



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2392

July 29, 2018

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

MailCall News

Received from **Merle McMorrow** on June 1 (Just before the anniversary of the June 6 Normandy invasion):

Dear Bob,

Until his death recently, this fellow, Bill Hayes, was in my Kiwanis Club. Your service continues to link my generation with those that follow. Your ability to provide missing information to those needing to answer questions about their relatives is amazing.

Merle McMorrow



Famous paratrooper recalls D-Day



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By news@inforum.com on Jun 2, 2002 at 12:00 a.m.

The focal point of one of the two most famous photographs taken during World War II, **Fargo's own Bill Hayes**, is doing well at 84 after recently suffering a slight stroke.

As independent as ever, Hayes, whose face blackened with cooking oil and cocoa powder was forever seared into the memories of all of us from the post-WWII era, said he's up and around again. "They gave me a bag of pills and put me on a diet that I have to follow," said Hayes.



I called Hayes last week because I hadn't talked to him for quite some time and I realized that the 58th anniversary of the D-Day invasion on June 6, 1944, will be noted on Thursday.

Hayes was immortalized in the picture of paratroopers being addressed by Supreme Allied Commander, Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, on the eve of the invasion. He was a member of Easy Company, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Parachute Regiment, 101st Airborne Division. In the photo, he stood next to Eisenhower.

The raising of the American flag on Iwo Jima's Mt. Suribachi by U.S. Marines was likely the only photo more famous during the war.

"I jumped out of the plane over Normandy at 12:10 a.m. on the morning of D-Day," said Hayes. "Our first assignment was to knock out three coastal guns. Two had already been taken out by aircraft when we arrived. We finished off the other one."

Hayes, a Wausau, Wis., native, was wounded twice during the war and received two Purple Hearts and two Bronze Stars for valor in combat.

He remembers being scared as he and his Easy Company buddies boarded the C-47 transport which would fly them from Greenham Common Airfield in England to France for their jump.

Eisenhower, a future president of the United States, was mingling with the troops.

"He didn't want to come right out and say, 'Are you scared?' but that's what he was getting at," Hayes recalls. "I said, 'You're damn right I'm scared.' "

Only Hayes, Ike and a select few soldiers really knew what was being said when the shutter clicked.

Ike had asked where he worked, and Hayes replied that he was a department manager at a Sears store in Wisconsin.

The photo, taken by a member of Eisenhower's staff, appeared on the cover of Yank magazine with the caption: Ike and His Invaders.

Hayes spent 31 years with Sears, Roebuck and Co., coming to Fargo in 1966. He has osteoporosis and is more stooped these days, but said all things considered, he's doing quite well. He said his tongue was a little heavy after the stroke, but he sounded fine during our conversation.

He and his second wife, Adeline Mary, still live in north Fargo. His first wife, Helen, died in 1995. Adeline, mother of 12 children, also lost her first husband. She and Bill met in church and have been married for six years.



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Hayes has spoken to many classes in area schools about World War II. He said children are very interested in history and he's often surprised by the insightful questions they ask.

He said it's disconcerting that members of his generation -- called the "greatest generation" by NBC news anchor Tom Brokaw -- are "dropping off like leaves from a tree."

It won't be many years and "we'll all be gone," said Hayes. That will be a sad day for all of us.

Readers can reach Terry DeVine at (701) 241-5515 or tdevine@forumcomm.com

From: <http://www.inforum.com/content/terry-devine-column-famous-paratrooper-recalls-d-day>

D-Day's Most Famous Photograph

Larry Gormley



Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower gives the order of the Day. "Full victory-nothing else" to paratroopers in England, just before they board their airplanes to participate in the first assault in the invasion of the continent of Europe.

June 6, 1944. Moore. (Army)

Records Administration "The Second World War was documented on a huge scale by thousands of photographers and artists who created millions of pictures." One of the most recognized photos of World War II depicts General Dwight Eisenhower talking with men of the 101st Airborne division on June 5, 1944 the day before the invasion of Normandy. Previously, Eisenhower had been briefed by Air Marshal Leigh-Mallory that the 101st was one of two units that would suffer 80% casualties during the invasion.

Eisenhower decided to visit the division in Newbury and talk with the soldiers. Even though his group arrived unannounced and the stars on his automobile had been covered word quickly spread of his presence. Eisenhower walked among the men asking their names and where they lived. At some point a photo was taken that captured the

humanity of the general and the crushing importance of the moment.

While the 101st did not suffer the predicted amount of casualties during the Normandy invasion, according to the Army and Navy Register, by the end of the war the total casualties for the 101st was over 7,500 men or almost 90% of the authorized strength of the division.

