



# 517<sup>th</sup> Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

**MailCall No. 2443**

May 10, 2020

*517<sup>th</sup> Parachute Infantry Regiment  
460<sup>th</sup> Parachute Field Artillery Battalion  
596<sup>th</sup> Parachute Combat Engineer Company*

## MailCall News





## *517<sup>th</sup> Parachute Regimental Combat Team*

A Thankful 75th VE Day to the 517th Parachute Regiment Combat Team and to all the family and friends of the 517th. Be well and stay safe.

All the best,

**Paul Abbene**

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Mother's Day Parade

May 13, 1945  
Verviers, Belgium

From **Sgt. George Ross** (F Company) photos

[http://517prct.org/photos/george\\_l\\_ross/george\\_l\\_ross.htm](http://517prct.org/photos/george_l_ross/george_l_ross.htm)



## *517<sup>th</sup> Parachute Regimental Combat Team*

To: Ben Barrett; webmaster@517prct.org

Is this Association still viable today?

I see the last President's term ended in 2013. Is Allan Johnson the correct person to whom I should write my request? If not he, then would you provide contact information for someone who can speak for the Association?

Thanks for your consideration.

Regards,

Rob Lofthouse

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Technically, the 517 Association has been deactivated. But I still have many contacts including Allan that I can reach out to.

What can we do for you?

Bob Barrett

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Thanks for getting back to me so quickly Bob.

I am writing a book about one of my cousins, who served with the 517 HQ 1BN, earned a battlefield commendation, and went on to serve in Korea and Vietnam.

I'd like to use some of your material about the history of the unit and its' actions in Europe. The 517th will be in two chapters of this book.

Will give due credit to the Association for use of your material upon written approval to do so.

Thanks.

Rob

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Hi Rob,

Pretty much everything on the web could be considered public domain. At least I've let other researchers and authors use it. Technically, I can't speak for the Association, but they've encouraged and supported the website and sharing of material.

The only copyrighted part is the "Paratroopers Odyssey" history, and members of the Association have taken the attitude that maintaining and spreading the unit's history was their purpose, so no one has ever disagreed with sharing it. Everything else on the website is either publicly-available government records, or freely submitted photos and personal histories.



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I only ask that somewhere in your book you just note the source - either the Paratroopers' Odyssey or the website itself. Note that on most of the personal photos I have tried to identify the contributor as well.

Also, I have lots of additional books, records, and supporting materials (e.g. Morning reports). Tell me who the trooper is and I'll be happy to see what else I can dig up for you.

Bob Barrett

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That is awesome! Thanks Bob.

My cousin's name is **Gordon Lippman**. He was a Platoon Leader in HQ 1Bn and left us with his AAR on the Soy-Hotton engagement. But I don't know much more than what his commendations tell us about his battlefield commission and a bronze star award.

I'm also working with a son of his, who has maintained a bunch of background material as well as his uniform and medals, which are now in a museum in northern Georgia.

Appreciate your help!

Rob

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Ha! I was going to guess Gordon Lippman, but I didn't want to be presumptuous. He is one of only a few from HQ/1 that are listed on our bio page: <http://517prct.org/bios.htm> and it does say that he stayed in the military.

I don't know that I'll find much more than you already have, but I will check tonight.

Is the AAR the one written by Sydney Marks?

[http://517prct.org/documents/infantry\\_school/MarksSidneyM\\_CPT.pdf](http://517prct.org/documents/infantry_school/MarksSidneyM_CPT.pdf)

Bob Barrett

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Thanks Bob. The AAR I have is in Gordon's own handwriting. He did indicate that he collaborated with others on it.

