



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2375

December 31, 2017

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

MailCall News

Dear friends and family of the 517th,

I wish you a MERRY CHRISTMAS and A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

God bless all of you during this new year and that bring you much happiness and full joy.

Just some news from Manhay, who on December 16th, we organise a big meeting with reenactment, including 200 people who present for a show of the battle of Manhay and Grandmenil. We were also 200 WWII vehicles and we drove across the forest and campaigns from Manhay. It was an incredible week-end of the memory.

In a few months, we will open a new museum near Manhay (In front of the Panther tank of Grandmenil). I work with the museum and we will have a special place for the memory of the 517th! As soon the museum will be open, probably to May 2018, I will sending you some photos. It will probably one of the best museum in the Ardennes area.

Best Wishes from your friend of Manhay,

Eddy Monfort

HAPPY NEW YEAR 517TH !

All the best in the New Year.

Paul Abbene



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Bob:

I hope you and your family as well, as the 517th Family, had a very merry Christmas. I think I enjoy the Christmases of today more than I would have if I hadn't experienced the Christmas of 1944..

I, along with a New York kid from a rich family living on the Lower End of 5th Ave., were in a foxhole on the outer perimeter of the gun sites. Up until that time, none of us in the Battery had any idea he had come from a family of wealth. We were lonely and sad. We could hear the Germans singing Christmas Carols and we knew the people at home were going to bed in warm homes and between white sheets. I guess we were feeling sorry for ourselves. He started to open up. He told me about how the chauffeur would take him and his brother to within one block of the school entrance and then they insisted that they walk the last block so the other kids would not see them being brought to school. The family along with a doctor and nurse spent a year on a round-the-world yacht trip in their early years. He dated Brenda Fraser, Debutante of the Year for 1939.

Before our two hour shift was over I knew all about his life but I had to promise to say nothing to the others I knew his life had not been a happy one.

At the end of the war he met some German girl. He was going home to get a diamond, come back and marry her. He got home, finished his three years at Yale. He went back to Germany in 1948 but she was tired of waiting and had married an American Army. He came home and spent the next two years drinking and trying to forget the woman in Germany. He came to visit me for pheasant hunting and eventually married someone that worked at Tiffany's.

As the years passed, he ended up with four children. During this time the Army Major had finished his tour of duty and he and the German bride moved to California. When the old girlfriend went back home to visit her mother, she would call from Grand Central Station. I asked during one of my visits if he actually went to see her during one of her trips through New York.

My wartime buddy's wife said, "There I am about to deliver our third child and he is rushing off to see an old girlfriend". I never did find out if he actually went,

Over the years he wanted me to fish and big hunting in Alaska, Africa, South America and Russia. I kept telling him I can't afford that but he said he would pay for it. I couldn't do that.

In 2002 while Mardy and I were In France I received a call from his wife informing me he had died and would I do the eulogy. I told her I could not make it. I wrote up a "Farewell to an Old Friend" and had one of his sons read it at the funeral

Every Christmas Eve I relive that two hour period where a kid having everything, and anything he wanted was telling a Depression kid who had nothing that he would gladly trade places for the love I seemed to have that he didn't.

Merle McMorrow



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Trooper **Thomas D. Hill**, Co. D, 3rd Platoon

By a strange, eerie and statistically improbable series of coincidences, I ran into **Thomas D. Hill**, Co. D, in my town of Bemidji, MN. While my own father, **Joseph B. Egelhof**, was in Co. D, he was in the 2nd Platoon while Tom was in the 3rd. Tom was a light machine gunner who went through jump training in Toccoa, GA in time to make the Operation Dragoon jump. He was wounded a few days after that jump and the rest of his crew killed, but recovered and returned the Regiment while it was stationed in Sospel. Tom went to the Battle of the Bulge, as my father did (my dad was a replacement who graduated from jump school in Rome, Italy in September of 1944). By Early January, 1945 Tom had been evacuated with severely frozen feet, and spent the rest of the war and then some in the hospital. His feet were originally slated for amputation but he prevailed on the docs to try therapy, which worked well enough to save the feet.

