



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2398

November 11, 2018

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

Veterans Day





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On the 11th of November #1944 for the Armistice Day, the B Company of the 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment was pulled back from the front line in Sospel to make a parade in Nice Southern France.

Keeping all Veterans and families of Veterans in our thoughts on this Veteran's Day 2018.

Paul Abbene



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MailCall News



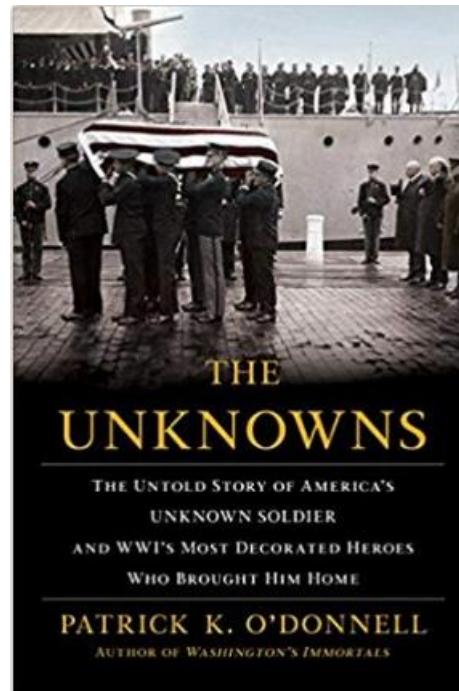
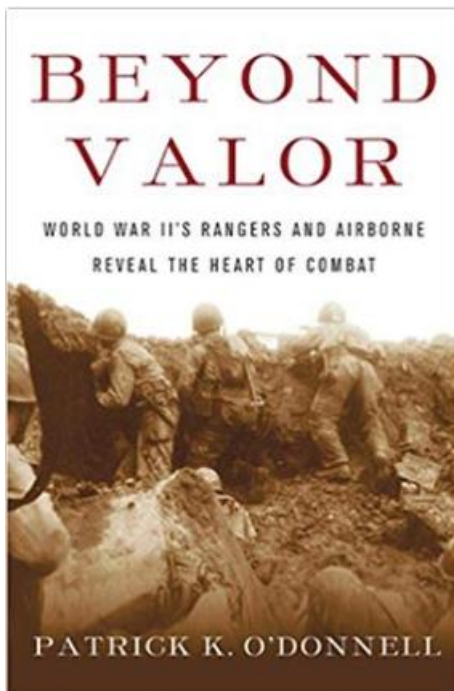
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The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

Military historian Patrick O'Donnell talks about his bo...

Many of you will remember Patrick O'Donnell. He has written several books about WW2, including stories of the 517th in his first book in 2001, *Beyond Valor*. Patrick was our keynote speaker at our 517th Reunion in Washington DC in 2007.

It seems appropriate to mention on this Veterans Day, that Patrick's most recent book, May 2018, is *The Unknowns: The Untold Story of America's Unknown Soldier and WWI's Most Decorated Heroes Who Brought Him Home*.





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Happy Veterans Day to all past and present servicemen and women, especially granddaddy Hal! Thank you for everything!

From Facebook, from a post by **Brittany Goetz Dakin**, the granddaughter of **Hal Beddow** (First Airborne Task Force).

Ben and Bob,

I just wanted to shoot you a quick thank you email for making your WWII Military page:

http://517prct.org/table_of_contents.htm

As a retired social studies teacher, I'm staying busy by volunteering in the youth department of my library; I tutor kids after school. (I can't let my brain rot away haha!)

We're covering the evolution of military vehicles and equipment (trucks, tanks, airplanes, etc.) at the moment, and the information you have on old military vehicles has been a big help! We've referenced it quite a bit!