Rob

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I just started a little research. I haven't found a lot yet in my records, but will keep looking. I did find notes that he is listed on 4 Morning reports:



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COMPANY	STATUS	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	MI	RANK	DATE	CODE	ASN	MOS	LOCATION	NOTES
HQ Co 1st Bn		Lippman	Gordon	J	S/SGT	1-Sep-1944	50	4E+07	651	Conn	MOS 651 fr duty to Abs sk NBC to trfd to 7th Army Det of Pat.
HQ Co 1st Bn		Lippman	Gordon	J	S/SGT	15-Sep-1944		4E+07	651	Pierre Cava, France	MOS 651 reasgd and jd to Co fr 7th Army Det of Pat (NBC)
HQ Co 1st Bn		Lippman	Gordon	J	S/SGT	7-Nov-1944		4E+07	7604	741-982 Sospel, France	Fr asgd to Co to atchd unasgd hosp LD NBC
HQ Co 1st Bn		Lippman	Gordon	J	S/SGT	11-Nov-1944		4E+07	7604	Sospel, France 74.1-98.2	fr atchd unasgd Hosp NBC LD to reasgd & Jd Co

I think these read that he had a Non-Battle Casualty (NBC) in September and again in November of 1944, both in Southern France.

FYI MOS 7604 means Paratrooper, Light Machine Gun. I think 651 means Platoon Sergeant.

Bob Barrett

Yup. He was a platoon sergeant before being promoted in Belgium to 2/LT.

I am attaching two artifacts. One is the original AAR in Gordon's handwriting, with a really bad resolution photo of him in Camp Toccoa.

I apologize for the bad scan, as my regular scanner is not working right now. Because that one is somewhat illegible, I'm also attaching my transcription of the same document.

Feel free to post it on the site as long as you give credit to **Sgt. Gordon J. Lippman** as the author, and **Michael Lippman**, as it came from his library.

I have dedicated a chapter in the book I am writing to this very action.

Let me know if you have any questions on this or anything else pertaining to Gordon's involvement.

Thanks for your help!

All the Best.

~ Rob Lofthouse

Hi Rob,

Good stuff. Thanks for your permission to put some of this on the 517<sup>th</sup> web and MailCall.

Here is something that you may find interesting. That AAR includes a short version of the attack on the hill at La Roumiere, where Col. Boyle led the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion to take the hill. Apparently, there are two sides to that story, and members of the 290<sup>th</sup> were not happy with the 517<sup>th</sup> being credited with winning that battle. See their complaint and version: <http://75thdivisiondad.com/laroumiere.htm> The troopers of the 75<sup>th</sup>/290<sup>th</sup> certainly deserve some credit, but the battle was certainly being lost and very costly up to that point.



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This was discussed at past reunions and, I think in past MailCalls. I'll see if I can dig up the responses. Not to disparage anyone, but **Bill Boyle** was known for not holding back – In battle and in person. I remember my Dad saying that Bill Boyle was a soldier's soldier – always at the front and in charge with his troops. And that Boyle probably should have been a General, but he refused to play politics and insisted telling it like it really was.

Anyway, when Bill was asked about what part the 290<sup>th</sup> played in the attack at La Roumiere, I don't have the exact words, but it was something to the effect of – *They put the 517<sup>th</sup> in to take charge because they were losing the battle. As we attacked, the primary contribution of the 290<sup>th</sup> was that they kept shooting at our own soldiers from the back.*

I see similar comments in Paratroopers' Odyssey: “No 290th Battalion Commanders or staff members could be found; Colonel Boyle had to deal directly with seven or eight companies.”

And in Battling Buzzards: “He has heard that while the field-grade officers of the 75<sup>th</sup> were still in their sacks, the hapless infantrymen, bundled up in target-ripe overcoats and carrying their weapons slung, marched into the German buzz saw with as many as 112 KIA in the first few minutes.”

**Col. Boyle** is no longer with us, so we may never know the whole story. I do have some copies of the commendations given to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion for their efforts in those early days of the Bulge.

Regards,

Bob Barrett

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Intriguing, to say the least. Hard to tell all these years after the battles, who is right and who is not. May even be some embellishment in there on both sides.

Gordon's report was written shortly after the battle, so I think we'd have to consider that as a credible artifact.

When I read both accounts, and I read the various commendations won by Gordon in WWII and Korea, it sounds like he and Col. Boyle were cut from the same warrior ethos cloth — win your objective.