Tom, unfortunately, does not recall my dad, but said the 2nd and 3rd Platoons lived next to each other and that a photo of my dad looks familiar. Both are listed on the Christmas roster, Tom as a PFC and my dad as a Private. Tom came out of the army as a Staff Sergeant with two Purple Hearts and the Bronze Star for his action in Operation Dragoon. I think he's been to some reunions in the past. I've visited Tom at his retirement home; he's of sound mind and body (except for his feet), still drives at 94, and is intensely proud (appropriately so) of his service with the 517th. I'll try to stay in touch with him.

John Egelhof

Hi John,

I did find one wartime picture of **Thomas Hill** with D Company photos from Mike Kane. -- BB



Tom Hill from http://517prct.org/photos/d_company_files/kane_company_d.htm



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I have been quite active with my WWII videos lately, and have put online a new video of the story of **Howard Hensleigh** returning the photos to the family of Georg Rieck, a soldier he had killed in southern France. I have the news report they had made of Howard, and then a sequence I had filmed myself of him telling the story when I had visited him in 2009:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X3u4ZllgsiM&index=2&list=PLQIZwIXLWC7N-VkqtfDxW7CjElupIKBLB>

Regards

Jean-Loup Gassend



Veteran returns wedding photos to family of German soldier he killed after 70 years

RE: recherche operation dragon 1944

Sir

je lis dans le livre de jean loup gassend sur operation dragon le parachutage le 15/08/1944 à montauroux sud de la france du capitain medecin plassman walter du 517th PIR Si cette personne est toujours vivante merci de me donner son adresse

Mon nom est PLASMAN jacques BELGIUM Merci

I read in the book of **Jean Loup Gassend** on Operation Dragon parachute 15/08/1944 in Montauroux South of France Captain Medecine **Plassman Walter** 517th PIR. If this person is still alive thank you for giving me his address

My name is PLASMAN jacques BELGIUM Thank you

Jacques Plasman <plasman.jacques@gmail.com>



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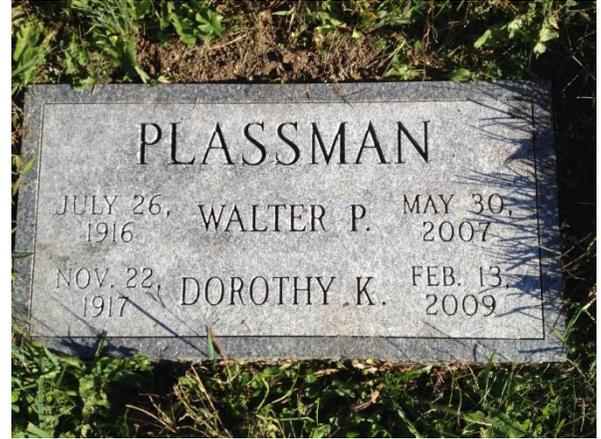
Unfortunately, Dr. Walter Plassman died in May 2007. -- BB

From: <http://517prct.org/mailcall/1327a.htm>

I regret to inform you that Dr. Plassman passed away on May 30, 2007 at age 90. Attending the 517 reunions was very important to him. He suffered from congestive heart failure, but was still active until 3 weeks before his death.

Respectfully,

Michael Plassman #2 son



MailCall # 1328, June 2007

Please transmit to **Walter Plassman** son and his family our sincere condolences. We met Doc Plassman in Georgia reunion 1999, and spend a long time together talking about his action and task in the 3rd battalion, and the incredible story of his jump experience when he landed at 30 miles north of DZ Le Muy near the little village of Montauroux, where he stayed few days, organizing a field hospital where he treated 517th paratroopers, french resistance, but also german soldiers. We still in contact with a laddy, nurse at this time who worked with him in those days of august 44. If son Michael or family plan one day to come back in France and visit the DZ and area where Doc was, that will be a great pleasure to organize the welcome hospitality.

Including is photos of Doc in Columbus, and one of him in 1944 at Nice.