I encouraged the kids to do some research on their own and I was very impressed with the resources they found. These two in particular I loved:

www.partsgeek.com/mmparts/the_history_of_military_automotive_vehicles.html

www.titlemax.com/articles/cars-tanks-airplanes-of-wwii/

I even learned a couple of things! I know you're probably busy, but I was wondering if you could include these two links on your page for me? Under the links section? If there's anything I've learned in my years of working with the youth, it's that encouragement is such a powerful thing!

I'd love to show the group they're helping others out there. I think they'd get a kick outta it! Let me know; I meet with them tomorrow evening! Hope to hear from you soon!

Thanks for keeping history alive :)

Mr. Bill ~ william.jackson@socialstudieshelp.com



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My name is Kate Dallas Sartain and I am **Frank Dallas'** granddaughter. As you may know, my grandfather passed away in 2017. I read the entry from Elizabeth Atlan's request for information regarding I Company with great interest. I was in Virginia this past week saying goodbye to my grandmother, Jo Dallas. During that time, we came across pictures of my grandfather that we had not previously seen from WWII--most of which appear to be from his time in France. My parents are scanning and making copies of the photos this week. I would be happy to send copies of these photos and biographical information to Elisabeth if you provide me with her contact information. My aunts and uncles will be packing up my grandmother's house in Virginia during the next couple of months, so I am afraid that a mailed request might be missed. Also, going forward, I will be the best contact for any requests for information regarding my grandfather.

Best,
Kate Sartain

Hi Kate, The email for Elizabeth Atlan is e.atlan@yahoo.fr

Also, I would love to have copies of any photos from WWII. I can create a bio page for Frank Dallas in our [Meet the Troopers](#) pages. All I have now is his page from the Special Forces:
<http://specialforces78.com/members-pages/ltc-frank-j-dallas/>

Regards,
Bob Barrett

RE: Finding out about Silver Star for **Harold A. Geibel**

Dear MailCall:

I have been looking into my father's records and trying to find out where he was awarded a Silver Star (and two Purple Hearts) as we have no record other than that found in his box of memorabilia many years ago. My father passed away in 1969. We had his boxful of letters, medals, diaries, patches for years and have donated some of the items to our local VFW in our hometown of Mexico NY for display. My goal, if possible, is to see if anyone remembers him during their service (a long shot seeing as there's so much time passed).....my only hope being that he was older than most men in the war and maybe some of the 90 year olds may have some recollection! We would like to know what records there may be regarding his commendations.

I am sending you a document I've passed on to a friend who is doing some research for me. If perchance you could look over the PDF file and let me know if MailCall could try and reach out to any of your readers to see if there are any links between someone still alive? Or, if there are any records available to us, we've been told that many were lost in a fire.

Thanks so much for your time and for having such a wonderful newsletter, I look forward to seeing it every month.

Sincerely,

Susan Geibel Dufek



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Harold A. Geibel 32 676 743 Staff Sergeant Company I 517th Parachute Infantry

Date of induction 15 DEC 42

Date of Entry into Active Service 22 DEC 42

Battles and Campaigns: Ardennes, Central Europe, Rhineland, GO 33 WD 45 as Amended

Decorations and Citations: European-African-Middle Eastern Service Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Purple Heart

(We found two Purple Hearts and one Silver Star in their original boxes in his memorabilia box)

Wounds Received in Action: ETO 25 July 45

Service Outside Continental US and Return:

12 OCT 44 MTO. Date of arrival 28 OCT 44

4 Nov 44 ETO. Date of Arrival 7 NOV 44

12 AUG 45 USA Date of Arrival 22 Aug 45

4 months Private Basic Training 521

1 year 6 months S SGT Parachute rigger rep 620

10 months S SGT Platoon Sgt 774

Summary of Military Occupation:

PLATOON SGT: Directed platoon of men in loading, aiming and firing rifles in assault on the enemy and in defending positions against enemy attack.

*(Discharge Papers)

Excerpts from his two small diaries (with lots of blank pages in between sometimes hard to read):

October 12: left Patrick Henry train to Newport News VA boarded ATHOS II with 230 men onboard, sailed w french crew. October 16: joined a convoy at sea, 25 ships. Landed in Naples transported in trucks 35 miles into the Voltura valley in tents and mud soldiers from every part of the world there.