He also made reference to several others who contributed to his report, although nameless. Some of that information was probably without his direct knowledge. However, he was leading one of the platoons as an NCO at La Roumiere and with his battlefield commission tied to these 5 days in December, probably lost his platoon leader in one of the many battles they faced over that time. Continuous fighting in the dead of winter, and they weren't close to the finish line. These men were exhausted.

I'm curious though, if none of the 290 commanders or staff were present, wouldn't Boyle raise that with his commander? I damn sure would!

However, I have seen high value medals awarded to senior officers without direct combat experience, so it wouldn't surprise me to find out someone was covering for one or more of them.



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Anyway, thanks for the insight. Anyone who lived through that has to be commended for “standing their post” and having the courage to fight it out. At one point in Korea, Gordon distracted an enemy machine gunner, got wounded, lost his weapon and started throwing c-rations at the enemy, while his squad rushed the gunner.

I'm sure if any of those guys from 290 read my book, it will ruffle some feathers, but it also sounds like the fog of war may have been prejudicially present during and after that attack.

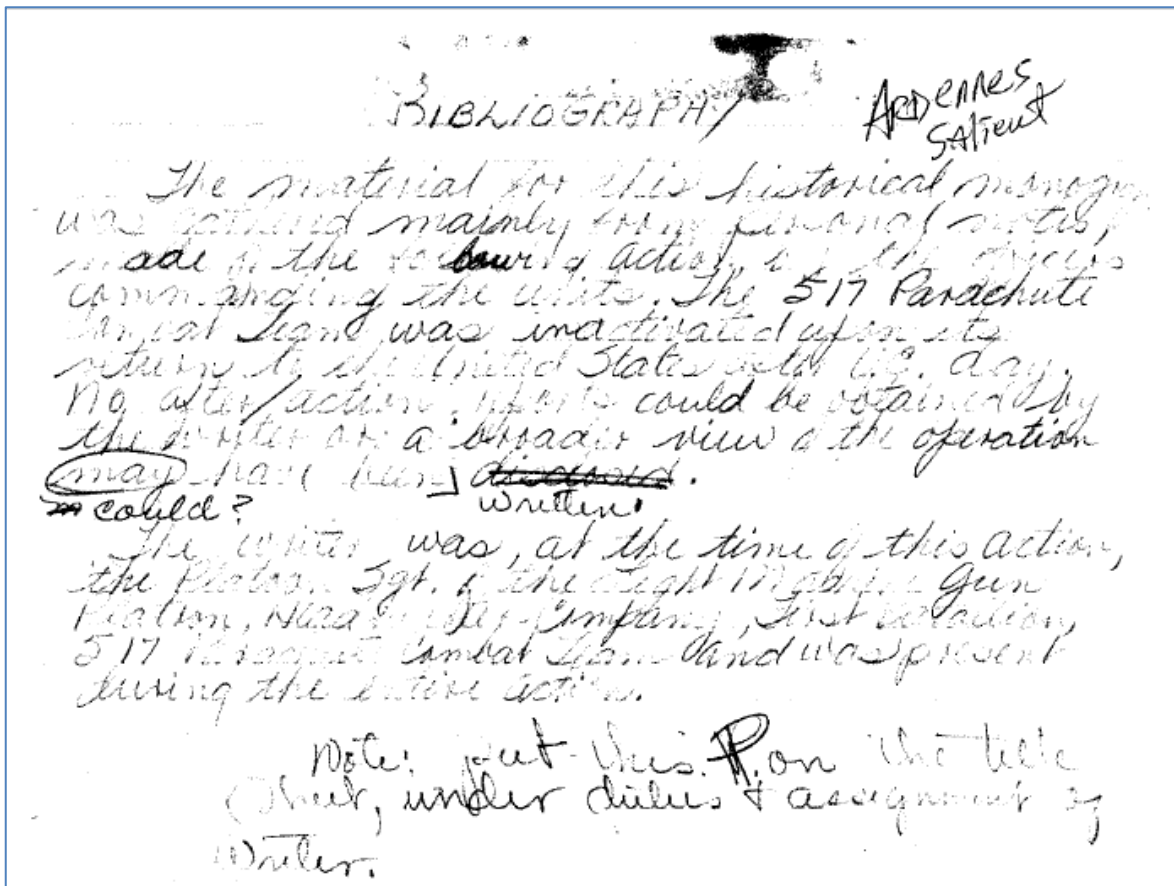
Looking forward to hearing more from you sir! Appreciate the interaction.

