



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2445

June 14, 2020

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

MailCall News

We're back! As I said in my last abbreviated MailCall, I had lost my network storage drive, a large shared drive that I kept all my 517th files including MailCall materials. So I've been unable to send a MailCall email for over a month. I wasn't too worried about losing the files themselves but had to figure out how to get the drive back on the network correctly. In the end it was very easy, once I got my head into it.

I do feel bad for missing both Memorial Day weekend news as well as the 76th anniversary of the Normandy invasion. Usually, there is a lot to report on Memorial Day celebrations, but with all the COVID-19 Stay-at-Home, most of the formal ceremonies were cancelled and not held in person. I will include in this email a couple of images that I sent with the non-MailCall MailCall last month. Let's hope that things return to normalcy soon. – Bob Barrett

Allan Johnson at the ABMC Cemetery in Draguignan France, in August 2019 (?)





517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

I didn't see any photos of formal cemeteries that are usually held at all the American Battle Monuments Commission locations in Europe. Apparently, they are all still in coronavirus lockdown:

Last Updated: March 16, 2020:

In keeping with current precautionary measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, all American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) cemeteries are closed until further notice.

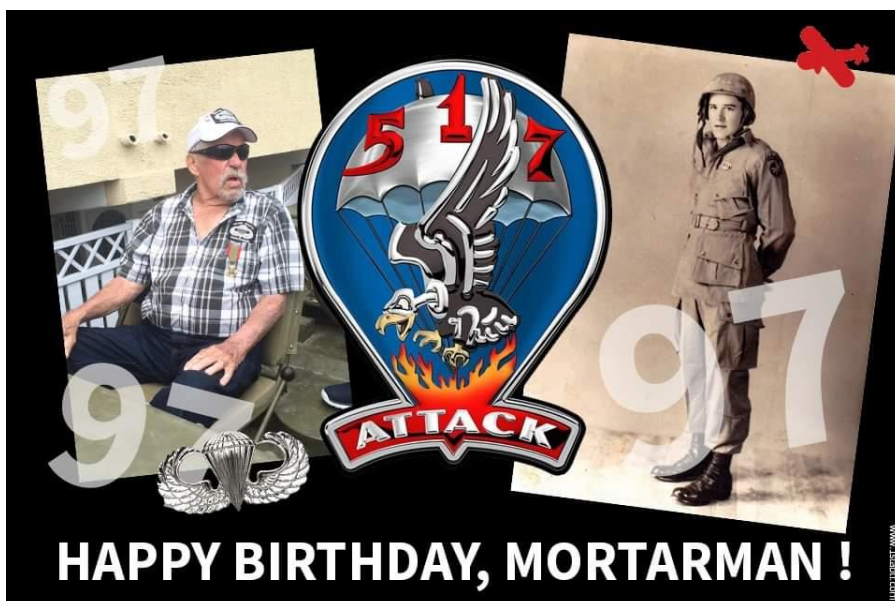
The Currahee Museum (Camp Toccoa, was opened for one day, yesterday on June 6th to acknowledge the Normandy Invasion. **Brenda Carlan** shared a photo:

It was a great day at the museum!! It was a last-minute decision to open for June 6th. We have missed seeing and meeting visitors for the last 2 1/2 months. We hope to announce our opening for regular days and hours soon. Also wonderful to see so many turn out to run Currahee and visit Camp Toccoa at Currahee site. They ran to show their respect for the soldiers that fought so bravely on June 6, 1944. Thank you, Matt Culpepper, enjoy your print!! The Filthy 13 was a "tribe of one".



All the best to everyone on this anniversary of D-Day. If you can, take a break from all the static and take in the day and thank those brave boys for your freedom.

- **Paul Abbene**



From Loïc Jankowiak's' [The 517th's Gang](#) Facebook page

Happy Birthday to **Robert Webber**, veteran of the Heavy Mortar Platoon, 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment.



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Bob thanks so much again for what you do. I am sure glad we attended the Georgia reunion and got a chance to meet. I still enjoy reading the weekly 517th posts and am very lucky to have been a part of what you do.

Our fathers would be proud to know how the memories of what they did in WWII are being preserved and shared.

Sincerely

Dennis Sura (Son of **Mike Sura** 3rd Battalion, Company H, 3rd Platoon)

Sirs,

I am corresponding to question how to get someone added to the list of members of the 517th. My bride's fathers **James Franklin Piercefield was** a member of this unit and does not show up on the roster. I have attached a copy of his DD 214 that indicates such.