November 5-8: on ship going to harbor at Marseille, couldn't dock, too rough. 10PM docked in area 2 expect to go to Nice by trucks tonight 200 miles, drew guns and ammo, may join 517th.

Friday Nov. 10:....boy what a ride we all near froze, nothing to eat but bread we can get from....Arrived inarea, pup tents and cold no chow 8 miles from front line men from 517 here expect to move up to front sunday.

Sunday November 12: Lt. Colonel come to get men for 517 move up to front line.

Monday 13th: Been assigned to I Co 517th we move to take out line at once. What a deal.

They are being shelled very hard. We arrived in town (Sospel) truck shelled twice. Arrived big



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hotel all blown up ten of us have rooms on top floor (5) bombed us all night. hotel 2 direct hits. Nazi's absent from Mt getting assigned now. Went up Mts to front line on patrol shot at 8 Nazi's returned at day break still shelling hard nearly got it.

Nov 15: still at (Lolf?) Hotel what a mess shells bursting all around so tired went to sleep. Expect to pull out in early morning . Have to walk to Nice 40 kilos all mountain walking it nearly ruins me. Have to change Co.

Nov 16: left at 4 AM boy it sure is cold. These Maritime Alps are rugged. Stopped at 12 on side of road for day can see the ocean and snow capped mts. Two more days of walking and we will be in rest camp.

Nov 17: Stopped in the same town I left from monday (L Elcarienoise?) it is not so good-no fire wood and its quite cold-boy I sure am tired my legs are like lead. Tomorrow we walk to Nice.

Nov 18: Finished our march to the rest area it is quite nice here. i of course had to get put on the side of a hill pup tents, chow is lousy.

Nov 26: Slept this morning it seemed good not to have to stand revel. Very boring life wish I was home with family. This is no place for me. I guess I am getting to old for this crap. (have to figure out).

Dec 6: Left rest camp went to box cars at Cains, 26 men to car, boy they sure are small. We have to eat and sleep on it for 6 days heading for Reims France to join first airborne army.

Dec 7: It sure is rough and cold, we sleep on top of one another eat 1001 rations, back is sore.

Dec 10: Arrived town Soisson we have large hosp for barracks, nice room.....just like basic training (Garrison) lots of chicken shit. Just resting up.

Dec 18, 1944: We have been alerted Germans launch big counter attack. Everyone quite excited, very busy showing new weapons equipment—508-501 already there 82nd Div 101 Div.

December 19, 20, 21 22, 23, 24: AT FRONT

Dec. 25: In hay loft in Belgium, fire all night.

Excerpts from a letter postmarked Feb 15, 1945 To Margaret Geibel

(Date on letter is torn, where i've left 's it's from the torn areas I've also (?) where I can't read)

Hello My Darlings:

At last I have a chance to write you. It's been about ten days since I wrote but it seems like a million years. Ive lived and died a million times but came through O.K. I'm very tired, haven't had any sleep in I don't know when. So don't mind letter.

Ten Days ago we left (Stoochlat?) from St. Vith we thought we were going to have a rest but we went to the Siegfried line and held a position for 2 days it was bad and very cold with a lot of snow but it warmed up and started raining what a mess, mud a foot deep. Boy it was terrible we were soaked and dirty beyond recognition. Well they took us out one night and we