As far as the other subjects in the photo, according to the US Army Web site: "Some of the men with Gen Eisenhower are presumed to be: Pfc William Boyle, _____, Cpl Hans Sannes, Pfc Ralph Pombano, Pfc SW Jackson, _____; Sgt Delbert Williams, **Cpl William E Hayes**, Pfc Henry Fuller, Pfc Michael Babich and Pfc W William Noll. All are members of Co E, 502d. The other men shown on the photo are not identified."

A finally note of interest is that the photographer is only identified as Moore. The photographer could be 1st Lt. John D. Moore of the Signal Corps.

Sources:

US National Archives and Records Administration

US Army and Navy Register

US Army Web Site

Normandy, The U.S. Army Campaigns of World War II

From: <https://ehistory.osu.edu/articles/d-days-most-famous-photograph>



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Just a note to all the 517th MailCall family: As mentioned previously, I was off the grid for a couple of weeks on a mountain-biking trip to Colorado and Utah at the end of June to July. After I returned, I had a lot of catching up to do, and as it would happen, my old PC finally gave up on me. It served me well for at least 8 years. So I had to break down and buy a new PC. A lot has changed in 8+ years, so I am still moving all my files and programs over. I do have a good backup, but some of my old favorite web and photo editing tools no longer work on Windows 10. Therefore, I am still struggling to catch up on some MailCall news -- e.g. Merle's note about Bill Hayes and the D-Day photo above. I'm mostly there now, but a few large things are still backlogged. As always, if you sent me something and did not see it, feel free to remind me or resend it. It happens all the time.

Thanks all, Bob Barrett

Hi Goffredo,

I looked at the 517th records, which are very incomplete, but did not find any record of a **Richard B. Johnson** with the 517th,

It is unlikely this is the same person -- Richard B. Johnson is a common name -- but I did find an obituary of a Richard B. Johnson who did serve in Italy during WW2:

<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/starnewsonline/obituary.aspx?n=richard-b-johnson&pid=87392701>

Good luck, Bob Barrett

Thank you, Bob.

It is unlikely him as he was wounded in Cassino which is 3 months earlier than occupation by US troop of Frascati.

who knows....

thank you

keep in touch for the museum [in museum in Frascati, Italy], the curator would like to have an area reserved to 517th Combat Team.

regards

Goffredo Danna

Thank you for all your work on this newsletter project. Know it's a job but an appreciated one.

The poem was FANTASTIC. Thank you. (My uncle, **L. Charles "Bus" McKillip** was in the 517th [D Company]; my Dad a SeaBee, my husband an EM3 in Navy.)

Best, Kathryn

Kathryn McKillip Thrift



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Hello, Bob -

Oh, what tough Mail Calls we're having! So sad to hear about the losses of **Norman Ross** and **Bob Dalrymple** in the same issue, and now **Tony Mandio** as well!

The entire Ross family was a fixture at those last reunions, and I hear they were also able to attend West Coast functions. They really made gatherings even more special for our guys.

And **Bob Dalrymple**. Just shy of his 101st birthday, I believe that he was the newlywed of our 517 family, and adorably in love when we were at the Salt Lake City reunion. Dad thought the world of Bob.

Tony was the liveliest guy and honestly, I think some people never thought he was old enough to be one of the guys - and of course, he was. He was amazing.

These men share a commitment to country and service and are part of our Band of Brothers. Thank you, Bob, for continuing to keep us connected.

Claire Giblin, daughter **K. Allan Johnson**, 596

Dear Bob: It was with great sadness that I read the Mail Call about **Tony Mandio's** passing. What a great guy he was and it was such a privilege to get to know him. While he has reunited with his Band of Brothers (and I imagine it was a big fun reunion), his passing leaves a hole for those of us still on earth. I thank God for the blessing of being able to learn from him and his life. His wife and family are in my prayers. May they feel surrounded by the presence of God's love in the large circle of family and friends who admired and loved him.

Pat Seitz

PS Thank you for keeping us glued together with such excellent Mail Calls.

PSS Hope you and Joanne have a great summer. We will be traveling until mid-August to England, Wales, Scotland, Iceland and Greenland -- getting out of Miami's heat and exploring places we haven't been before.

From **Phil McSpadden**: Facts about the Vietnam War Memorial:

A little history most people will never know. Interesting Veterans Statistics off the Vietnam Memorial Wall.

There are 58,267 names now listed on that polished black wall, including those added in 2010.

The names are arranged in the order in which they were taken from us by date and within each date the names are alphabetized. It is hard to believe it is 61 years since the first casualty.

