



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2430

December 22, 2019

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

75th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge



To The Bulge
Life magazine,
1944

Members of the 460th
Field Artillery Battalion,
on the way to the bulge



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American soldiers help an old Belgian woman, who refused to evacuate the town, Manhay, during the fighting

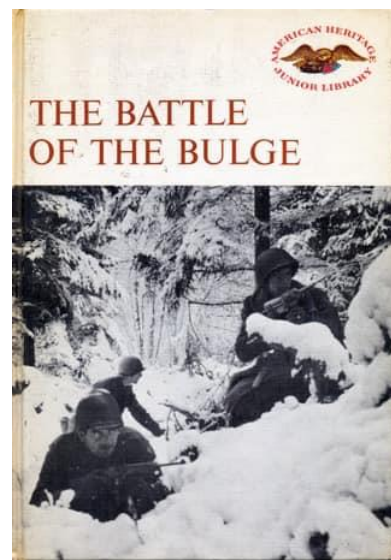


[Patrick K. O'Donnell](#)

December 16 at 8:15 AM ·

On this day 75 years ago was the beginning of the Battle of the Bulge — one of America's greatest battles. I'm also reflecting on the hundreds of American heroes I interviewed who fought in the Ardennes and are no longer with us. I treasure their friendship and the powerful memories they entrusted to me. Next to a very recognizable Bulge photo is one of my favorite books from my early childhood. When other kids were reading dinosaur books, I was obsessed with America in WWII and the Civil War.

A childhood obsession, still my passion, is a calling.





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A few photos of the recent events near Manhay, recognizing the 75th Anniversary.

From Eddy Monfort's facebook page:

In [Grandmenil, Luxembourg, Belgium](#).

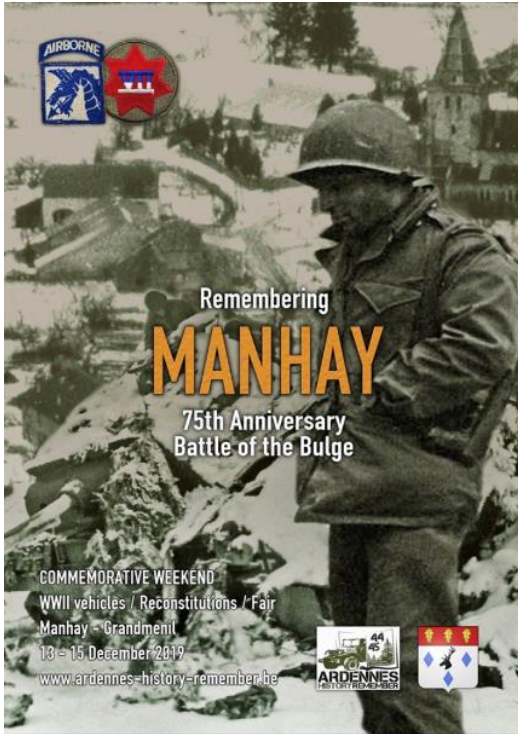
"A crazy weekend. Never seen in Ardennes since 1944"



<https://www.facebook.com/benedikte.gijsbregs/videos/10218940049484986/>



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More photos from [Time Travellers , Retro & Vintage Photography](#)





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From: [Melee for the Manhay-Grandmenil Sector in the Bulge](#)

American and German troops battled for control of two key Belgian towns during the Battle of the Bulge.



By Kirk A. Freeman

The young men of Companies H and I of 3rd Battalion, 517th Parachute Regiment (PIR) were about to move out for their assault on the crossroad town of Manhay, Belgium. The paratroopers started at 1 am from their assembly area a mile northwest of Vaux Chavanne and hiked the two miles through dense underbrush and deep snow to a small wood line 1,000 yards northeast of Manhay.

It was getting close to 2 am, and the men were waiting with the usual mixed emotions before an attack. Some huddled together for a little warmth; smoking was not allowed, movement was restricted, and so the men waited silently like ghosts in the moonlit snow under the shadows of the trees. Some of the men probably were replaying how this moment in their lives was first set into motion.

[text_ad]

Fighting For the Crossroads of the Ardennes

The severe winters of the Ardennes region usually start with harsh and heavy rains and thick fog in November and that turn into deep snowfalls in December. The clay soil is solid when frozen but turns quickly into slippery and sticky mire during rainfall. The northern sector of the German offensive in the heavily wooded Ardennes, which began on December 16, 1944, was a range of low, relatively open plains with some wooded areas and prominent ridgelines intermingled. The numerous small river crossings made cross-country travel with armor nearly impossible. To make any appreciable movement an army had to rely on the roads.

Towns and villages that were at the intersections of these vital roads were important points for defense and attack for each of the armies involved in the great series of actions that came to be known as the Battle of the Bulge. These small crossroads became vital points for control of the flow of men and matériel during the German drive toward the Meuse River and then, it was hoped, on to Antwerp, the great Belgian seaport. They also were vital to the Americans in defense to deprive the enemy of their routes of advance and supply.

The objective of the German offensive was to capture Antwerp, denying the Allies a major port of entry for men and supplies and to drive a wedge between the American and British armies advancing toward the heartland of Germany. If successful, Hitler believed that the defeat might actually be such a catastrophic blow to the Allied effort that a separate peace might be negotiated in the West. Then the Führer intended to turn all his military might and attention toward the defeat of the marauding Soviet Red Army in the East.