My wife is Mona Lisa (Piercefield) Janczewski. Her personal email is [\[...\]](#). Her father joined the US Army from Terre Haute, Indiana and passed away in Logansport, Indiana in 1973. We have been following this group for a couple years and would love to see him recognized officially. We also attended the Toccoa event in 2018.

Thank you in advance.

Benedict Janczewski
MSgt, USAF Retired
Niles, Michigan 49120

Hi Benedict,

(My dad's first name was Benedict, and also with the 3rd Battalion, in H Company.)

There is no official roster of the 517th alumni. We used to have an unofficial mailing list for reunions and Thunderbolt newsletter, but those are retired now. However, James Franklin Pierce was clearly a member of the 517th, and he is listed on the December 1944 roster with the 3rd Battalion HQ Company. http://517prct.org/documents/xmas1944/xmas_1944_hq_co_3rd_2.jpg It took me a while to find it, as he was a Private at the time, not a Tech/4.

I don't see him listed by name in any of my records, but my records are very incomplete. I do not have Morning Reports for the 3rd Battalion. But he is on that Christmas roster and his discharge papers validate that he was with the 517th. It looks like he enlisted 28-Oct-43, went to jump school in 1944 (possibly Fort Bragg?), and was sent to Europe to join the 517th on October 28, 1944. They were still in Southern France, in the Sospel area until November. He was with them in Europe from until August 1, 1945. So he was with the 3rd Battalion throughout the Battle of the Bulge and after.

Welcome to the 517th family!

Bob Barrett



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

parachute pay pc on vou #13987 check # 178888 dtd 9 Nov. 1945 spots
ENLISTED RECORD AND REPORT OF SEPARATION 217673
 A. CALPESTRI, Maj. PD **HONORABLE DISCHARGE**

1. LAST NAME - FIRST NAME - MIDDLE INITIAL PIERCEFIELD JAMES F		2. ARMY SERIAL NO. 35 808 567	3. GRADE TFC 4	4. ARM OR SERVICE INF	5. COMPONENT AUS
6. ORGANIZATION HQ 3RD BN 517TH PROCT INF		7. DATE OF SEPARATION 22 OCT 45	8. PLACE OF SEPARATION SEPARATION CENTER FT BRAGG NC		
9. PERMANENT ADDRESS FOR MAILING PURPOSES RT2 BOX 712 WEST TERRE HAUTE IND		10. DATE OF BIRTH 29 JUN 19	11. PLACE OF BIRTH TERRE HAUTE IND		
12. ADDRESS FROM WHICH EMPLOYMENT WILL BE SOUGHT SEE 9		13. COLOR EYES BLUE	14. COLOR HAIR BROWN	15. HEIGHT 5 8	16. WEIGHT 154
17. NO. DEPEND. 2	18. RACE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WHITE	19. MARITAL STATUS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MARRIED	20. U.S. CITIZEN <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	21. CIVILIAN OCCUPATION AND NO. AUTOMOBILE MECHANIC MOTOR (5-81.610)	

MILITARY HISTORY

22. DATE OF INDUCTION 28 OCT 43	23. DATE OF ENLISTMENT 18 NOV 43	24. DATE OF CHINA INC. INTO SERVICE	25. PLACE OF ENTRY INTO SERVICE FT BENJAMIN HARRISON IND
26. REGISTERED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	27. LOCAL U.S. BOARD NO. 3	28. COUNTY AND STATE VIGO CO IND	29. HOME ADDRESS AT TIME OF ENTRY INTO SERVICE VIGO CO IND
30. MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALTY AND NO. LIGHT MACHINE GUNNER (604)		31. SPECIAL QUALIFICATIONS (e.g., proficiency, aviation and marksmanship badges, etc.) SS 30 CAL RIFLE MT. BADGE COMBAT INFANTRY:	
32. BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS RHINELAND: ARDENNES: CENTRAL EUROPE:			
33. DECORATIONS AND CITATIONS RAMET CAMPAIGN MEDAL WITH 3 BRONZE SERVICE STARS GOOD CONDUCT MEDAL GO # 11 HQ 517 P I R 8 MAR 45			
34. WOUNDS RECEIVED IN ACTION NONE			
35. LATEST IMMUNIZATION DATES		36. SERVICE DUTY	
SMALLPOX 21 JUL 45	TYPHOID 21 JUL 45	TETANUS 21 JAN 44	OTHER (specify) THPH 31 OCT 44
DATE OF DEPARTURE 12 OCT 44		DESTINATION RAMET	
DATE OF DEPARTURE 1 AUG 45		DESTINATION USA	
DATE OF RETURN 28 OCT 44		DATE OF RETURN 9 AUG 45	
37. TOTAL LENGTH OF SERVICE		38. HIGHEST GRADE HELD	
CONTINENTAL SERVICE		TECHNICIAN	
FOREIGN SERVICE		FOURTH GRADE	
YEARS 1	MONTHS 0	DAYS 22	
YEARS 0	MONTHS 9	DAYS 28	
39. PRIOR SERVICE NONE			
40. REASON AND AUTHORITY FOR SEPARATION CONVENIENCE OF THE GOVERNMENT RRL-1 DEMOBILIZATION AR 615-365 15 DEC 44			
41. SERVICE SCHOOLS ATTENDED PROCT SCH (COURSE IN JUMP) 1944			42. EDUCATION (Years) Grammar 8
			High School 2
			College 0