The first known casualty was Richard B. Fitzgibbon, of North Weymouth, Mass. Listed by the U.S. Department of Defense as having been killed on June 8, 1956. His name is listed on the Wall with that of his son, Marine Corps LCpl Richard B. Fitzgibbon III, who was killed on Sept. 7, 1965.



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There are three sets of fathers and sons on the Wall.

39,996 on the Wall were just 22 or younger.

8,283 were just 19 years old.

The largest age group, 33,103 were 18 years old.

12 soldiers on the Wall were 17 years old.

5 soldiers on the Wall were 16 years old.

One soldier, PFC Dan Bullock was 15 years old.

997 soldiers were killed on their first day in Vietnam.

1,448 soldiers were killed on their last day in Vietnam.

31 sets of brothers are on the Wall.

Thirty-one sets of parents lost two of their sons.

54 soldiers attended Thomas Edison High School in Philadelphia. I wonder why so many from one school

8 Women are on the Wall, Nursing the wounded.

244 soldiers were awarded the Medal of Honor during the Vietnam War; 153 of them are on the Wall
Beallsville, Ohio with a population of 475 lost 6 of her sons.

West Virginia had the highest casualty rate per capita in the nation. There are 711 West Virginians on the Wall.

The Marines of Morenci - They led some of the scrappiest high school football and basketball teams that the little Arizona copper town of Morenci (pop 5,058) had ever known and cheered. They enjoyed roaring beer busts. In quieter moments, they rode horses along the Coronado Trail, stalked deer in the Apache National Forest. And in the patriotic camaraderie typical of Morenci's mining families, the nine graduates of Morenci High enlisted as a group in the Marine Corps. Their service began on Independence Day, 1966. Only 3 returned home.

The Buddies of Midvale - LeRoy Tafoya, Jimmy Martinez, Tom Gonzales were all boyhood friends and lived on three consecutive streets in Midvale, Utah on Fifth, Sixth and Seventh avenues. They lived only a few yards apart. They played ball at the adjacent sandlot ball field. And they all went to Vietnam. In a span of 16 dark days in late 1967, all three would be killed. LeRoy was killed on Wednesday, Nov. 22, the fourth anniversary of John F. Kennedy's assassination. Jimmy died less than 24 hours later on Thanksgiving Day. Tom was shot dead assaulting the enemy on Dec. 7, Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day.

The most casualty deaths for a single day was on January 31, 1968 ~ 245 deaths.

The most casualty deaths for a single month was May 1968 - 2,415 casualties were incurred.

For most Americans who read this they will only see the numbers that the Vietnam War created. To those of us who survived the war, and to the families of those who did not, we see the faces, we feel the pain that these numbers created. We are, until we too pass away, haunted with these numbers, because they were our friends, fathers, Husbands, wives, sons and daughters There are no noble wars, just noble warriors.



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Greetings.

I Saw my family name on your 517th parachute site. My grandfather **ALBERT FREDERICK BRADOVICH** (1916-1984) served in WWII. Along with his brother Don Bradovich. I know albert served in the european theatre possibly as a sgt of supplies? Do you have any more info? Him and his brother don both made it home safe.

Alberts wife jeans sisters husband leo and all his 5 brothers served in ww2 and all came home. They got a newspaper article written about them.

Brian S. McDonald (bradovich)

Hi Brian,

Thanks for the info. We have a few items about a **John Bradovich** from Minnesota on the website. Any relation? But I haven't found anything of Albert or Don in my (incomplete) records of the 517th.

Thanks,

Bob Barrett

Hi Bob

Thanks very, very much for sending the Morning Reports. I've been looking at them closely, and I don't really know how to read them. There doesn't seem to be any indication of when Paul was in the hospital, or when he was discharged. Nor do I see any indication of how, why, or under what circumstances he would have received a purple heart or a bronze star. Can you help with that?

You asked about his Silver Star citation. I'll transcribe that for you and send it along.

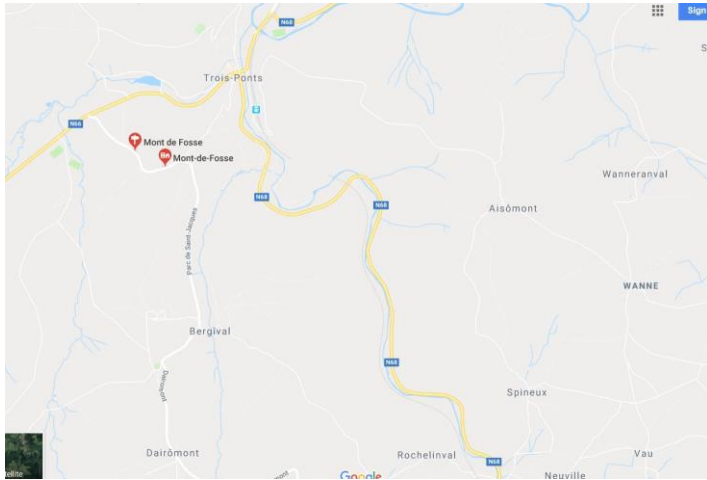
Thanks again!