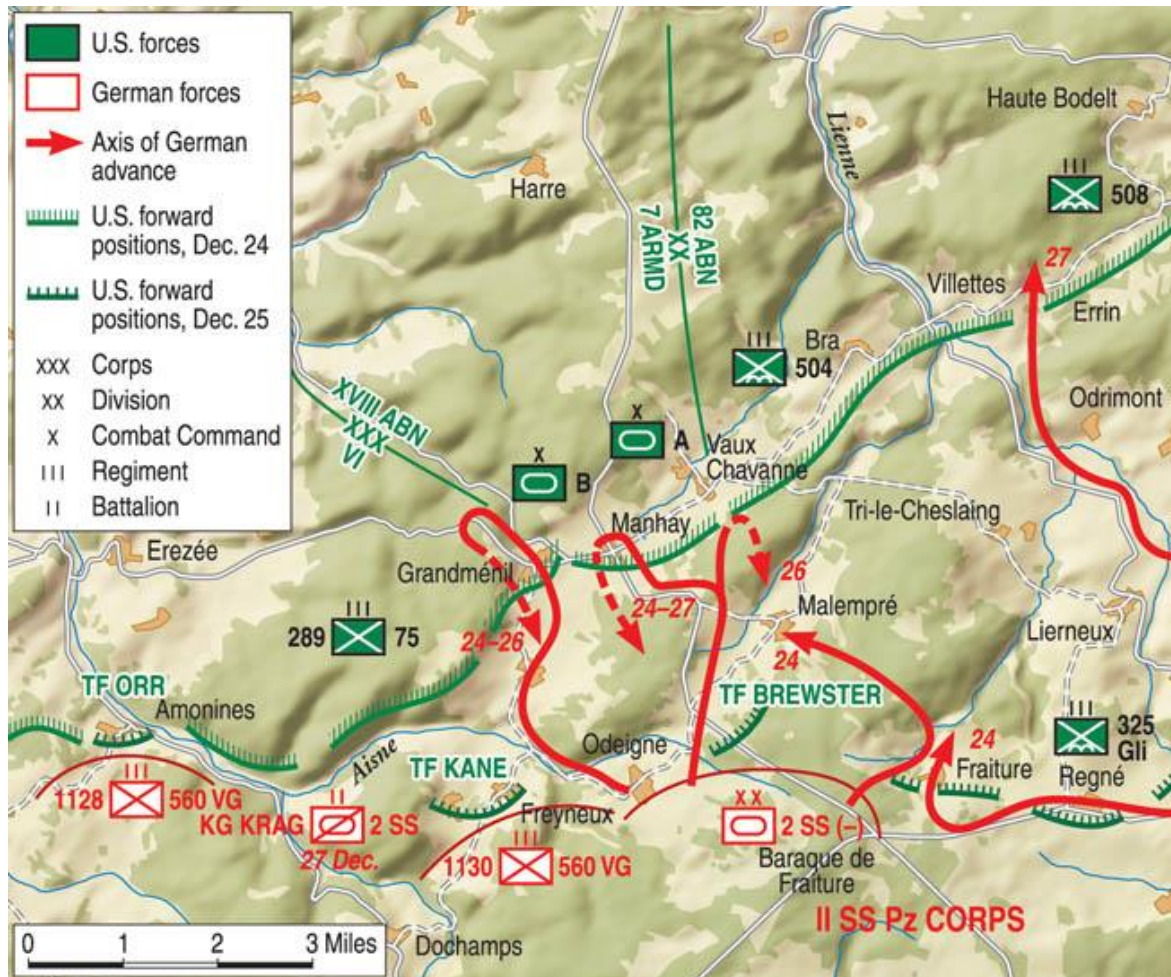


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Although the plan was deemed a sure failure by most German generals, Hitler believed in the desperate gamble and overruled his top commanders. The German war machine assembled in the Ardennes was indeed powerful but lacked fuel and other basic supplies, while some units were short of manpower.

The battle-hardened Sixth Panzer Army was assigned to the northern sector of the German offensive. However, after initial success in the attack the army was running out of the precious fuel and supplies to keep going. The mostly untried American infantry divisions that fell back during the first stages of the assault were quickly bolstered by more experienced units with better support. The 1st SS Panzer Division slammed into the American 30th Infantry Division several days after the initial assault. The 30th was an old adversary that previously tore the SS Division apart during the battles in northern France after the D-Day landings in June 1944 and forced it to reorganize for the Ardennes offensive.

History was repeating itself, for the 30th Division stopped the 1st SS in its northwesterly drive during the Bulge, and in the ensuing battles would again hammer the German division into near annihilation. The 12th SS and 9th SS, support divisions of the 1st SS, were slow in their advance and eventually became embroiled in bloody battles against an unmoving Allied line. Soon, other German SS and regular army units of the Fifth Panzer Army that were supposed to be preparing defensive positions were forced to attack strengthening American positions along the Salm, Orthe, and Lesse Rivers. This left the entire northern shoulder of the German offensive weakened and exposed to counterattacks.



American troops and armored vehicles of Combat Command A, 7th Armored Division battled elements of German SS divisions for control of the key towns of Manhay and Grandménil as the Germans attempted to advance toward the Belgian seaport of Antwerp during the Battle of the Bulge.



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Fuel For Das Reich

By December 24, the majority of the German advance in the north was forced to proceed on foot as supplies dwindled. The German command was sending in fresh units to bolster the northern sector and to attempt to take vital high ground occupied by the U.S. 82nd Airborne Division. The 82nd was, in turn, being reinforced by elements of other units, including the now exhausted troops that had fallen back after their stubborn but failed defense of the town of St. Vith, Belgium.

This pieced-together force was holding a fragile and scattered line along the Salm River, stretching about 30 miles roughly southwest to northeast and with vulnerable flanks. The American command decided that a strong armor-supported defense at the crossroads town of Manhay would deprive the Germans of that important hub and protect a wobbling flank of the line the 82nd Airborne was building. Elements of the 7th Armored Division and the remnants of the hard-hit 106th Infantry Division were ordered to dig in and hold Manhay and strengthen the high ground west and north of the town.

In the early morning hours of December 24, 1944, the 2nd SS Panzer Division Das Reich arrived in the southeastern portion of the Manhay-Grandménil sector in the middle of the northern shoulder of the bulge. The division finally received fuel for its tanks on the 22nd and was moving into position to attack. To the right of the 2nd SS were the 9th and 1st SS and their support units. To the left was the 560th Volksgrenadier Division. Immediately, the 3rd and 4th Panzergrenadier Regiments (Deutschland and Der Führer, respectively) from the 2nd SS Panzer Division, both with armored support, moved up the road leading north into Manhay. The remaining German armor was stationed in the rear, hidden in heavily wooded areas with conserved fuel for a quick and decisive attack or defense when needed.

The American Defenses

The American defense of Manhay on the 24th never really had much support due to poor communication between the numerous unit commanders. Units could rarely make radio contact with their headquarters or one another. Additionally, high-ranking officers from some units refused to take orders from other officers of different divisions or corps as it went against their idea of the proper chain of command. The American command and communication failures were setting the stage for a military blunder that the Germans were, without knowing it, about to exploit at Manhay.

The town of Manhay in the Luxembourg Province of Belgium was one of those small crossroads towns that were so vital to the German armies in the area. Through this small, ancient town passed the northbound road to Liege, while eastern and western roads linked points along which other German forces were advancing in their northwestern push toward Antwerp. Over 1,000 people lived in Manhay in 1944, but that all changed when the Germans overwhelmed the American forces in their initial assault to the east. For over a week retreating Allied soldiers were seen moving through the town. Those residents who did not flee soon found themselves in a combat zone.

On the morning of December 24, the exhausted and war-weary soldiers of Combat Command A, 7th Armored Division entered the sleepy town of Manhay and immediately urged the remaining residents to get out before it was too late. Many people rushed to nearby villages only to find that those residents were evacuating also. Then, toward the end of the day the Americans received a short message via radio giving them strict orders to keep the civilians in their homes. The American command, after long debate, decided to withdraw from this area under cover of darkness and take up a stronger defensive position on the higher ridges north of the village. Only a small scouting outpost was to remain behind to keep a lookout for any approaching enemy columns while the rest of the command removed to the new defensive line.



