil/museum/eagles/kittinger.htm)



## What is the Lowest Parachute use?

**Submerged 10-20 feet** - A British navy flyer, LT. Bruce Mackfarlane had an engine failure on takeoff, leading to an immediate ditching off the carrier HMS Albion. Surprisingly, he survived the water impact and was coherent enough to clearly recall seeing the water close over the canopy, and begin to darken as the aircraft began to descend into the depths. His training instincts took over and he yanked the canopy jettison handle with his left hand, and immediately fired the seat with his right. At this point, his memory becomes understandably blurred, but he recalls tumbling free of the seat, still underwater. He had the presence of mind to release his chute and activate his life vest. (He surfaced aft of the carrier, almost directly under the 'Angel' rescue helo, which had moved into a hover over the disturbance in the water from his aircraft splash. The helo crew reported seeing his aircraft pass in two pieces along either side of the hull of the carrier. This indicates that if the pilot had delayed his attempt to escape a few seconds later, he would likely have been killed when the bow of the ship sliced his bird in half. *LT Mackfarlane is not the only aviator to have such an experience.*

## What is the Lowest Combat Jump?



*W.W.II., Noemfoor was an insignificant little Island off the Northwest Coast of New Guinea. It had two operational airfields and another well-along in construction. The Japanese had scraped these fields out of almost solid coral. 1/503 was to jump on Kamiri airfield. On 3 July 1944, C-47 in twin columns dropped the 1/503 at 400 feet AGL. However due to an altimeter error two aircraft dropped troops at **175 feet** (AGL). Dak To by Edward F. Murphy page 327*



## What is the Lowest Planned Combat Jump?

*The lowest recorded combat jump is the German paratroopers (Fallschirmjager) when they jump into Crete (WWII). The Fallschirmjager jumped from **250 feet**. If any one knows of a lower combat jump (Bailing out doesn't count), let me know.*





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## Lowest Mass Tactical Jump



1st Battalion (ABN), 509th Infantry executed the lowest altitude mass parachute jump in history exiting the aircraft a **143 feet** in England during June 1942 rehearsals. I wonder who thought this idea up and better yet how did they measured it! <http://www.jrtc-polk.army.mil/OPFOR/History.htm>

## Longest Combat Airborne Operation

1-509th spearheaded the Allied invasion of North Africa. The longest Airborne operation occurred 8 November 1942. After a C-47 **flight of over 1600 miles** from England, the battalion seized Tafarquay Airport in Oran.



## What is the most jumps made by one person in a single (24 hour) day ?

Michael Zang broke the world record on 20 May 2001 at 1705 hours (5.:05pm) by completing **500 jumps in 24 hours**. That is 21 jumps per hour or one jump every 2:45 minutes from 2100 feet. Mike did this event to get money for children in his program called JUMP4KIDS.

*All proceeds from the event go directly to programs for children. Zang hopes to raise \$100,000 to fund programs to send children to summer camps and build playgrounds. Corporate Sponsorships currently available range from \$500 - \$40,000. Individual sponsorships are also gratefully accepted. All donations are 100% tax deductible. For further sponsorship information please call Michael Zang @ 972-420-0011, write him at: 1281 Michael Ave., Lewisville, TX 75077. <http://www.jump4kids.org>*

## Who was the Oldest Jumper ?

CLEVELAND (AP) -- A **92-year-old man with artificial knees** made it into the record books by becoming the oldest person ever to **jump out of an airplane without holding on to anyone else**. "What a thrill!" Herb Tanner said seconds after he touched down Friday. "That was beautiful. Just gorgeous. I'd love to do that again, but not today." Tanner, of the Cleveland suburb of Mayfield Heights, looked to the Guinness Book of World Records to see what kind of mark he could make in parachuting. Jumping while attached to another parachutist was out. A 99-year-old woman already had done it, and the record for males was held by a 95-year-old Englishman. But Tanner could still break a record if he jumped solo. The record had been held by the late Edwin C. Townsend, who was 89 when he jumped in Louisiana in 1986. After receiving basic jump instruction and making 10 computer jumps using a virtual reality simulator, Tanner was ready. The 105-pound Tanner -- fake knees, hearing aid and all -- climbed into a jump suit and leaped from a plane at 3,500 feet. A lifelong pilot, Tanner has flown for 63 years but never parachuted. "I always wanted to parachute, but my wife wouldn't let me," he said. "She said she would leave me if I jumped. She died two years ago." *Note: the oldest Tandem Jumper was 100 years old, October 1999(Skydiving magazine)*