APPLICATION FOR
 READJUSTMENT ALLOWANCE
 PUBLIC LAW #348
 MADE THROUGH
 STATE *Indiana*
 DATE *11-14-45*

A FREE PERMIT
 To HUNT, FISH and TRAP
 ISSUED BY
 Clerk of Court
5-36-50


Cass
 4-1954

PAY DATA

43. LONGEVITY FOR PAY PURPOSES	44. NUMBERING OUT PAY	45. SOLDIER DEPOSIT	46. TRAVEL PAY	47. TOTAL AMOUNT, NAME OF DEBURSING OFFICER
YEARS 1	MONTHS 11	DAYS 9	TOTAL \$ 300	THIS PAYMENT \$ 100
		NONE		\$ 46.75
				I A CALPESTRI MAJ PD

INSURANCE NOTICE VCU NO 10013

48. KIND OF INSURANCE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> U.S. Govt.	49. HOW PAID <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Allotment	50. Effective Date of Allotment 31 OCT 45	51. Date of Next Premium Due (One month after 30) 30 NOV 45	52. PREMIUM DUE EACH MONTH \$ 6.72	53. INTENTION OF VETERAN TO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continue
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54. 	55. REMARKS (This space for completion of above items or entry of other items specified in W. D. Directives) LAPEL BUTTON ISSUED 15 DAYS LOST UNDER AW 107 ASR SCORE 70 (12 MAY 45) INACTIVE SERVICE ERC 28 OCT 43 TO 17 NOV 43
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56. SIGNATURE OF PERSON BEING SEPARATED <i>James F. Piercefield</i>	57. PERSONNEL OFFICER (Type name, grade and organization - signature) L V MORAN CAPT AUS <i>L V Moran</i>
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WD AGO FORM 53 55
 1 November 1944
 This form supersedes all previous editions of
 WD AGO Forms 53 and 55 for enlisted persons
 entitled to an Honorable Discharge, which
 will not be used after receipt of this revision.
RECORD DUNES APPLIED FOR



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Good Morning, My name is Nicolas, french collector and reenactor. I'm looking for information about three 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

Hey, great Mail Call - I enjoyed reading it as always.

For what it's worth, my Dad, **Hoyt Kelley**, was with **Boyle** in Belgium (he was Boyle's Staff Sergeant (HQ S4) and his recounting of what happened at Le Roumiere very much reflected Col. Boyle's account. Dad, who passed away several years ago was not someone to embellish war time stories - he actually refused to even talk about his war service until he was in his late eighties. That said, he idolized Col Boyle and seemed to share Boyle's opinion of the apparent dereliction by the 75th's field officers. Below is an excerpt from part of my Dad's journal which he wrote a few years before his death at age 92.

"When we reached the infantry division, we found only one officer, a very young Captain, probably in his early twenties in charge. He informed us that all the other officers were back in the town, as he was the only one who had gone with the troops. They had tried to cross an open field about a mile square in size, and the Germans let them get all the way into the field and then mowed them down with machine guns as well as on tanks. The field held some 200 to 300 dead Americans. They died in close formation as if they were on their way to a picnic. We couldn't believe the lack of training that could lead to such a massacre, or the officers sitting back in the city who should have been with the men if not leading the green soldiers who never made it through their first day of combat."