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The Confused Fight For Manhay

From the southern road the 2nd SS Panzer Division Das Reich was nearing its objective of Manhay. The 2nd SS Panzer Division was an elite combat unit originally formed in 1939. It served with distinction in the invasions of France and the Low Countries, the Balkans, and the Soviet Union. The 2nd was brought back to France to be refitted as a heavy armored division and to rebuild its depleted manpower after the Allies landed in Normandy in 1944. Even though it did not complete its refurbishing, the division moved north and fought almost continually, inflicting and receiving heavy losses. Now the division was moving forward once more to take on an old adversaries in a last-ditch effort that many of the soldiers believed was in vain. With that said, they considered it their sworn duty to achieve victory or die trying; they would not back down easily.



The day before the German attack on the Belgian village of Manhay, an American soldier shoulders a bazooka and stares down a tree-lined road, the likely route of approach that German tanks would utilize. The fight for Manhay occurred at the height of the Battle of the Bulge.

As a result of the heavy fighting on the flanks with American infantry and armor, other German units were draining men and matériel from the 2nd. Only two battalions made from elements of the two regiments of Der Führer and Deutschland were available to make up the attacking force. A bright moon was visible in the freezing night. The soldiers of both sides were visible as dark spots against the white, snow-covered ground, and their large vehicles appeared as clear targets. Just as Combat Command A started to move out of town, the SS soldiers and their tank columns arrived and immediately attacked.

Artillery and mortar fire poured into Manhay from both sides. The Germans aimed to eliminate the American armored column. Stuck in their homes, the citizens of Manhay were stunned by the ferocity of the artillery, mortar, and small-arms fire. Civilians fled their homes from one side of the town as the Das Reich soldiers entered the other. Both civilians and soldiers were now hit in the exchange. The roads became choked with wrecked vehicles,



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panic-stricken civilians, retreating soldiers, and the dead and wounded. In a short time the town of Manhay was in German hands. Casualties were heavy.

The Germans Reinforce the Grandménil-Manhay Sector

As the Americans retreated from Manhay, the remnants of Combat Command A moved westward barely a mile down the road to Grandménil. The American commander, Lt. Col. Walter B. Richardson, spotted two M10 tank destroyers of C Company, 629th Battalion, and ordered them quickly into defensive positions. Without infantry support their situation quickly became untenable. After a brief exchange of fire, both the Americans and Germans lost two tanks, and the German advance continued. As the Americans were pushed out of Grandménil, an artillery barrage ordered by Richardson started to fall on the road leading west from the town. The Americans used the artillery cover to retreat toward the town of Erezée about 4.4 miles farther west. Attacking German armor followed into Grandménil but halted due to the American artillery fire and waited for infantry support. The German advance lost precious time in the process. It took more than an hour for the infantry to come up and to establish a defensive perimeter before pushing on.

Meanwhile, Richardson came across soldiers of the 75th Infantry Division as his command retreated toward Erezée and ordered them to set up an ambush along the road. The Americans used the time to dig in and wait. Once their infantry arrived, the Germans renewed their attack. At the front of their column were several American Sherman tanks captured earlier at Manhay and Grandménil and pressed into service by the Germans. This ploy is debated as either being due to the lack of time to siphon all the fuel from the Shermans into German tanks or a clever tactical ruse to confuse the situation.

As the German spearhead thundered westward, the men of the 75th first saw the Sherman tanks coming toward them. Thinking they might be American, the mostly green soldiers of the 75th held their fire until the armor was right on top of them. In the ensuing melee, one of the Sherman tanks was taken out by a bazooka. As daylight approached, the German assault pulled back to Grandménil and Manhay to await reinforcements.

Throughout the evening of December 24, the 2nd SS Panzer Division moved into the Grandménil-Manhay sector. The 4th Regiment Der Führer defended Grandménil, and the 3rd Regiment Deutschland occupied positions in and around Manhay. According to one SS soldier, someone found a piano in a house that night and tried to play a few Christmas carols, but after a pitiful attempt to sing everyone realized they were not in a festive mood.

Clear Skies on Christmas Day

The dawning of Christmas Day 1944 in the Grandménil and Manhay sector was not a peaceful one. With the clear day, Allied aircraft were free to strafe, bomb, and gather intelligence on the Germans at will. At Manhay several Lockheed P-38 Lightning fighter-bombers strafed and bombed the town, destroying German armor. In the treeline just over a half mile northeast of town, the war-weary men of the 2nd Battalion, 424th Regiment and a battalion from the 7th Armored Division moved into place. The exhausted infantrymen of the 424th had been in nearly continuous combat since the initial German assault at St. Vith on December 16. Christmas Eve was the first day they were allowed any appreciable rest, and men found floors in warm houses to sleep on until they were kicked awake with the warning that the Germans were at Manhay. On Christmas morning the tired American troops were digging foxholes in the woods northeast of Manhay, awaiting their slow-moving armored support, and officers were being quickly briefed about their attack that evening on Manhay.

Meanwhile, at Grandménil, the cruelty of war continued. The morning after the action with the German spearhead, the men of K Company, 75th Infantry Division moved into Grandménil. Halfway into town they were greeted with heavy machine-gun fire from the other side of the village. When German tanks began arriving the company quickly pulled out of town. Once more American artillery fire started to fall on the town. After the barrage,



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Companies I, K, and L assaulted and briefly occupied part of Grandménil until once again they were forced to pull out.

The towns of Grandménil and Manhay were now under almost constant American artillery bombardment and air attacks. All morning U.S. soldiers and equipment moved into position between Grandménil and Erezée and awaited the order to launch a heavy counterattack. Along with the 75th Infantry Division, the 289th Regimental Combat Team and elements of the U.S. 3rd Armored Division reached the area. That morning the 1st Battalion, Combat Command B, 33rd Armored Regiment occupied a position with the infantry just west of Grandménil while waiting for more reinforcements. Around 10 am, Companies D and F, 36th Infantry Regiment; A Company, 33rd Armored Regiment with light Stuart tanks; Companies F and I with medium Sherman tanks; and the 2nd Platoon, D Company, 23rd Combat Engineer Battalion arrived to bolster the assault force. The American attack was set for dusk. Meanwhile, artillery rounds continued falling on the Germans in both towns.



On December 27, 1944, an M4 Sherman medium tank advances toward Manhay and possible contact with German forces in the vicinity.

German Withdrawal From Manhay

At Manhay, the 2nd Battalion, 424th Infantry Regiment started its assault across open ground in the fading light. The German machine gunners allowed the attack to approach to within about 50 yards of the town and then laid down a deadly hail of bullets that snaked across the American advance through a field. Instinctively, the men of



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the 424th sought cover, and all forward movement stopped. As the winter darkness gathered, flares lit the sky for the gunners to find targets. The attackers were ordered to withdraw almost immediately, but the order did not reach most of the men who had advanced closest to the town. As American artillery fire resumed, these men were subjected to friendly fire. Small groups fell back to a sunken road that split the open plain north of Manhay. They quickly gathered the wounded for the medics to attend before moving farther back to safety. During its brief attack the 2nd Battalion suffered nearly 35 percent casualties.