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loaded.....trucks and went into Germany at a town.....Bergestein, our mission was to spearhead a large hill it didn't look like much of a job but there was a river to cross and an open field then up to the hill where Jerrie was. It was a nasty night riding and cold and muddy as hell. I and G Co was to do it we left out at 1 in the morning. Jerry was throwing flares and 88's. We got a part way across the field and ran into a mine field. A boy near me set off the first one and lost his legs. Boy, Jerry.....waiting for us and the mortars started in falling like the rain. Machine guns and burp guns were splattering us all to hell. We reached the river on our hands and knees and crossed- about 8 of us but it was so hot we broke up and tried to get back there was nothing we could do but try and stay as close to the ground as possible. Dead Jerries lay all over-finally it started getting light and we holed up the best we could. Jerries were in front and in back of us. It was all very confusing to try and tell them from our own. I can't describe how terrifying it is under fire like that. Flashes and explosions dirt stones and shrapnel flying all over it just makes your whole system shake so hard it's hard to hold your weapon, well all.....sniped and they sniped and shells and more.....soared we thought others would get through and couldn't understand why they didn't come. Jerrie laid more mines at dusk and we had to get out of there it got dark and all hell broke loose we started out and walked all over the place. My LTD was wounded and the Capt sat on a mine it blew him apart. (Today I heard he died) we got back finally and H Co was to try again we have no support when.....and it makes it hard in places like that. H Co had the same luck so 517 was sure beat up. My Co I had 130 men when we started when we came back we had 42. G Co had 99 and they had 37. H Co had 160 they have 58 boy it sure was rough. These Jerries have no place to retreat now so they sure fight like hell. It sure was the worst we ever saw. The other battalions had many casualties too but we finally made it and captured the town of Schmidt and Jerrie had to move on further.

What a motley crew we were. Mud, beards and dirty it rained every day. Sat they pulled us out and we left on trains from Achen and came back to France. Leone, its a big barracks affair the whole Rest plus 514 is here. I guess they.....us replacements. (Lots of rumors here)... how....Japan? No one knows, maybe a jump somewhere I sure hope not. I've had enough of it all. I thought of you all the time honey. You and Butch were with me and I was protecting you, it's funny how you can think of something like that and it helps you keep going."

I have a new job now it's not so bad as line.....It's with s-4 thats supply- 3rd BN Supply. We all 3rd Bn Companies with everything they.....when they are on the line I drive them supplies.....very thrilling with a load of ammo.....at you but its a lot better than the line. You asked me what outfit I was attached to, we have been attached to many, mostly the 82nd some others are the 17th-30th, we are like (foundlings) wherever they get hard up or need something done quick they call us.

Gosh I've been blabbing all about me and what I really have been sweating out is you and the children but your letters tell me you are OK. Boy what I wouldn'thome with you. I miss you all so much I just cant tell you in words. I pray it will all end soon. We will have so much to catch up on I hope God wills it that way.



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Honey I have to go to sleep I can hardly keep my eyes open and my weary old back is kind of bending. How I wish you could tuck me in. Give Allen and big hug and kiss for me and all the rest for you. I will try and write every day we are here honey so until later. Goodnight.

I love you (bouque) in France (very, very much)

Your loving husband, Harold

Alan:

I have compiled these excerpts from old letters and two small diaries my father carried with him. The letters were in a box in my mothers home for years and had been in our attic where squirrels had gotten into them and chewed some of the paper! Thus the’s and the diary portions were in pencil and sometimes not too clear.

In the box of memorabilia we found two purple hearts and one silver star in their original boxes. I would like to see if there is any way to find out where the commendation is for the silver star or perhaps shed some light on where he could have been to have been awarded the Silver Star.

My dad’s nick name “Pappy” as he was older than most the men at 27 and had a wife and child at home. I believe he was a jump master, or so we always heard. In the You Tube film “A Cut Above” part 2 he is in several frames of the video, a close up shot of men jumping out one by one. We were told by an old friend that he joined to be able to tell his children he “did something in the war” and that he joined the paratroopers so he would get better pay.