Warmest regards

J. Mickael & Eric, Le MUY airborne Museum France



Michael Dr. Plassman Eric



Dr. Plassman Michael



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From 2007 [MailCall # 1330](#)

Ben, Here is a message for Michael Plassman, #2 son of **Walter Plassman**, his other family members, his Centralia Ill. friends, and all who appreciate the medics who were with us all the way. This 3rd Bn. story could be repeated as a salute to the medics in other units of the Combat Team.

Our tribute to the medics cannot be overstated. This includes a broad range of men who would be at our side with sulfa, plasma, sterile bandages and expertise when we were hit. With the frequent call of "Medic" they would be there. It includes the litter bearers (usually the cooks whose field ranges were far in the rear) to get us to the aid station and the battalion surgeons to patch us up and send us back to combat after a few days or hours or send us to the field hospitals from which we usually went awol to get back to the outfit. It was confidence in these men that made it possible to move forward to take fiercely defended objectives. If we were hit in the attack, they would be there to take care of us.

In the 3rd Bn. **Capt. Plassman** was leader of these men. He trained them well and led by example. No matter how chaotic the situation, he always projected a serene atmosphere of orderly control.

The scene of the small clinic in Montaroux will always remain indelibly in my mind when Frank Long and I broke through to evacuate our jump casualties. Capt. Plassman along with many others was injured on the jump into Southern France. Although the pilots gave us the green light with the proper altimeter reading, we were jumped over the foothills of the maritime alps, not the valley of our drop zone. Most of the planes did not throttle back to 95 miles per hour so our magnified opening shock was followed almost immediately by a crash landing, which left Walter Plassman with a left knee injury barely able to hobble. But hobble he did collecting the jump casualties and setting up an aid station in Montaroux. When Frank and I entered it we saw a thoroughly organized clinic with Dr. Plassman in a white uniform in full charge. Our first words were over the roar of German trucks just leaving town in the face of the 141th Infantry advance. How he saved our jump casualties from serving out the rest of the war as POWs is one of his many accomplishments.

Bn. Surgeon Plassman was the strong leader of a band of good men, including his assistant Bn. surgeon **Dan Dickinson**, **Sgt. John Chism** and the many corpsmen who lived and trained with the troops they would serve in combat. I know of no failure of a medic to respond when called for. On occasion their bravery went beyond patching up and evacuating the wounded. I Company's Terril [**Wilbur Terrell**] for example saved many of our necks the afternoon **Capt. McGeever** was killed attempted to link I Co. up with G & H on Ridge X near Col de Braus. We were all pinned down by a company of Germans in fortified positions with good fields of fire when Terril came forward into withering fire waving a big Red Cross banner on a long pole triggering a cease fire. This was the type of action that was inspired by our Battalion Surgeon. You Plassman kids have a right to be proud of your father. We are happy he was with you until age 90, but are in sorrow with you for your loss and ours.

Howard Hensleigh



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Currently listed on eBay at: <https://www.ebay.com/itm/b8861-US-Army-517th-Parachute-infantry-Regiment-Bullion-Occupied-Japan-PIR-R3D/351825286813?hash=item51ea6bd69d:g:RasAAOSwFV9Xxxq>

It is listed as: b8861 US Army 517th Parachute infantry Regiment Bullion Occupied Japan PIR R3D

I'm not sure what to make of this patch, as the 517th PRCT or PIR was never sent in to occupy Japan. Am I missing something? Maybe the 517 Signal Corps? I don't see that the 517 Signal Corp was ever in Japan either. – BB

The American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) now has a search capability on their site for names (e.g. "Stott") or units (e.g "517th Parachute").

And for any soldier listed on their site you can print a memorial certificate for that trooper. Here is a sample:

IN MEMORY OF
★★★★★
FLOYD A. STOTT

RANK
FIRST LIEUTENANT, U.S. ARMY

UNIT
517TH PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENT

DATE OF DEATH
DECEMBER 27, 1944

COMMEMORATED IN PERPETUITY AT
HENRI-CHAPELLE AMERICAN CEMETERY
HOMBOURG, BELGIUM



"Time will not dim the glory of their deeds."
— GENERAL JOHN J. PERSHING



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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
- 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.

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