Later that night, the Germans started to withdraw the majority of their soldiers from Manhay. Their tanks were nearly out of fuel, and ammunition was running low. German commanders decided to try another push in a new location while they still had the capabilities to attack. One SS pioneer officer with the Deutschland Regiment wrote in his journal about the American Christmas Day attack and subsequent shelling: “Our guns in an orgy of spendthrift recklessness reply with eight rounds—then cease fire.” Within days only a small detachment of German defenders remained in Manhay with a few tanks in support.

Taking Back Grandménil

After heavy preliminary artillery bombardment, the main attack at Grandménil finally gained a toehold in the town. Then the fighting became house to house. Many of the houses were aflame, and the forms of the soldiers and tanks could clearly be seen by all in the hellish landscape. At 10 pm, American tank columns started pushing toward the town with an infantry company in support, but the American armor was soon in trouble from German antitank fire, while heavy weapons fire also bogged the supporting infantry down. In one American tank column, eight of the 10 tanks were destroyed or disabled before getting into the village itself. All through Christmas night and into the next morning the struggle for the town continued. One German tank sat in a pit for cover and proved impossible to dislodge. That tank crew took out any American armor foolish enough to get in its sights. To make matters worse for the Americans, the tenacious panzergrenadiers were not showing any signs of leaving. Both sides took heavy casualties in the house-to-house fighting.



Destroyed and abandoned vehicles litter the field of combat around the Belgian town of Manhay. The town itself sustained heavy damage during the Battle of the Bulge as American troops maintained control of the area, including vital roads that led westward toward the River Meuse and the port of Antwerp.



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The Americans had not slept in over 40 hours, and exhaustion eroded their combat effectiveness. After a series of attacks and counterattacks neither side gained the upper hand. An order for the Americans to withdraw was sent early in the afternoon, and the troops started pulling out around 1:30 pm. The artillery again opened fire on the town around 3 pm. The weary Americans moved into Grandménil once again, but this time it was much quieter. Only a handful of Germans remained; the majority of the enemy forces had used the time to retreat. Others, trapped by the artillery fire, made a break toward Manhay. The Americans cut them down with small-arms fire and mortars as they crossed the open fields and the nearby road.

For the rest of the day and into the night the Americans fought to retake the town. For the next two days, German snipers and small mortar teams kept the Americans busy. Both sides occasionally lobbed shells at one another as well.

With Grandménil in American hands, the men of the 75th Division started digging foxholes east of the town, setting up a defensive perimeter. Soon, however, they found they were digging in an unmarked American minefield. Their task was quickly abandoned and the perimeter moved closer to the village. The ensuing days were spent rounding up German survivors in the town, collecting the wounded and dead, and dodging the occasional mortar round.

The 517th Parachute Regiment in the Bulge

Before the Christmas Day attacks on Manhay and Grandménil, the Germans decided that they could not get to Liege through those villages; the cost would be too great. On December 27, the Germans tried to push through Sadzot, a small village southwest of Manhay- Grandménil. That attack led to a series of blunders on both sides and a vicious fight that ended with an American victory. The Germans pulled the majority of their forces out of the Manhay-Grandménil sector in preparation for the failed Sadzot attack.

American commanders were unaware of the purpose of the German withdrawal and brought in the 3rd Battalion, 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team. The 517th was among the elite forces of World War II. The men were mostly hand picked, all airborne qualified, young, intelligent, and in top physical shape. They were veterans of the Italian campaign and Operation Dragoon, the Allied invasion of southern France. The 517th was an independent unit attached at various times to the 17th, 82nd, and 13th Airborne Divisions.

When the orders were received to deploy for action during the Battle of the Bulge, the 517th was in Soissons, France, getting much needed rest after 94 continuous days in combat during Operation Dragoon. It rained almost continually in the little time the men were at Soissons, and it was raining on the night of December 21 as they were loaded on trucks. The fortunate men rode in trucks with canvas covers. Others were exposed to the elements as they were driven through the night in the cold rain, sleet, and then snow as they moved closer to the northern shoulder of the bulge. The following day, men of the 1st Battalion were driven right into an artillery barrage and unloaded in a desperate battle near the towns of Soy and Hotton. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions were sent farther north to bolster gaps in the American lines and hold near Werbomont, south of Liege.



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Soldiers of the 7th Armored Division stand atop a camouflaged M4 Sherman medium tank and scan the horizon for the presence of German forces near Manhay.

More Than 5,000 Rounds of Artillery

Company G, 3rd Battalion was detailed to guard the American headquarters at Harze. Companies H and I went into action accompanied by one platoon of the 596th Engineers and a section of the regimental demolitions platoon. On the night of December 26, the attack force moved to the treeline just northeast of Manhay and waited. At 2 am, the American artillery was to commence a 10-minute barrage. The troopers would move closer to the town and wait as a short secondary barrage started five minutes later. Once that barrage lifted the men were to mount a classic charge into the town with fixed bayonets. In all, more than 5,000 artillery rounds would drop in the vicinity of Manhay during that short time.

After the first barrage lifted, the men moved into the open field north of Manhay. When the second barrage came over, the fire of at least one artillery battery was short, the rounds landing on the men of 1st Platoon, I Company with devastating effect. First Lieutenant Floyd A. Stott was killed along with 12 others under his command, and at least 20 men were wounded. The rattled troops could not stay to take care of their friends; they had to advance as fast as they could into the town. Men from H Company had to pass through the carnage with comrades pleading for help, but the officers were shouting for everyone to keep moving.

The Americans rushed into the town and immediately started tossing white phosphorous grenades through cellar doors, into rooms, and other places where the enemy might be hiding. Within half an hour the town was in the paratroopers' control. About 50 Germans were killed and 29 taken prisoner. Several German tanks were also destroyed by bazooka fire. Many buildings lay in ruins, and some were ablaze. As the Americans rounded up prisoners, a German Tiger tank started moving from the town to the woods south of Manhay. The Americans had believed it was out of action and overlooked it during their attack. The tank, however, rumbled off to a safe distance without attacking.



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On December 23, 1944, Belgian civilians flee after being warned that a battle for the village of Manhay was looming. Many of these Belgians have bicycles ready to speed their retreat to safety.

“You Never Walked in Manhay, You Ran!”

Around 4 am, a minor German counterattack against the 517th defenses proved ineffective; it was not heavily pressed, nor repeated. Small German infantry teams remained in the woods and continued to periodically fire anti-tank guns, mortars, or small arms into the town while they prepared to try the alternative route through Sadzot. Meanwhile, the Tiger that had rumbled off earlier stayed in the area for a few more days and occasionally fired down the streets at the men as they scurried about. For years, the old veterans jokingly recalled, “You never walked in Manhay, you ran!”

On the day Manhay was captured, three American P-38 planes flew over. Thinking the town was still in German hands, the pilots strafed and bombed the paratroopers, killing one man and tearing the arm off another before flying back to their base. The battle for Manhay was finally over.

Although the battles for Manhay and Grandménil were relatively small engagements compared to others, the men on both sides who were there fought with determination and great will power. Memories of the fighting at these two little crossroads towns would remain with them for the rest of their lives.