Thomas Hertzel (Nephew of **Lt. Paul Craig**)

SILVER STAR CITATION: "On January 3, 1945, the 3rd platoon, 517th parachute infantry, was engaged in an attack on the town of Monte de Fosse, Belgium. Lieutenant Craig's platoon was approaching the enemy-held positions through heavy machine gun and small arms fire. Three men were seriously wounded and lying in an open field. In an attempt to reach them and administer aid to his comrades, the platoon aid man was also wounded. Lieutenant Craig crawled to their position and personally rendered medical aid. He, together with another soldier, evacuated the wounded men to a less exposed position, where they could be evacuated by litter. His courageous action resulted in saving the lives of these soldiers, and was a great inspiration to his men and a credit to his organization."



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Hi Thomas,

First, here is the filtered list of all Morning Reports for Paul Craig. Mike Kane, a friend of the 517th family transcribed the morning reports one by one into a master list that I can search.

The morning report files can be fairly large, so I will attach only 1 or 2 per email.

Bob B

COMPANY	SUBJECT	NAME	NAME	MI	DATE	CODE	MSG	NO	LOCATION	NOTE	REMARKS	REMARKS
E	KIV	CLAIÉ JL	блп	E	30-04-1944	MI	0-194-1942	1210-0	Trois-Ponts Bergival	fr duty to abs sk NBC to trfd to Det of Pat 7th Army = From duty to absent sick Non-Battle Casualty to transferred to detachment of (patrol?) 7 th Army.		
E		CLAIÉ JL	блп	E	30-04-1944	A	0-194-1942	1210-0	reasgd & jd Co fr Det of Pat 7th Army NBC LD = Reassigned and joined Company from detachment of (patrol?) 7h Army Non-Battle Casualty Line of Duty			
E		CLAIÉ JL	блп	E	30-04-1944	20	0-194-1942	1210-0	Morning Report abbreviations: http://103divwwii.usm.edu/assets/mr-abbreviations.pdf			
E		CLAIÉ JL	блп	E	30-04-1944	A	0-194-1942	1210-0	Let me tell you a little of what I can figure out. The silver star citation says 3 rd platoon, 517 prct. That has to be the 3 rd platoon of E Company, since we know he was in E Co: http://517prct.org/documents/xmas1944/xmas1944.htm			
E		CLAIÉ JL	блп	E	30-04-1944		13030303	1210-0	These events happened in Mont-de-Fosse, which is part of Trois Ponts. See map below.			
E		CLAIÉ JL	блп	E	30-04-1944	A	13030303	1210-0				
E		CLAIÉ JL	блп	E	30-04-1944	20	13030303	1210-0				
E		CLAIÉ JL	блп	E	30-04-1944		13030303	1210-0				
E		CLAIÉ JL	блп	E	30-04-1944		13030303	1210-0				
E		CLAIÉ JL	блп	E	30-04-1944	20	13030303	1210-0				
E		CLAIÉ JL	блп	E	30-04-1944		13030303	1210-0				
E		CLAIÉ JL	блп	E	30-04-1944		13030303	1210-0				
E		CLAIÉ JL	блп	E	30-04-1944	20	13030303	1210-0				
E		CLAIÉ JL	блп	E	30-04-1944		13030303	1210-0				
E		CLAIÉ JL	блп	E	30-04-1944		13030303	1210-0				

Hi Thomas,

The Moring Reports can be a little difficult to read, but let me give you a couple of examples from the text:

fr duty to abs sk NBC to trfd to Det of Pat 7th Army = From duty to absent sick Non-Battle Casualty to transferred to detachment of (patrol?) 7th Army.

reasgd & jd Co fr Det of Pat 7th Army NBC LD = Reassigned and joined Company from detachment of (patrol?) 7h Army Non-Battle Casualty Line of Duty

Morning Report abbreviations: <http://103divwwii.usm.edu/assets/mr-abbreviations.pdf>

Let me tell you a little of what I can figure out. The silver star citation says 3rd platoon, 517 prct. That has to be the 3rd platoon of E Company, since we know he was in E Co: <http://517prct.org/documents/xmas1944/xmas1944.htm>

These events happened in Mont-de-Fosse, which is part of Trois Ponts. See map below.