I have a picture of his regiment at Camp Toccoa, we’ve picked him out in the top row 13th from the right. The caption below picture reads: Lt, J.H. Hardy, COMDG HQ, CO, I ST.BN. 517th, Parachute, INF Camp Toccoa, GA





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Operation Dragoon 2019

Greetings friends -

I can see that people are starting to plan for next summer and the 75th anniversary of the 15 August jump into the south of France. Some of you have emailed me or others; others of you I'm just throwing on the thread, and apologies if you didn't want this information (But I love you guys! Hi Melanie! Wade! Joanne! Mimsey! Tom!). Let me know if you want off the thread :-)

Eric, can we ask you to check with the good people at Col de l'Ange about setting aside a block of rooms for us? Personally, I'd like two of them myself.

I am going to resurrect something I wrote five or so years ago as kind of an order of operations for planning.

- **Timing:** The jump was 15 August; **Var events of 517 interest run from about 12 August to about 17 August, with the main concentration on 14-15-16 August. Sainte Cezaire (an hour or so from Draguinan, up in the hills and near Callian, where my father was dropped) is already planning its 75th and has asked if the 517 would like to attend on 23 August** (each town or village celebrates its own liberation day). If you want to be in place for marches, parachute jumps and other events, plan to arrive on the 11th or so. Remember it's an overnight flight.
- If you want to visit battle points of interest, especially those not right in the Le Muy-Les Arcs-La Motte-Draguinan area, I suggest you **make a list of what you'd like to see and let's coordinate through Mail Call**. While we have friends in the South of France, we also need to collaborate and harness resources. Lots of activities, events, commemorations and ceremonies are going on and **all of our friends there have obligations and responsibilities for the events, and many are also working their day jobs!** We need to collaborate and coordinate, and if we get planning going on Mail Call, it lets our French friends see what's going on. People with availability will step forward to help.
- **First and foremost: do you have a valid passport that will have at least 3-6 months remaining** before its expiration date? If not, get one now.
- **Then get your flights:** Flights are expensive, we're traveling at the costliest time of the year, and few airlines fly directly to Nice, making it an expensive destination. It's possible to save money if you take a connecting flight. I don't because I travel with my father, who will be 95 next summer. Think about your own trip and travel partners; you might want to incorporate a side trip or another destination. If you want to do trips to battlefields in southern France, set aside those days. In years past, some of us have also visited Belgium; I'm also copying our 517 family in Belgium Irma and Arnold Tarragon. But again, let's put most things through Mail Call so we can coordinate. If you have a question about what can be accomplished in a day, ask us via Mail Call.
- I have saved a little money and lots of time in recent years by simply calling Delta Vacations - they package together the flight, car and travel insurance (they don't have hotels up so far off the Riviera).



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- Once you have your flights, get to work on your schedule. The static line jump in Le Muy, coordinated by Stephane Hadadje, is always impressive (but of course, subject to weather). It's usually around 11 or 12 August. Various reenactment groups set up encampments as well. If you're going for events, those will be 14-15-16 August (these are coordinated by longtime friend Eric Renoux), and then again 23 August in Ste. Cezaire (coordinated by Marc and Elisabeth Atlan, also great friends).
- **Hotel booking sites have come a long way in the last few years, and Joanne Barrett used booking.com** with great success on her last visit, as have I. This is especially helpful away from the Var/Draguinan area.
- I have a great find in the smartphone service department: **Hip Pocket Wifi** is a French-based company that will provide a small, go-anywhere wifi hot spot for up to ten devices for around or under \$10/day. Verizon charges \$10/day for just my device, so being able to have a group wifi hot spot was great and quite a savings. They'll mail it to your hotel prior to your arrival; drop it in the prepaid envelope they provide and mail it back when you leave. Easy!
- **Finally, buy the highest level of travel insurance available! Travel insurance was critical to my group in 2015 when Leo Dean fell and was hospitalized for more than three weeks in France. Also, make sure your personal medical insurance covers you outside the US. To my knowledge, Medicare does not.**

And so here we go! Airborne! All the WAY!

Claire Johnson Giblin

daughter, **Kaare Allan Johnson**, 596

Administrivia

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- 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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