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75ème anniversaire de la Bataille des Ardennes à Manhay



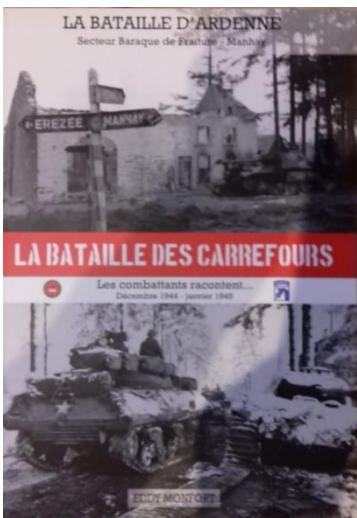
<https://www.tvlux.be/video/info/75eme/75eme-anniversaire-de-la-bataille-des-ardennes-a-manhay-33356.html>

Manhay commémore la Bataille des Ardennes du 11 au 15 décembre 2019. Eddy Monfort, collectionneur, auteur et président de l'asbl « Ardennes History Remember » évoque les événements de l'hiver 44 et le programme du WE de commémoration. Gilbert Sepult, 9 ans à l'époque, nous parle de ses souvenirs.

French 6 December 2019.

75th anniversary of the battle of the Ardennes in Manhay.

Manhay commemorates the battle of the Ardennes from 11 to 15 December 2019. **Eddy Monfort**, collector, author and president of the "Ardennes history remember" evokes the events of the winter 44 and the program of the we Commemoration. Gilbert Sepult, 9 years old at the time, tells us about his memories.



December 6 at 4:29 PM

Just arrived 😊

Eddy Monfort's book, on sale only at the MHM44 museum of grandmenil.

[Manhay History 44 Museum](#)



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From: <http://www.battleofthebulgememories.be/stories26/us-army25/488-the-2nd-battalion-517th-parachute-infantry-regiment.html>

The 2nd Battalion, 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment, and the Bulge.

Interview with:

Major David H. Armstrong, executive officer

And Lieutenant W. G. Irwin, S-3.

Lieutenant Colonel Richard J Seitz is Commander.



L to R =Major David Armstrong, Ex Of - Lt Col Richard J Seitz, Commander and Tom Cross (Photo Website 517th PIR)

By Captain Robert C. Healey
Information & History Service
NARA documents (1945)

The 2nd Battalion was in regimental rest area at Soissons (France) when the breakthrough came. All weapons were taken from the Battalion and given to the 82nd Airborne Division. On December 18, 1944, regiment was alerted to move on two hours' notice. On the afternoon of the 21st the still-weaponless Battalion was ordered to move with regiment to Namur (Belgium). New weapons were issued at 2025 hours and the Battalion entrucked at 2130 hours, riding all night and all day to one-half mile south of Aywaille. The 517th Regimental Combat Team was attached to the 30th Division on the 23rd December. In accordance with 30th Division orders the Regimental Combat Team moved by truck 50 miles to an assembly area two miles east of Xhoffraix. The next day, the 24th, the companies left the area and set up defensive positions in the vicinity of Chodes. Christmas Day they moved another 50 miles to Ferrieres and set up further defensive positions. During this time and through the next six days



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there was no contact with the enemy. On the 28th December the 2nd Battalion entrucked after dark for a forward assembly area one and one-half miles north of Manhay, where it bivouacked for the next three days. New Year's several rounds of heavy artillery fire fell in the vicinity of the Battalion CP. There was one direct hit on the CP, killing one and wounded eight. That night the 2nd Battalion entrucked again for another forward assembly area one and one-half miles northwest of Haute Bodeux.

For the attack – coordinated attack – which started at dawn January 3, 1945, the Battalion was operating on the extreme left flank of the 82nd Airborne Division, which had the mission of clearing the right bank of the Salm River and occupying the high ground along the river. The 30th Infantry Division on the left flank was to keep pace along the left bank. Battalion objectives were Trois-Ponts (that part of the town lying along the right flank of the river) and the high ground at Mont de Fosse. Companies "D" and "E" were abreast for the attack, Company "D" moving in the left to Trois-Ponts, Company "E" on the right to Mont de Fosse. Company "F" was in reserve. The two companies met stiff resistance on the outskirts of Trois-Ponts. The enemy had good observation from across the river and from Mont de Fosse. Company "E" called for artillery support but could get only a battery – three rounds. Company "F" was committed at 0930 hours. It started to move around left behind Company "D" but was pulled back at 1430 hours to set up defensive positions along the road into Trois-Ponts covering Company "E" which was in difficulty from heavy mortar and machine guns fire from the high ground at Mont de Fosse. Company "D" took Trois-Ponts during the afternoon with losses of 12 enlisted men and two officers killed in action and 88 enlisted men and five officers wounded. It was relieved by a company from the 3rd Battalion.

During the night Company "E" withdrew under the cover of Company "F" and took up Company "F"'s positions on the road. Company "F" reassembled and went on a wide sweep around the right flank and took the high ground at (666966), thus outflanking the troublesome resistance on Mont de Fosse. Companies "E" and "D" followed, at daybreak. Company "E" moved in on Mont de Fosse, capturing 137 prisoners with little resistance and moved into Trois-Ponts to relieve the 3rd Battalion's company.

For the next three days the positions were consolidated. There was much sniper fire in the area and the enemy still had plenty of good observation for fire from across the river. On the 4th January Company "F" lost six men and one officer killed. Company "E" took over cleaning out the town on the 5th January and lost two men by sniper fire. Companies "D" and "F" were in defensive positions north of Bergeval. Company "E" lost an officer killed by a sniper in Trois-Ponts.

On the 11th January 1945 the Battalion entrucked at 2230 hours and role all night to one mile west of Stavelot. The next day it was attached to the 7th Armored Division and bivouacked at Neuville.

From the 13th to 18th January, Battalion was on 1-hour alert to pass through 1st Division on attack plan which had to be called off because of foul weather.

On the 19th January trucked to Walk. The companies went into a forward assembly area north of Am Kreuz (864982). On the 20th command post was set up at Deidenberg (865955). Company "F" sent out a night patrol to reconnoiter the wood "Auf der Hard", south of Deidenberg.



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For this position the Battalion was working with the CCA of the 7th Armored Division and had Company "B" of 17th Armored Infantry under Lieutenant Hardin to form Task Force Seitz. On the right flank CCB was to take Born and on the left the 1st Division would take Ambleve and work down toward Wallerode (880900). From a line of departure at Deidenberg Task Force Seitz would clear out woods at An der Hand and continue down to clear out resistance in the In der Eidt woods. Companies "D" and "E" led off the assault with Company "F" in reserve. They meet intense artillery and nebelwerfer fire throughout the attacks. It was snowing and the weather was wretched. Resistance from enemy infantry was moderate. They were on their first objective setting up defensive positions by nightfall with loss of six men killed and 30 wounded. There, they were relieved by the 508th Parachute Regiment and prepared to continue the Battalion attack to the south and southwest. Pushing out at midnight they secured the edge of the In der Eidt woods.