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As a side note, I have been to Trois Points area with my Dad and some of the 517th in 2009. He fought with H Company and was wounded in nearby Bergeval on Jan 5th, 1945. The people of the Trois Pons area welcomed us and continue to pay tribute to the 517th every year, and there is a monument to the 517th in nearby Wanne.

Dear friends of America, Here is a picture of Wanne and the 517th monument during the ceremony of MAY 8th. As we attended the ceremony in Trois-Ponts, 2 persons joined us because they could hear "the Last Post" near the church of Trois-Ponts. Alexandra and Jeremiah, 2 American from Arizona, visiting the area, they were very touched about the ceremonies at the US monuments and they stayed with the group for the rest of the pilgrimage. On the picture, you can see the Mayor Francis BAIRIN, Alexandra and Jeremiah, Victorine GUSTIN, President of CADUSA and the children of the little school of Wanne with their teachers. Very soon, we shall attend the ceremonies of Memorial Day in Henri-Chapelle.



Irma and Arnold Targnion

MailCall # 2357

Send news to MailCall@517prct.org

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Attached is the morning report from January 3rd, 1945, the date of Lt. Craig's silver star. As you can see, this was a difficult day for E Company: "Co began attack of enemy held territory at 08:30. Met heavy resistance and Company subjected to intense mortar barrage." I count 18 wounded and 3 KIA on the Jan 3rd report. So the 4 that Paul Craig rescued could be any of them.

There is a general description of the actions around Trois Pons in the Paratroopers' Odyssey book, which is on the website at:

http://517prct.org/documents/odyssey/paratroopers_odyssey.htm#6_ardennes_counterattack

In the path of 517th's advance were the 183rd and 190th Regiments of the 62nd Yolk Grenadier Division. About 150 to 200 Germans had been digging in at Mont de Fosse for five days, and the enemy was also dug in along the woodline southeast of Basse Bodeux. The Yolk Grenadiers were reported to be poorly trained, but they occupied commanding ground. Little training is required to pull a trigger .

Across the Salm were elements of the 1st SS Panzer Corps, with the 1st SS Panzer Division (minus), the 18th Volksgrenadier Division, and miscellaneous SS, Volksgrenadier, and Parachute units. The enemy east of the Salm was not going to be hit by the January 3rd attack, and would be free to reinforce the 62nd Volksgrenadiers anywhere west of the Salm at any time.*



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* Little or none of this information was available to the attacking battalions.

Last -- and at least as important as terrain -- was the morale. factor. The Germans believed their own propaganda, which told them that they had scored a tremendous victory in the Ardennes. All they had to do was hang on, and the western Allies would sue for a negotiated peace.

Trois Ponts was the hinge upon which the First Army attack would swing, the Germans were going to put up a stiff fight to keep the door open.

January 3rd dawned clear and bitterly cold. New-fallen snow had drifted against fences and hedgerows, eliminating much cover. The snow was now knee-deep. As the assault battalions approached the line of departure the 460th fired short concentrations.*

* After the attack began the 460th was told that it would be limited to 500 rounds per day. This allotment was extended before darkness 3 January 1945.

The 551st came under mortar and artillery fire while forming behind the Trois Ponts--Basse Bodeux road. An artillery forward observer was killed and a 60mm mortar squad became casualties. This delayed their start, but at 0900 the 551st jumped off with a yell, two companies abreast. The left company, hit by flanking fire from Mont de Fosse, pressed on valiantly; the right company made somewhat better progress, and in an hour the 551st gained a foothold in the woods southeast of Basse Bodeux.

The 2nd Battalion crossed the line of departure promptly at 0800 with E on right, D on left, and F following D in Battalion reserve. Company E was to go for Mont de Fosse, D for Trois Ponts, and F was to protect the exposed left flank.

On Mont de Fosse 150-odd Volks Grenadiers watched E Company advance over the open snowfield and waited. The Germans -- outnumbering E Company -- were dug in around the farm buildings. When Newberry's men were within two hundred yards the enemy opened up with well-planned final protective fires. Troopers exposed in the open were hit by machine gun fire; those in defilade became targets for artillery, mortars, and Nebelwerfers. Lieutenant Joe Kisilwicz began to maneuver his platoon to the right, but two scouts were killed and he was badly wounded. Within a half-hour, 20 to 30 men were down including Captain Newberry. Unable to advance, E Company had no choice but to lie there and take it.