## Woman, 90, skydives to prove age is just a number (Feb., 2, 2002)

WILSON -- Marni Evans literally "dropped in" for her 90th birthday party Saturday afternoon, jumping from an airplane cruising over her farm at 12,000 feet. She said she wanted to show her friends that age is just a state of mind, even when you're nearing the century mark. <http://www.dropzone.com/news/woman90skydivestoproveag.shtml>



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## Four-Year-Old Skydives!

In a leap into the record books, four-year-old Toni Stadler became the youngest person to skydive! The tandem parachute jump took place at the Cape Parachute Club, 25 miles north of Cape Town, South Africa, on Oct. 27, just five days before Toni's fifth birthday. The youngster was strapped to jumpmaster Paul Lutge's chest as they leaped out of their single-engine plane 10,000 feet above the earth, freefalling for half a minute before opening the parachute.

Toni's mom said, "We have been skydiving for four years and recently Toni started asking if he could jump too,". "We did not make him do it. He made us let him."

[http://www.skyxtreme.com/archive/dec\\_jan2000/news.html#record](http://www.skyxtreme.com/archive/dec_jan2000/news.html#record)

## What is the Highest Jump WITHOUT a Parachute?

1. "Lieutenant I. M. Chisov of the former Soviet Union was flying his Ilyushin 4 on a bitter cold day in January 1942, when it was attacked by 12 German Messerschmitts. Convinced that he had no chance of surviving if he staged with his badly battered plane, Chisov bailed out at 21,980 feet. With the fighters still buzzing around, Chisov cleverly decided to fall freely out of the arena. It was his plan not to open his chute until he was down to only 1000 ft above the ground. Unfortunately, he lost consciousness en route. As luck would have it, he crashed at the edge of a steep ravine covered with 3 ft of snow. Hitting at about 120 mi/h, he plowed along its slope until he came to rest at the bottom. Chisov awoke 20 min later, bruised and sore, but miraculously he had suffered only a concussion of the spine and a fractured pelvis. Three and one-half months later he was back at work as a flight instructor." Hecht, Eugene. Physics: Calculus. 2nd ed. United States: Brooks/Cole, 2000. p 85
2. Flight Sergeant Nicholas Steven Alkemade was on a bombing mission over Germany on 23 March 1944 when his Lancaster bomber flying at 18,000 feet was blazed apart and in flames when he was forced to jump, **without a parachute** or be burn to death. He dove out of his destroyed aircraft hoping on a quick death. His speed accelerated to over 120 miles per hour and he impacted on a snow covered sloping forest. He was completely uninjured and later captured by the Germans who refused to believe his story. ([www.urbanlegends.com/death](http://www.urbanlegends.com/death))
3. *The longest survivable fall, 26 January 1972, was Vesna Vulovic a stewardess in a DC-9 which blew up at 33,330 feet. She was in the tail section of the aircraft and though injured survived the fall.*

## Balloons, a Parachute, a BB gun and Vietnam Vet

On July 2nd, 1982, Larry tied 42 helium-filled balloons to a Sears lawn chair in San Pedro, California. With the help of his ground crew, he then secured himself into the lawn chair which was anchored to the bumper of a friend's car by two nylon tethers. He took with him a parachute and a BB gun to shoot out the balloons when he was ready to descend. His crew cut the tether, and he shot up into the LA sky at over 1,000 feet per minute. So fast was his ascent that he lost his glasses. He then climbed to over 16,000 feet. For several hours he drifted in the cold air near the LA and Long Beach airports. A TWA pilot first spotted Larry and radioed the tower that he was passing a guy in a lawn chair at 16,000! Larry started shooting out a few balloons to start his descent but had accidentally dropped it. He eventually landed in a Long Beach neighborhood, he was uninjured. He was a Vietnam Vet. I wonder what unit he served with?





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## 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](mailto:MailCall@517prct.org)
- If you send me email that you do not want included in MailCall, just label it as FYEO.
- I now understand how Ben could get confused about what he already posted and what he didn't. If I miss something, please just send it again.
- Donations for any programs involving the 517th should be sent to our 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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