Anyway, I don't know if there were multiple engagements or one primary one that 1st Battalion was involved with, but the above entry certainly seems to square with Boyle's account. Given 75 years that has passed, I imagine every participant in World War II is now a war hero, as they should be - but as with any large engagements - screw ups were inevitable. This certainly seemed to be one of those occasions.

Again, thanks for all your work putting this together.

Brian H. Kelley



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

From [Hoyt Kelley's journal](#):



World War II Journal
Hoyt Frank Kelley
1943 – 1945

After several days, the Germans were forced out of the town and our troops returned. The First Battalion, of which I was the Staff Sergeant, was given a command to rescue a platoon of the armored division surrounded by the Germans in a town called Hotton. An American Infantry Division, (I think the 79th) fresh from the states had tried to get them out but had been annihilated in the attempt. We had to take a circuitous route in order to have cover from the forest. By the route we took, I would guess it was about eight miles. Before we got to the town of Hotton, the trapped Infantry Division opened fire on us. We contacted them by radio, but they were too frightened to believe that we were actually Americans and kept firing. They didn't know the code of the day, which all men on the line had to know. Colonel Boyle got on the phone and using some choice cuss words from his early life in New York, informed them that if they fired one more shot we were equipped to wipe them out. They seemed to understand good American cussing and let us come in.

When we reached the infantry division, we found only one officer, a very young Captain, probably in his early twenties in charge. He informed us that all the other officers were back in the town, as he was the only one who had gone with the troops. They had tried to cross an open field about a mile square in size, and the Germans let them get all the way into the field and then mowed them down with machine guns as well as on tanks. The field held some 200 to 300 dead Americans. They died in close formation as if they were on their way to a picnic. We couldn't believe the lack of training that could lead to such a massacre, or the officers sitting back in the city who should have been with the men if not leading the green soldiers who never made it through their first day of combat. We sent half of our men back with the Captain and those of his troops who had made the safety of the hill and then went into Hotton with the rest of our battalion. The armored team called Task Force Hogan had no operable equipment so it was just a matter of destroying what ammunition and fuel we couldn't take with us and returning to Soy. We didn't lose one man in this assignment and Colonel Boyle was later given a Distinguished Service Cross for leading the action.



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Here is one more account of that battle from **Clark Archer's** "Chronicle"

1985? - [Chronicle](#)* (A short chronicle of who, what, where, when by unit)

26 DECEMBER 1944

The early part of the night was spent in patrolling the wooded area to wipe out remaining scattered enemy groups. During the night Colonel HOWZE placed Lt. Colonel BOYLE in command of all the troops on the objective, including the two battalions of the 290th Infantry.

These troops were badly scattered and disorganized. Lt. Colonel BOYLE with his staff and Company officers, personally oriented each company commander of the 290th Battalion, assisted them in reorganization, and placed them in defensive positions along the south edge of the woods on the objective. At 0600 as one of the companies was being placed in position a counter-attack was launched from the south by an estimated platoon; they were completely routed, fifteen of them killed, and four prisoners taken, without loss. Enemy artillery was received throughout the remaining time the First Battalion occupied the position.

At 0800 hours the First Battalion was informed that it would be relieved by the two battalions of the 290th on the hill; this relief was completely effected at 1600. The Battalion was assembled from its position on the SOY-HOTTON highway and LA ROUMIERE OL FAGNE and marched back to SOY.

Unschooling in the military art of retreat, and ignorant of the word defeat, the First Battalion paid its price of 157 casualties, but in doing so, accounted for at least 210 enemy dead, took 18 prisoners, knocked out 3 tanks and 9 self-propelled guns, destroyed over the period in actual engagement one of each; a half-track, an armored reconnaissance car, a volkwagon, and an ammunition truck.



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Hello Bob,

I'm **Adrien SOLDI**, son of **J.Michel SOLDI**, we already met in southern France and Washington Reunion, I also made a 517th flag to carry it to the ceremony around the drop zone and the Maritimes alps to honour the unit of our heroes, I hope you remember me.

I hope you are all safe and in good health during this terrible time of COVID.

I first want to ask you to register my new email address to the mailcall adrien.soldi83@gmail.com.

Secondly, we create with Dad a Website to gather the informations about the liberation of southern france, soldiers killed in action, veterans stories, and to create a virtual museum, as we lost the one we had in Le Muy in the terrible flood of 2010. Here is the link : <https://www.operation-dragon.com/>

For the story of the 517th i used an article of your website, "517th short story" and want to know if you allow me to use it. I also made a translation in French that you can use for your website if you want.