The Armored Infantry support was called into play for the continuation of the attack. Early in the morning orders came to move down through the woods and attack Hunnange (845899). One company was to mount on medium tanks, the next on half-tracks. Mounting was to be in position.

At 0900 hours the 23rd January they started moving through the woods. There was no bridge over the railroad running into St Vith. The half-tracks couldn't get across the railroad and the infantry had to continue afoot. The tanks, however, got over. They reached the edge of the woods on the southwest. On their right flank Nieder Emmels (839908) which had been reported as taken by 30th Division still showed signs of resistance and four assault guns and 100 prisoners were cleaned out. Task Force Wimple (CCA 7th Armored) was supposed to have taken high ground to south of Hunnange, but two assault guns remained in the town. By 2100 hours defensive positions had been set up around Nieder Emmels and Hunnange.

The morning of the 25th January 1945, Battalion received orders to move to assembly area northeast corner of In der Eidt. The 106th Infantry (424th Regiment) was jumping off from the Auf der Hand woods at 0705 hours to take Medell (883923) while Task Forces Griffith and Rhea took Wallerode. When both were taken – schedule called for 1000 hours – Battalion to take high ground between them. The Battalion jumped off at 1000 hours, was held up for a time by machine guns and small arms fire but was on the objective at 1130 hours. The 106th (424th Regiment) on the left and Task Forces Rhea and Griffith were contacted on the right. Defensive positions set up. Relieved on the 26th January by the 424th Regiment and withdrawn to Stavelot.

Source: Combat Interview from NARA: National Archives = 1945



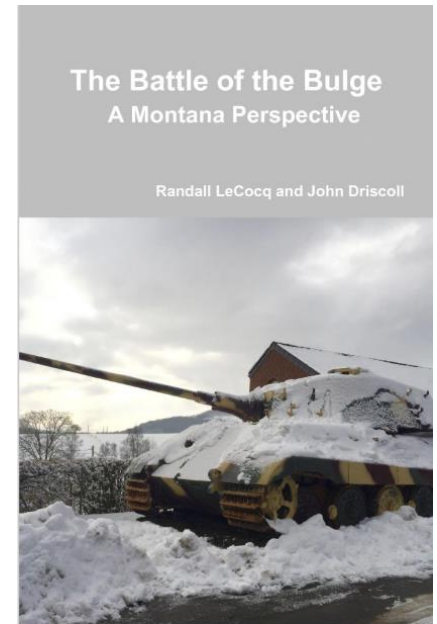
517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

From: https://books.google.com/books/about/The_Battle_of_the_Bulge_A_Montana_Perspe.html?id=STNnDwAAQBAJ

By early on December 24, Montgomery had determined that the U.S. line near the Salm River was exposed -- too far forward. He ordered Ridgway to pull the U.S. 3rd Armored and 82nd Airborne forces back to Manhay, where they would join the 7th Armored Division survivors from St. Vith, the 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment, and the 75th Infantry. This was just in time, as the 2nd SS Panzer was approaching Manhay, and, on their left, the 560th Volksgrenadiers threatened Soy.

The Marche Plain was to be the German “high water mark,” the turning point in the Battle of the Bulge, and the last German threat in the European Theater. Manteuffel seized Manhay at midnight on the 24th, but his men were exhausted and his units were depleted of supplies, fuel, and food. Most importantly, the skies had cleared and U.S. P-47s and British Typhoons were in the air, flying 12,000 sorties in the two days before Christmas.⁶⁷ American replacements of both men and armor were filling in the reduced battalions and companies on the line. Sherman tanks were, as Führer Begleit Brigade Commander Remer said, “everywhere,” and U.S. artillery was massed on the heights behind Manhay and Grandmènil.

Things began to change on December 25 and 26, with Christmas Day being crucial. Ridgway had told his commanders, “We smash the German drive here today on our front, smash the German offensive, his spirit for this war. We lick the Germans here today.”⁶⁸ The battle had shifted to the Manhay crossroads. The 2nd SS Panzer Division tried to move from Manhay down to Grandmènil and Érezée on the Marche highway, but was turned back by the converging 289th Regiment of the 75th Infantry, 509th PIB, and 7th Armored CCA, and by 3rd Armored CCB (Task Force McGeoge) troops arriving from the northern shoulder. The 325th Glider, 7th Armored, and 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment finally retook Manhay on the 27th, and the 325th blocked other elements of the 2nd SS Panzer withdrawing to Tri-le-Chesling. Tucker’s 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 82nd Airborne, heroes at Cheneux, drove the 9th SS Panzer from Bra on the German right.





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Further down the highway, the 84th Infantry Division stopped the 116th Panzer Division at Marche and crushed it in the Verdennes pocket, destroying 113 armored vehicles and taking 1,200 prisoners. On the 26th, the 84th Infantry Division had issued weapons to cooks, orderlies, and truck drivers who were pushed into the line as the enemy attacked. General Bolling disseminated orders that “this was as far as the Germans would advance. There would be no retreat; this was a fight to the last man.” That day, German Tiger tanks attacked single file, unaware that Marche was highly defended. The 84th held.

The 290th Infantry Regiment of the 75th Division, 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment, and 3rd Armored Combat Command A, with Combat Command B arriving, stopped the 560th Volksgrenadiers at Hotton and destroyed the German salient towards Soy and Dochamps at a cost of 139 casualties. During the fight at Soy, General Rose, commanding the 3rd Armored Division, told his commanders, “Stay right here or there will be a war fought all over again and we won’t be here to fight it.”

U.S. resistance was heroic. The 517th PIR became Ridgway’s “fire fighters,” playing a major role in the nine crucial days of the battle on the Marche Plain. They arrived from southern France on December 22, veterans of the Italian campaign before that, and many of them were replacements from the First Special Services Force. From December 22-24, the 517th’s 1st Battalion, in support of the overstretched 3rd Armored Division, turned back the 560th Volksgrenadiers at Soy and Haid-Hits. The 517th also rescued the U.S. 75th Infantry Division at La Roumiere Hill and assisted Task Force Kane of the 3rd Armored Division at Samrée, Dochamps, and Freyneux, slowing the German advance to Manhay. Freyneux was the 517th’s “toughest fight since Anzio.” Between December 25 and 27, the 517th was involved in battles taking final control of Manhay itself.



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On December 26, Ridgway called on the 517th's 3rd Battalion again, to help the 3rd Armored Division stop the 2nd SS Panzer movement from Manhay to Grandmènil. Following a rolling barrage as in Italy, three 517th companies battled an SS battalion in what one 517th veteran called "a fair fight."⁶⁹ Two members of the 517th, Norm Allen and King Brady, reported for smokejumper duty in Missoula, Montana, in 1946.⁷⁰ Thirteen U.S. field artillery battalions, using "pozit" proximity fuses, had made shells of 28 Tiger tanks already suffering from U.S. P-38 and P-47 attacks. The road between Manhay and Grandmènil had become a killing ground. As the 2nd SS Panzer discovered, one 155-mm "pozit" shell airburst could shred every square foot within a 75-yard diameter.⁷¹

In the three days from December 24-27, the Germans were defeated in all engagements. But there is always the cost. First Lieutenant Norman Streit of Roundup, Montana served with the 36th Armored Infantry Battalion of the 3rd Armored Division. Streit was one of those killed on Christmas and buried at Henri-Chapelle.