Rob

Added to website:

1944 - Soy-Hotten After Action Report [Handwritten](#) [Transcribed](#)

Sample of Lippmann's handwritten AAR:





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**Gordon Lippmann** is buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

Posted by Jay Franz:

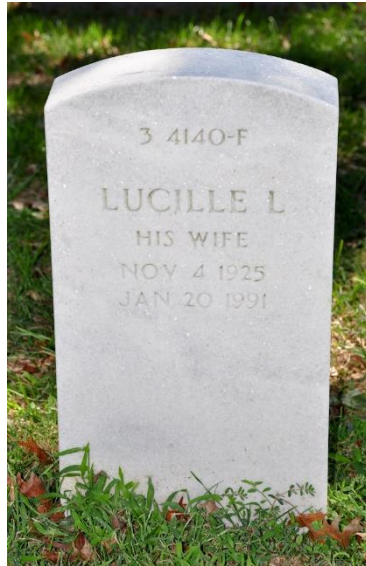
“Colonel Lippman was the XO of the 3rd Brigade of the 1st Infantry Division. The Brigade was located at Lai Khe, Viet Nam.

As the commander of one of the attached units (Company C of the 1st Engineer Battalion) I had many dealings with him. His professionalism and sense of fairness were unmatched. He was fatally wounded when the perimeter at Lai Khe came under attack and he unhesitatingly left the safety of the Commander's compound to check on the welfare of the Military Police assigned to provide security for the commander and the

compound. In the last few minutes before being loaded into a medevac chopper he was in excruciating pain but told the commander and others gathered there that it had been an honor to serve with us. Many grieved when we learned the next morning that he had died just before or after arrival at the hospital.”

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Gordon is buried at Arlington National Cemetery.



About 21  
years old





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### [Stephen Ambrose Historical Tours](#)

April 29 at 1:38 PM ·

Support the Currahee Military Museum!

For those of you have traveled with us on our Original Band of Brothers Tour, as well as fans of Stephen Ambrose's epic book, Band of Brothers and the miniseries of the same name, we wanted to let you that the home of these great American heroes, Currahee Military Museum at Camp Toccoa in Georgia, needs your help.