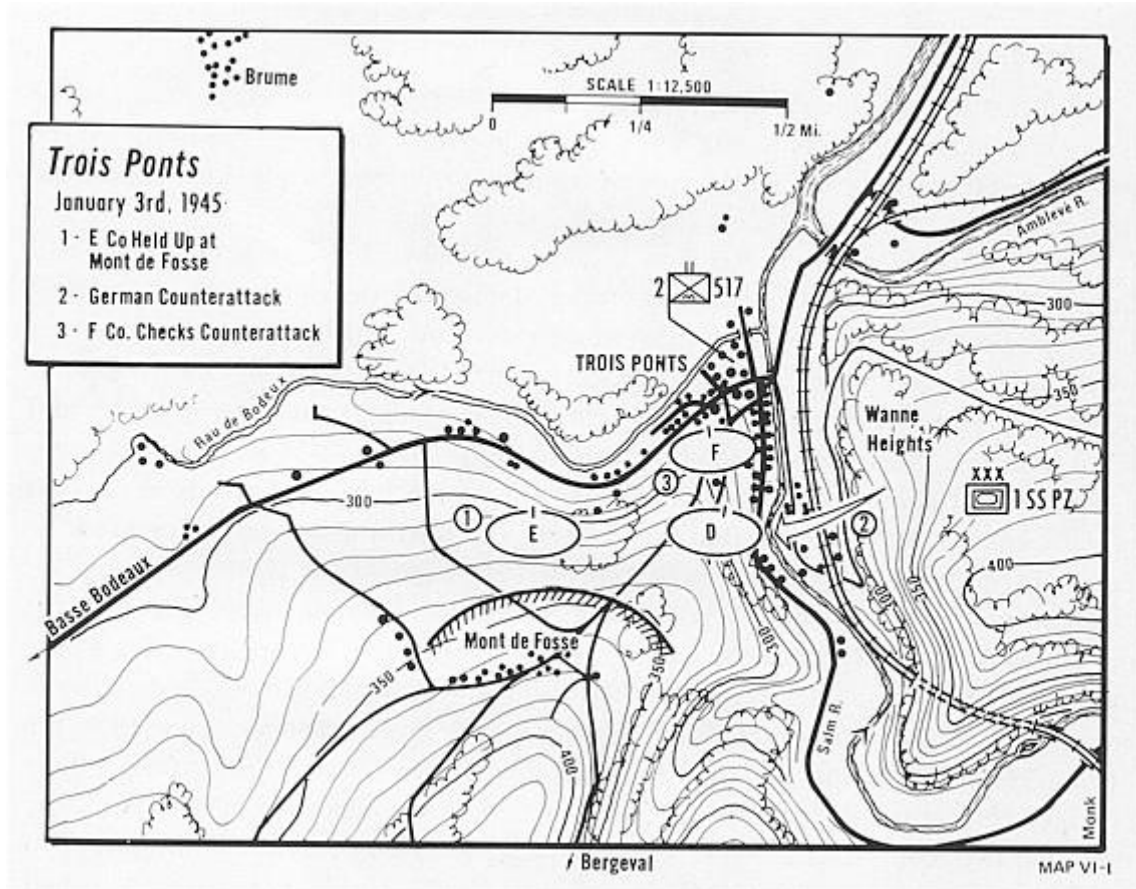
On the Battalion left D Company cleared Trois Ponts house-by-house, meeting only sporadic fire from east of the Salm. At 0900 D Company reported that it had seized its first objective.

Major General James M. Gavin, commanding the 82nd Airborne, arrived in the 517th area soon after the attack jumped off. At Basse Bodeux he was joined by Colonel Graves, and together they moved toward Trois Ponts. On the way they encountered Colonel Seitz with his command group. Colonel Seitz requested additional artillery support. General Gavin promised that it would be made available,* and left to return to Basse Bodeux.

* No additional artillery became available. (Letter, R.J. Seitz to author .)



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On the Wanne Heights German observers watched the American attack move out across the Trois Pons--Basse Bodeux road. Artillery was brought to bear, and a strong force was sent to counterattack across the Salm. The bridge had been blown, but the river was easily fordable. The Germans waded the Salm, took position on the west bank, and opened fire.

D Company, emerging from Trois Pons into the open area to the south, was hit on left flank and rear by heavy machine gun fire. Company commander Carl Starkey and a dozen others were hit, and the Germans charged to overrun the Americans.

Captain John Lissner's F Company was close behind D. Lissner deployed his men quickly and opened fire. The Germans, caught on their own flank, halted and shifted some of their fire to F Company. Lissner and several others were wounded and Lieutenant George Giuchici took command.

The 460th hit Mont de Fosse with repeated 75mm concentrations, but the Germans were well dug in and the fire had little effect. In an effort to bring direct fire to bear upon the enemy positions, the attached Tank Destroyed platoon was brought into action. The leading vehicle ran over a Tellermine buried beneath the snow, and the others backed off to a safer location.

