



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2401

December 16, 2018

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

Battle of the Bulge



74 years ago today, December 16th, was the beginning of the Battle of the Bulge in Belgium.

The Battle of the Bulge (16 December 1944 – 25 January 1945) was the last major German offensive campaign on the Western Front during World War II. It was launched through the densely forested Ardennes region of Wallonia in eastern Belgium, northeast France, and Luxembourg, towards the end of



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World War II. The furthest west the offensive reached was the village of Foy-Nôtre-Dame, south east of Dinant, being stopped by the British 21st Army Group on 24 December 1944. The German offensive was intended to stop Allied use of the Belgian port of Antwerp and to split the Allied lines, allowing the Germans to encircle and destroy four Allied armies and force the Western Allies to negotiate a peace treaty in the Axis powers' favor. Once that was accomplished, the German dictator Adolf Hitler believed he could fully concentrate on the Soviets on the Eastern Front. The Third Reich was not as politically sound as people had originally thought. Physically they were prepared for this battle.

The surprise attack caught the Allied forces completely off guard. American forces bore the brunt of the attack and incurred their highest casualties of any operation during the war. The battle also severely depleted Germany's armored forces, and they were largely unable to replace them. German personnel and, later, Luftwaffe aircraft (in the concluding stages of the engagement) also sustained heavy losses.

The Germans officially referred to the offensive as Unternehmen Wacht am Rhein ("Operation Watch on the Rhine"), while the Allies designated it the Ardennes Counteroffensive. The phrase "Battle of the Bulge" was coined by contemporary press to describe the bulge in German front lines on wartime news maps, and it became the most widely used name for the battle. The offensive was planned by the German forces with utmost secrecy, with minimal radio traffic and movements of troops and equipment under cover of darkness. Intercepted German communications indicating a substantial German offensive preparation were not acted upon by the Allies.

The Germans achieved total surprise on the morning of 16 December 1944, due to a combination of Allied overconfidence, preoccupation with Allied offensive plans, and poor aerial reconnaissance. The Germans attacked a weakly defended section of the Allied line, taking advantage of heavily overcast weather conditions that grounded the Allies' overwhelmingly superior air forces. Fierce resistance on the northern shoulder of the offensive, around Elsenborn Ridge, and in the south, around Bastogne, blocked German access to key roads to the northwest and west that they counted on for success. Columns of armor and infantry that were supposed to advance along parallel routes found themselves on the same roads. This, and terrain that favored the defenders, threw the German advance behind schedule and allowed the Allies to reinforce the thinly placed troops. Improved weather conditions permitted air attacks on German forces and supply lines, which sealed the failure of the offensive. In the wake of the defeat, many experienced German units were left severely depleted of men and equipment, as survivors retreated to the defenses of the Siegfried Line.

The Germans' initial attack involved 410,000 men; just over 1,400 tanks, tank destroyers, and assault guns; 2,600 artillery pieces; 1,600 anti-tank guns; and over 1,000 combat aircraft, as well as large numbers of other armoured fighting vehicles (AFVs). These were reinforced a couple of weeks later, bringing the offensive's total strength to around 450,000 troops, and 1,500 tanks and assault guns. Between 63,222 and 98,000 of these men were killed, missing, wounded in action, or captured. For the Americans, out of a peak of 610,000 troops, 89,000 became casualties out of which some 19,000 were killed. The "Bulge" was the largest and bloodiest single battle fought by the United States in World War II and the second deadliest battle in American history.



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From the Facebook page of Carl Wouters (friend of **Eddy Monfort**)

74 YEARS - Here are a few pictures of today's events remembering the 74th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge and honoring our WWII veterans for their service and sacrifice. A big thank you to all those who made the commemorative events of today possible and who faced the winter weather to participate.



Shortly before the Flag of Friendship ceremony in St. Vith. A beautiful flower arrangement provided by the city of Sankt Vith.

WWII vintage jeeps provided an authentic backdrop for the ceremony.



An unexpected surprise for **Eddy Monfort** as he is awarded the Order of the Golden Lion by the US 106th Infantry Division Association. For many years Eddy has dedicated time and energy in honoring the veterans of the 106th by his work as a historian, monument builder and organizer of events perpetuating the history of the Division.



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A view on the reenactment at Manhay, which provided an exciting evocation of the Battle of the Bulge.

The snow covered fields and reenactors in period uniforms and equipment (notice the Hetzer in the background) created an authentic scenery of the winter battle that raged here in 1944.



The Manhay History Museum '44 in the background recently opened with stunning displays and authentic relics of the Battle of the Bulge. A must see!



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MailCall News

My mother, **Jo Anne Spencer Clark**, is no longer using her computer. Please remove her from your mailing list. She has enjoyed it for years, but at 97-1/3, she is not capable of using her computer anymore.

Thank you!
BJ McCauley

[Jo Anne is the wife of **Dick Spencer**, HQ/3. Our favorite artist and cartoonist, and creator of the Battling Buzzard logo.]

From **Loïc Jankowiak's** Facebook page [First Airborne Task Force and the Forgotten Paratroopers](#)
December 7 at 5:29 PM ·



While this kind of story must surely be numerous elsewhere, it is rather rare in Southern France.

I am excited enough to be able to participate in sending pictures recently discovered in the garage of a lady who witnessed the liberation of August 1944 in Provence.

Nadine Boyer's parents from Les Arcs-sur-Argens, helped a paratrooper, **Dale Booth** from HQ-1/517 who landed near their home on August 15, 1944. As a result, a friendship was forged and kept in correspondence well after the war. They have in addition to that, took four shots where is Nadine family and other paratroopers.

In 2018, Nadine Boyer gave these photos to author Phillippe Natalini asking that these photos be given to Dale Booth or someone from his family.

I discovered this request today and I am in touch with Dale Booth's son !! Unfortunately Dale Booth died, but his twin sons are still here. These photos are very interesting because there are very few taken to Les Arcs.

Quite exceptionally, the picture on the left was taken on August 14, 1944 in the afternoon before planes' boarding by a US camera. The photo on the right was probably taken on August 18, the day the 517th left the Les Arcs area and was took by Nadine's family !



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From our Swiss friend, **Gilles Guignard**
December 13 at 11:27 PM

“My Friend Pat Lucide and I were on Swiss TV last night”

Un collectionneur dans l'univers WW2

A collector in the WW2 universe



[Play RTS video](#)



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I am so saddened about the loss of **Lory Curtis**. He was so passionate, so committed to the men of the 517th and their history that he would think nothing of proposing the nearly impossible, only to make it happen. He was probably our reigning national reunion host champion, hosting at least three national reunions. He was always the man for the job, and it seems impossible we've lost him this soon. Lory was for some time one of my partners in crime - that next generation peer who would do anything for our guys. My heart goes out to his beloved wife, children and grandchildren, and of course to his dear brother Tim.

I do love the mental picture that **Pat Seitz** painted for us, though - that of Lory organizing the guys yet again. I'm sure she's right.

Claire Johnson Giblin

Daughter, **K. Allan Johnson**, 596

Another excellent Mail Call. I am so grateful that this email had tributes to Lory as I loved seeing his smiling face. Good memories of a special person.

PS please don't tell Alan that I mistyped his last name! Grier is the original Scottish spelling, but his family was sent to Northern Ireland where the spelling morfed into the way he spells it —Greer.

Pat Seitz

[Pat, that was my fault. I spelled Alan's name wrong, not you. – BB]

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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