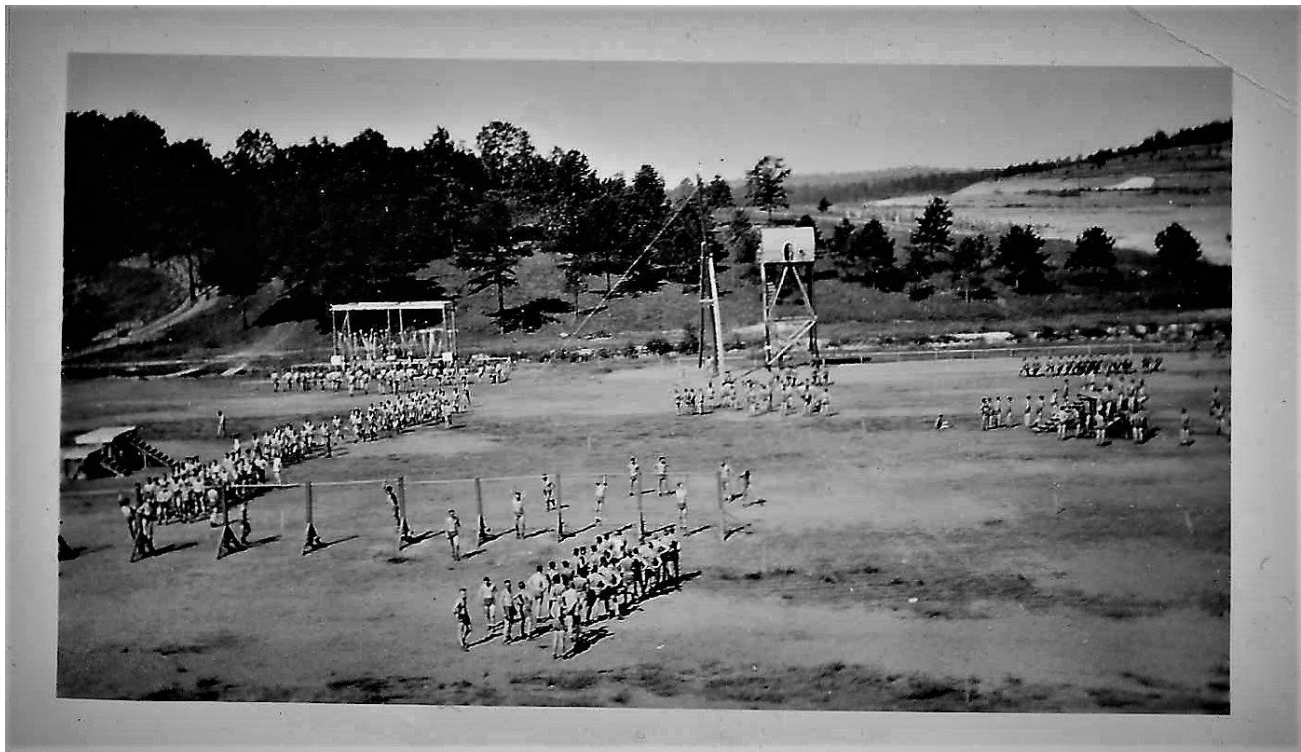
The Currahee Military Museum is temporarily closed due to the recent travel restrictions in response to COVID-19 as well as to minimize the risks to staff, volunteers, visitors from around the world and their families. All of this is now in jeopardy.

The museum is a 501C3 non-profit organization. It is solely dependent on visitors, admissions, membership dues, gift shop sales and donations to continue its operations and to preserve its collection of artifacts and memorabilia. Not only has the museum lost significant revenue from the closure, but with travel restrictions in place it will take the museum longer as a small business to "bounce back" from this economic decline.

Your support is vital during this time, and you can help by donating or becoming a member.



<https://www.toccoahistory.com>



**Camp Toccoa**



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Good Morning, My name is Nicolas, french collector and reenactor. I'm looking for information about tree men from 517th and one the 596th.

517th

B Company  
**Wyman Jesse Bolin**

G Company  
**Cpl Paul H. Farnan**  
**Lt Benjamin Renton**

596th  
**Ernest C. Kosan**

I own some stuff from this men.

Thank You

**Nicolas Robache**



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[...]

By the way Dad is still with us and up to the start of the OPID-19 quarantine was still getting occasional visits from retired and active duty Airborne Riggers. I had the honor of representing Dad this February at the annual induction of new members to the COL Thomas R. Cross Airborne Rigger Hall of Fame at Ft. Lee, VA.

As you may remember Dad was a staunch supporter of having the French 517<sup>th</sup> supporters involved in 517<sup>th</sup> activities such as the reunions. He was always ready to encourage their continued involvement in honoring the 517<sup>th</sup>'s accomplishments.

In closing, I never miss an opportunity to introduce anyone with an interest in WW2 to the 517<sup>th</sup> web site. I always refer to it as the gold standard for a WW2 U.S. Army unit web sites and more effective and informative than most of the current active duty unit web sites. All the 517<sup>th</sup> veterans and families are indebted to you and your dad for keeping the 517<sup>th</sup> PRCT history and tradition of excellence alive all these years.

**Tom Cross Jr**

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Thanks for the recommendation on **Jean-Loup Gassend's** book which I just ordered. A couple of years ago I ordered Dad a coffee table style book on the history of U.S. Army Airborne containing numerous photographs of the Airborne Test Platoon, the Jump School and the initial officers and NCOs that organized the first airborne units. Dad recognized all the people and locations pictured and we use it to jog his memory- usually while he's wearing his rigger cap.