Colonel Seitz, grasping for any means to help E Company, decided to commit F Company in an envelopment against Mont de Fosse from the east. As Seitz began to radio instructions to F Company he learned of the counterattack that had just hit.



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With a few runners, he moved across the Battalion front no easy thing under fire in the snow. He found Lissner wounded and out of action, many others wounded and dead, and George Giuchici engaged in a heavy firefight with the counterattacking force.

The Battalion was caught in a murderous cul-de-sac, under fire from front and flank. The enemy counterattack was finally halted, but for the rest of the day the Germans maintained a heavy volume of fire from Mont de Fosse, the Wanne Heights, and the west bank of the Salm. Over a hundred Americans lay dead, wounded, and dying in the snow.

All rifle company commanders and half the platoon leaders had become casualties. Through the afternoon the troopers lay in the freezing cold behind what little cover they could find. The slightest movement drew fire, and casualties continued to mount. Mercifully, darkness came early. At twilight evacuation of the wounded began. Carl Starkey, himself hit twice, directed the evacuation of his company's wounded and refused to leave until they had all been taken care of. His behavior was typical of the others.

The 1st Battalion had become Regimental reserve when the assault battalions passed through. As the reserve commander, Colonel Boyle had a vital interest in the progress of the attack. From his CP at Brume he had an unobstructed view of the entire area, and he watched as the 2nd Battalion was held up in front of Mont de Fosse. At 1200 Boyle told executive officer Major Donald Fraser to get A and B Companies ready to move, and headed for the Regimental CP at Basse Bodeux.

General Gavin was highly dissatisfied with the 517th's lack of progress.* Returning to the Regimental CP at Basse Bodeux, he lectured Colonel Graves and stabbed his finger at a map, pointing to St Jacques and Bergeval. "I want those towns by daylight tomorrow", he said and left.

* In "On to Berlin" General Gavin states that "the 517th seemed to have difficulty getting off its line of departure." This is true, and the reasons why are explained in the preceding pages:--enemy resistance was much stronger than had been reported, and the open left flank invited (and drew) a counterattack.

Colonel Graves turned to his staff and said, "Get Boyle." Bill Boyle was waiting outside the door. Together, Graves and Boyle studied the problem and its possible solutions. Boyle suggested that his Battalion should follow the 551st and strike obliquely for St Jacques--Bergeval, using the concealment provided by the woods. Graves recognized the merits of Boyle's plan, but he also wanted early action against Mont de Fosse. Finally he decided to have F Company, the 2nd Battalion reserve, tag along behind the 1st Battalion and peel off toward Mont de Fosse as soon as Boyle's men hit their objectives.

In the late afternoon B and C Companies assembled on the eastern outskirts of Basse Bodeux. The long-anticipated Christmas turkey had arrived and the troopers ate on the run. The turkey ration was based on the Battalion's strength before it had been committed with the 3rd Armored. There was more than enough to go around, but no time to enjoy it.

Company A was under fire on the hillside northwest of Trois Ponts and would join the Battalion later. With B, C, and part of Headquarters, the strength of Colonel Boyle's force was about 250. Company F had managed to disengage and withdraw and was at the rear of the column under Lieutenant Giuchici.



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As darkness fell a guide arrived from the 551st and the column moved out. Although it was only a mile and a half, the move to St Jacques required five hours. In the darkness and dense underbrush it was found that the only way to keep the column together was for each man to hang onto the equipment of the man in front. After several hours the guide reached the point where he had last seen the 551st. Now there was neither sound nor sight of it.

Boyle took a compass bearing and struck out to the east. Shadowy buildings appeared, and the artillery fired a marking round. Two or three tracked vehicles started their engines and began rumbling around. Bazooka men were called forward, and Captain Dean Robbins deployed B Company. One platoon went right in an encirclement while the others advanced straight ahead. Enemy soldiers forming in the street were cut down by a B company machine gunner.* Riflemen worked down the street firing and throwing grenades. In a half-hour the capture of St Jacques was complete and it was C Company's turn.

* A photograph of this scene was published in LIFE magazine under the caption "War in the West Goes on in the Snow." The article that appeared with the photo was totally fictional.

A newly-captured English-speaking prisoner said that Bergeval was held by only 15 Germans who wanted to surrender. Taking no chances, C Company maneuvered into position. Five German outguards were taken by surprise and killed.

After an artillery concentration the troopers waded out into the snow. An enemy automatic weapon opened up and the artillery concentration was repeated. The company charged, three platoons abreast, yelling and shooting from the hip. In a half-hour they worked to the far edge of the village, halted, and sent back detachments to finish off any enemy holdouts. One hundred and twenty-one Germans were captured including two officers -- a far cry from "fifteen." An additional twelve or fifteen had been killed and perhaps 20 escaped to the south. In the street in operating condition were two jeeps and a half-track, still bearing the markings of the unfortunate 106th Division.