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MailCall News







On this day in History –December 14, 1944

As the logistics and military leadership requirements of World War II escalated after the June 1944 Normandy Landings, the United States government created a new version of General of the Army. The five-star rank and authority of General of the Army and equivalent naval Fleet Admiral was created by an Act of Congress on a temporary basis when Pub.L. 78–482 was passed on 14 December 1944,^[6] which provided only 75% of pay and allowances to the grade for those on the retired list.^[7] The rank was temporary, subject to reversion to permanent rank six months after the end of the war. The temporary rank was then declared permanent on 23 March 1946 by Pub.L. 79–333, which also awarded full pay and allowances in the grade to those on the retired list.^{[8][9]} It was created to give the most senior American commanders parity of rank with their British counterparts holding the ranks of field marshal and admiral of the fleet. This second General of the Army rank is not the same as the post-Civil War era version because of its purpose and five stars.

The insignia for the 1944 General of the Army rank consists of five stars in a pentagonal pattern, with points touching. The five officers who have held the 1944 version of General of the Army and the date of each's appointment are as follows:

Generals of the Army during WWII:

Name	Photo	Date of Rank
George Marshall		16 December 1944
Douglas MacArthur		18 December 1944
Dwight D. Eisenhower		20 December 1944
Henry H. Arnold		21 December 1944



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Hello Sir,

I'm a Belgian amateur researcher. I answer you on your request in the newsletter "Mail Call" # 2429 concerning **Pvt Lincoln Ackerman**.

I took a quick look through my records of the 517th, which are very incomplete. Unfortunately, the only specific references to **Pvt Lincoln Willard ACKERMAN Head company 517th P.I.R.** are the following.

The only "official" records I have found is the enlistment records form ancestry at:

https://www.ancestry.com/search/categories/bmd_death/?name=Lincoln_Ackerman&birth=1921&death=1945

Born on the 14th June 1921 in New Hartford Oncida country – New York, U.S.A. and died on 16th January 1945. Killed in action in the Bulge and buried at the American Cemetery of Henri-Chapelle. He was decorated of the Bronze Star.

<https://nl.findagrave.com/memorial/56278930/lincoln-willard-ackerman>

His parents were:

Fay Louis ACKERMAN ° 1895 – † 1921 & Amelia Veronica MYERS ACKERMAN ° 1895 – † 1971

Mr. Meyers, if you want to know more about Pvt. Lincoln ACKERMAN, you can inform for free by a handwritten letter at the following address:

Mr. Robert Dickerson (I called this man ± 10years ago ??)
Freedom of information and Privacy Act Officer
department of the Army
Administrative Section
Attn: (TAPC-ALP-A FOIA)
DCS Personnel and Logistics
200 Stoval Street
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22332-0405

Don't forget to mention in your letter the next sentence: **Concerning: I.D.P.F. of this soldier (Name).** The goal of my request has nor a commercial neither a financial aspect. I'm only interested in this soldier because he was a member of my family. If there are fees or other, I'm ready to pay applicable governmental fees.

I.D.P.F. means = (Individual Deceased Personnel File)

So Mister Meyers, I hope I could help you to find back a link to you young parent who was killed in WWII in my country, who let his live for fighting against the tyranny so that I got my freedom back and could live in peace. The Belgian people is not forgotten what these young American guy's did for us! The sacrifice of their live.

**My personal Christmas greetings to you and those you love!
Also to all the members of the newsletter of the 517th P.I.R.**

Mr. Claudy WINANT
Toekomststraat, 19
3404 – ATTENHOVEN, Belgium



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

From <https://www.honorstates.org/index.php?id=90232>



Lincoln W Ackerman

He was a casualty of World War II on January 16, 1945. He is honored and remembered by the people of New York.

STATE OVERVIEW

New York

Lincoln W Ackerman is among the 53,729 American Gold Star casualties recorded in our archive with close ties to New York. This is a substantial number of individuals who gave their lives in service to their country.

Our core focus is on the decades spanning World War I through the Vietnam War. Generations of sacrifice and service. Many volunteered to serve. Others were asked to join. Each situation as unique as the individuals involved.

SERVICE OVERVIEW

Name Lincoln W Ackerman

Born June 14, 1920

From Essex County, New York

War World War II

Branch US Army

Rank Private

Group 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment

Death January 16, 1945

Cause Hostile, Killed in Action

ORIGINS and HISTORY

Lincoln W Ackerman was born on June 14, 1920. According to our records New York was his home or enlistment state. Furthermore, we have Lewis listed as the city and Essex County included within the archival record.

SERVICE DETAILS

He had enlisted in the Army. Served during World War II. He had the rank of Private. Service number was 42120841. Served with 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment.

CASUALTY CIRCUMSTANCES

Ackerman experienced a traumatic event which resulted in loss of life on January 16, 1945. Recorded circumstances attributed to: "KIA - Killed in Action".

REMEMBERED and MEMORIALS

Lincoln W Ackerman is buried or memorialized at Plot G Row 9 Grave 38, Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery, Henri-Chapelle, Belgium. This is an American Battle Monuments Commission location.



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Lincoln Ackerman enlisted in the US Army at Utica, New York on 21 January 1944. He was married at the time he enlisted. He was killed when an attack was launched at 0800 on January 13th, to seize a line running from Spineux, north of Grand Halleux, to Poteaux, eight miles south of Malady. The 1st and 2nd Battalions moved to the south capturing Butay, Lusnie, Henumont, Coulee, Logbierme and established blocks at Petit Thier and Poleax.

AWARDS and COMMENDATIONS

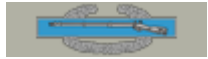
Listed below are some of the awards, medals and commendations that Lincoln W Ackerman either received or may have been qualified for.