Here is the Facebook link to the 2020 Airborne Rigger Hall of Fame Induction ceremonies. I don't use Facebook so I am not sure if it includes the full program. If it does, there is an initial ceremony in the school's auditorium where the new inductees are recognized and remarks by the school's senior cadre, the QM General and DCS Logistics and my remarks. The auditorium is full of active and retired riggers. The second ceremony is in the Hall of Fame Room where each inductee's plaque is placed on the HOF wall.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/469098370420575/>

Tom

Thomas R. Cross



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**COLONEL THOMAS R. CROSS**  
**PARACHUTE RIGGER HALL OF FAME INDUCTION**  
**CEREMONY**

- ❖ CW5(R) ROY MELEBECK
- ❖ CW5(R) WENDY JENNER
- ❖ CSM(R) MARIA ALLSOPP
- ❖ CW4(R) PETRICE McKEY-REESE
- ❖ CW4(R) DEBORAH LEE
- ❖ CW5(R) MARKHAM MICHEL
- ❖ SPC ERIC BURRI

AERIAL DELIVERY  
&  
FIELD SERVICES DEPARTMENT

FEBRUARY 24, 2020  
@1300

LEWI AUDITORIUM  
BLDG 6025

710 ADAMS AVE  
FORT LEE VA, 23801  
"I WILL BE SURE ALWAYS"

Video:

[https://www.facebook.com/LEADFSDF/videos/660893548053365/?v=660893548053365&external\\_log\\_id=661e8139e7457f8ec890397a780d81c7](https://www.facebook.com/LEADFSDF/videos/660893548053365/?v=660893548053365&external_log_id=661e8139e7457f8ec890397a780d81c7)



[History of the Parachute Rigger Badge – Army Quartermaster Foundation...](#)



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## Administrivia

If you miss any MailCalls, they are all available online at <http://www.517prct.org/mailcall/>

- At any time, if you want to be added or removed from the MailCall list, just let me know, or just click on the unsubscribe link on the email.
- Send any news, stories, or feedback to: [MailCall@517prct.org](mailto:MailCall@517prct.org)
- If you send me email that you do not want included in MailCall, just label it as FYEO.
- I now understand how Ben could get confused about what he already posted and what he didn't. If I miss something, please just send it again.

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Website	<a href="http://www.517prct.org">www.517prct.org</a>
Send MailCall news to	<a href="mailto:MailCall@517prct.org">MailCall@517prct.org</a>
MailCall Archives	<a href="http://www.517prct.org/archives">www.517prct.org/archives</a>
2018 Roster (updated!)	<a href="http://www.517prct.org/roster.pdf">www.517prct.org/roster.pdf</a>
Thunderbolt Archives	<a href="http://www.517prct.org/archives">www.517prct.org/archives</a>

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2ND LT. EDWARD ATHEY IS JUMPMASER FOR THE JUMP IN SOUTHERN FRANCE. WHEN TAKING OFF FROM THE DUSTY RUNWAY AT ORBETELLO, THE ENGINES OF HIS AIRCRAFT SUCKED UP DUST AND ONE OF THE ENGINES CAUGHT FIRE.

ACTING QUICKLY, THE FIVE CREW MEMBERS AND ALL THE PARATROOPERS EJECTED FROM THE REAR DOOR WITH ALL THEIR EQUIPMENT AT A HEIGHT OF SEVERAL METERS. THE PLANE EVENTUALLY CRASHED.

THE MAJORITY OF THE OCCUPANTS OF THE AIRCRAFT SUFFERED FRACTURES AND OTHER INJURIES, BUT ALL ARE ALIVE.

THINKING OF MISSING THE MOST IMPORTANT DAY OF THEIR LIVES, ATHEY WITH FOUR OTHER OF HIS PARATROOPERS WILL BOARD A GLIDER AND LAND ON DROP ZONE 'A' IN THE EARLY EVENING ON AUGUST 15.

[www.1stabtf.com](http://www.1stabtf.com)

**THE 517's GANG**

2nd Lt. Edward Athey

The 517th's Gang is available at: <https://1stabtf.com/en/boutique/the-517ths-gang-us-eng-version/>