As the Company command group entered a building in the center of the village a field telephone rang. It must have been the German command trying to find out what was going on. Unfortunately, no one at hand spoke German, and after a few futile "Allo?" 's the party on the other end impolitely hung up.

Colonel Boyle's night flanking attack had succeeded beyond all expectations. At a cost of two casualties to the attacking force, St Jacques and Bergeval had been seized, 150 Germans captured, and 30 to 40 killed.**

** It must be borne in mind that the attack would not have been possible without the hard fighting of the 551st and 2/517, which created the gap and held the enemy in place while Boyle's men hit from the flank.

As C Company started for Bergeval, Lieutenant George Giuchici led F Company from the woods and turned north. Just before daylight the Company hit Mont de Fosse from the rear. German resistance fell apart. A few enemy escaped, some were killed or captured, but most laid low-. They had shown no mercy to the Americans and they expected none. It was safer to remain in hiding until the riflemen had passed, and try to surrender later as the opportunity arose.***

*** Later that day 75 Germans came out of hiding at Mont de Fosse and surrendered to the 460th's Major Kinzer and Regimental S-2 Lieutenant Neiler, who happened to be passing through the area.



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Suffering heavy losses, the 551st had advanced during the afternoon of January 3rd to an area southwest of St Jacques. Along a sunken road leading to Fosse they met strong resistance and were hit by self-propelled guns. The Battalion spent the freezing night between St Jacques and Fosse, and on the morning of the 4th began to advance southeast toward Dairomont.

At daylight on the 4th the 2nd Battalion reorganized and moved to the high ground overlooking the Salm, where they had a clear shot at isolated groups of Germans trying to escape along a road bordering the river. The 3rd Battalion followed the 2nd to protect the still-exposed left flank against any renewed counterattack.

There is also a lot about those battles in http://517prct.org/documents/infantry_school/SmithBill_G._CPT.pdf, but it has limited details about the 2nd Battalion. With a map:

http://517prct.org/documents/infantry_school/Bill_G_Smith/SmithGMapC.jpg

Another brief account is in http://517prct.org/documents/bluebook_magazine/Feb1948/Feb48p66_75pct.jpg

And I may have mentioned this before, there's a good war biography of Gene Brissey who died just a few years ago. Gene was in Lt. Craig's 3rd Platoon and mentions Lt. Craig a few times. http://517prct.org/documents/brissey/brissey_history.htm

That's all I've been able to find so far. Hope this helps.

Bob Barrett



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For you old-timers, from **Phil McSpadden**:

Mergatroyd!...Do you remember that word? Would you believe the email spell checker did not recognize the word Mergatroyd?

Heavens to Mergatroyd!

The other day a not so elderly (65) year old lady said something to her grandson about driving a Jalopy and he looked at her quizzically and said "What the heck is a Jalopy?"

OMG (new phrase)! He never heard of the word jalopy!! Well, I hope you are Hunky Dory after you read this and chuckle.

About a month ago, I illuminated some old expressions that have become obsolete because of the inexorable march of technology. These phrases included "Don't touch that dial," "Carbon copy," "You sound like a broken record" and "Hung out to dry."

Heavens to Betsy! Gee whillikers! Jumping Jehoshaphat! Holy moley!

Not for all the tea in China!

Back in the olden days, life used to be swell, but when's the last time anything was swell? Swell has gone the way of beehives, pageboys, knickers, fedoras, poodle skirts, saddle shoes and pedal pushers...

We wake up from what surely has been just a short nap, and before we can say, Well, I'll be 'a monkey's uncle!' Or, This is a 'fine kettle of fish!' We discover that the words we grew up with, the words that seemed omnipresent, as oxygen, have vanished with scarcely a notice from our tongues and our pens and our keyboards.

Long gone: Pshaw, The milkman did it. Hey! It's your nickel. Don't forget to pull the chain. Knee high to a grasshopper. Well, Fiddlesticks! Going like sixty. I'll see you in the funny papers. Don't take any wooden nickels. Wake up and smell the roses.

It turns out there are more of these lost words and expressions than Carter has liver pills.

We of a certain age have been blessed to live in changeable times. For a child each new word is like a shiny toy, a toy that has no age. We at the other end of the chronological arc have the advantage of remembering there are words that once did not exist and there were words that once strutted their hour upon the earthly stage and now are heard no more, except in our collective memory. It's one of the greatest advantages of aging.

Leaves us to wonder where Superman will find a phone booth...

See ya later, alligator!

Okidoki



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Administrivia

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