★ Bronze Star



★ Purple Heart



★ Combat Infantryman Badge



★ Marksmanship Badge



★ Parachutist Badge



★ World War II Victory Medal



★ American Campaign Medal



★ Army Presidential Unit Citation



★ Army Good Conduct Medal



★ European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal



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From: <https://etvma.org/veterans/courville-b-tarpley-7501/>

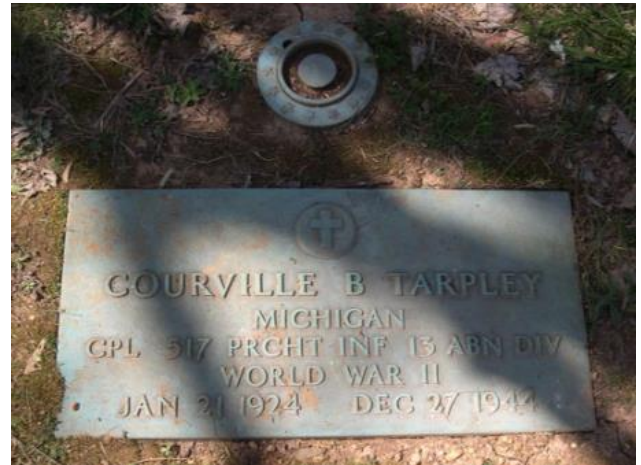
Corporal Courville Tarpley was my uncle and brother of my mother, Mary Nell Tarpley Baker of Knoxville, TN. He was killed in the Battle of the Bulge, Dec 27, 1944 at Manhay, Luxemburg Province, Belgium. He was a paratrooper – 517th Parachute Infantry Combat Team, attached to the 82nd Airborne Division. He was killed one month short of his 21st birthday.



He grew up in Cleveland, TN, and was a 1942 graduate of Bradley Central High School. He went on to attend VA Tech until his education was interrupted by his enlistment to serve in WW II. He was survived by his mother, Flora Ella Jones Tarpley, father, Truman Tarpley and sister, Mary Nell. Place of burial is Hillcrest Cemetery, Cleveland, TN.

–Submitted by his niece, Margaret Ann Bailey

- **Rank:** Corporal
- **Born:** 21 January 1924
- **Died:** 27 December 1944
- **County:** Bradley
- **Hometown:** Cleveland, Tn
- **Service Branch:** Army/Army Air Forces
- **Division/Assignment:** 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment
- **Theater:** Europe
- **Conflict:** World War II
- **Battles:** Battle of the Bulge
- **Awards:** Purple Heart
- **Burial/Memorial Location:** Hillcrest Cemetery, Cleveland, TN
- **Location In Memorial:** Pillar VII, Top Panel
- **Sponsored by:** [Contact us to sponsor Courville B. Tarpley](#)



verify ago death rpt + 293 file

ORIGINAL

CHECK TYPE REQUIRED (See Instructions attached)		WW II APPLICATION FOR HEADSTONE OR MARKER (Please make out and return in duplicate)	
<input type="checkbox"/> UPRIGHT MARBLE HEADSTONE	ENLISTMENT DATE 17 March 1943	SERIAL No. 34726664	EMBLEM (check one) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CHRISTIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> FLAT MARBLE MARKER	DISCHARGE DATE	PENSION No.	<input type="checkbox"/> HEBREW
<input type="checkbox"/> FLAT GRANITE MARKER		STATE <i>Mich</i> RANK <i>Cpl.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> NONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BRONZE MARKER (NOTE RESTRICTIONS)		COMPANY <i>I</i>	
NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial) <i>93 Tarpley, Courville B.</i>		U. S. REGIMENT, STATE ORGANIZATION, AND DIVISION <i>517th PARA INF REGT</i>	
DATE OF BIRTH (Month, Day, Year) 21 January 1924	DATE OF DEATH (Month, Day, Year) 27 December 1944	LOCATION (City and State) <i>Cleveland, Tennessee</i>	
NAME OF CEMETERY <i>Hillcrest Cemetery</i>		NEAREST FREIGHT STATION (City and State) <i>Cleveland, Tennessee</i>	
SHIP TO (I CERTIFY THE APPLICANT FOR THIS STONE HAS MADE ARRANGEMENTS WITH ME TO TRANSPORT THE STONE FROM THE FREIGHT STATION TO THE CEMETERY) <i>Truman B. Tarpley</i> (SIGNATURE OF CONSIGNEE)		POST OFFICE ADDRESS OF CONSIGNEE <i>Cleveland, Tennessee</i>	
DO NOT WRITE HERE		I certify this application is submitted for a stone for the unmarked grave of a veteran. I hereby agree to assume all responsibility for the removal of the stone promptly upon arrival at destination, and properly place it at the decedent's grave at my expense.	
FOR VERIFICATION MAR 3 1948	ORDERED APR 20 1948	APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE <i>Truman B. Tarpley</i> DATE OF APPLICATION <i>Feb. 21, 1948</i>	
B/L 4287	ADDRESS (Street, City, State) <i>2406 Oak Street, Cleveland, Tennessee</i>		
SHIPPED			

DDMG FORM REV 15 APR 47 623 16-11453-6 GPO

IMPORTANT—Complete Reverse Side



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

In Memorium – John Rupczyk, Jr. – I Company



John Rupczyk Jr., 95, of Sugar Grove, PA, passed away Wednesday, November 27, 2019, at Kinzua Healthcare and Rehab Center in Warren, PA.

John was born February 16, 1924, in Sugar Grove, PA, a son to the late John and Sophie Rupczyk Sr. He served in the US Army during WWII in the 517th Airborne Division as a Paratrooper. John was a hero to many and was recognized with three Silver Stars, a Bronze Star, an Oak Leaf Cluster and a Purple Heart, just to name a few.

After returning home, he went to work at the Youngsville Furniture Factory and eventually the Jamestown Metal Corp. where he was a welder for 30 plus years. John was a member of the Sugar Grove American Legion Post 758,

Sugar Grove AMVETS, the Harmony Riders and the P.O.N.Y. Association. He enjoyed archery hunting and spending time with his family.

John is survived by his daughters, Nancy (John) Saullo of Russell and Sandra (Kenneth) Peterson of Midland Park, NJ; his grandchildren, Ellin (Rory) Saullo Kightlinger, Jacob (Sara) Saullo, Brendan Peterson and Shane Peterson; his great grandchildren, Rosalee Saullo, Jayden and Jaxon Kightlinger and many nieces and nephews.

In addition to his parents, John was preceded in death by his wife, Ann Swanson Rupczyk, two sisters, Ella Wozniak and Kate Flasher and 5 brothers, his twin brother, Frederick, as well as, Marion, Anthony, Stanley and an infant brother.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, December 14, 2019, at 12pm at the Nelson Funeral Home and Cremation Services, 314 North Main Street, Youngsville, PA 16371. An hour of visitation will be held from 11:22pm prior to the service.

Memorial donations may be made to the Sugar Grove American Legion Post 758, 169 Creek Rd., PO Box 386, Sugar Grove, PA 16350.

See John's story, "He jumped into darkness to find an enemy ahead" at:

<http://www.timesobserver.com/news/local-news/2014/06/he-jumped-into-darkness-to-find-an-enemy-ahead/>



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

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.

Website	www.517prct.org
Send MailCall news to	MailCall@517prct.org
MailCall Archives	www.517prct.org/archives
2018 Roster (updated!)	www.517prct.org/roster.pdf
Thunderbolt Archives	www.517prct.org/archives



A column of American paratroopers from the 17th Airborne Division's 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment. These men were attached to elements of the 7th Armored Division during the drive on St. Vith, Belgium during the final stages of the Battle of the Bulge. January 20, 1945. The photo was taken just outside Iveldingen, Belgium.