Thank you in advance.

Kind Regards

SOLDI Adrien

www.operation-dragon.com

HOME BLOG HISTORY IN MEMORIAM VÉTÉRANS VIRTUAL MUSEUM GALLERY / THEN & NOW
GLIDER CG4A PROJECT MONUMENTS LA RÉSISTANCE VAROISE CONTACT ABOUT US

Operation Dragoon / La Bataille de Provence

OPERATION-DRAGON.COM

Museum

"D" day, 15th of August 1944, the Landing of Southern France

This website, made of 30 years of research and veterans meeting is dedicated to all the soldiers and civilians who were involved in the operation Dragoon, Southern France landing and the liberation of all the towns and villages.



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

May 13, 2020

Good morning! I hope this finds you all well and healthy!

I'm emailing you because my dad, **Kaare Allan Johnson**, will be 96 soon, and if you'd like to send him a card, he'd love to hear from you. His birthday is Thursday, May 21, but the actual date is not that important, especially during this unique time. If you'd like to drop a note or a card, or send wishes via social media if we're connected on Instagram or Facebook, we'd love to share your good wishes with him. He's always delighted to hear from friends and family overseas, amazed that a photo of him taken when we start a meal will result in good wishes before dessert!

Dad has had an uneven course since slipping on ice and snow on his way into YOGA class in December. He's been hospitalized twice and just came home this past Sunday (so I'm a little late with this email). We're happy he's home and his appetite is as fierce as ever!

His address:

Kaare Allan Johnson
215 Mission Road
Hackettstown, NJ 07840

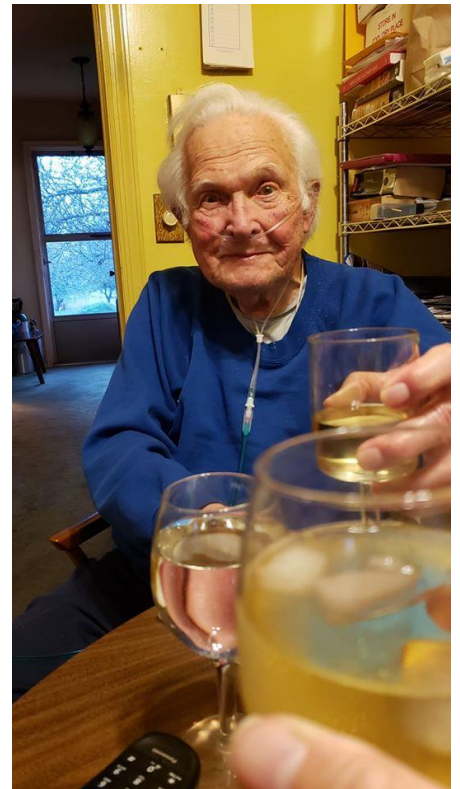
Please do not stress about this. Good thoughts are great thoughts and any wishes in any format are welcome at any time.

All the best to you and yours during this time.

Love, **Claire Giblin**

I'm so sorry. I received Claire's note above on May 13, just as my computer was locked up. Not sure if Claire intended this for me or for the whole 517th family, but I am including it for the good news and health update for Allan. - BB

PS: And Allan was looking great on his birthday.





517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

May 17, 2020

Hello all,

Many of you in 2020 ordered 'The 517's Gang' Part 1, the untold story of the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team. A book to keep these heroes from being forgotten and I hope you enjoyed it.

I can only thank you for your encouragement and your interests. This book has been translated into English especially for families of veterans, wishing to know more about the journey of their father, grandfather, brother or uncle.

But on the other hand, many people had asked that this book be written in English which who are not interested anymore. Many efforts have been made by me and friends who have corrected the whole book. Today, many of these people are no longer interested, finding me with a very large stock of books and my disappointment.

In addition to that, today, the books (all over the world) is going through one of the most serious crises in its history. Due to the current health crisis, many events have been canceled in Europe and of course worldwide. Because of this, the promotion of the book, having been done on the occasion of several events in Southern France, Belgium and Normandy, has stalled. Today, the future is uncertain. This is the case for all publishers, small publishers or freelance writers.

With this message, and in order to guarantee the continuity of this sector and guarantee a 'Part 2' of this book, do not hesitate to talk about it around you, post a link on social medias, or order one other to support this effort. Otherwise, do not hesitate to order a book from an other publishing house, military history or not.

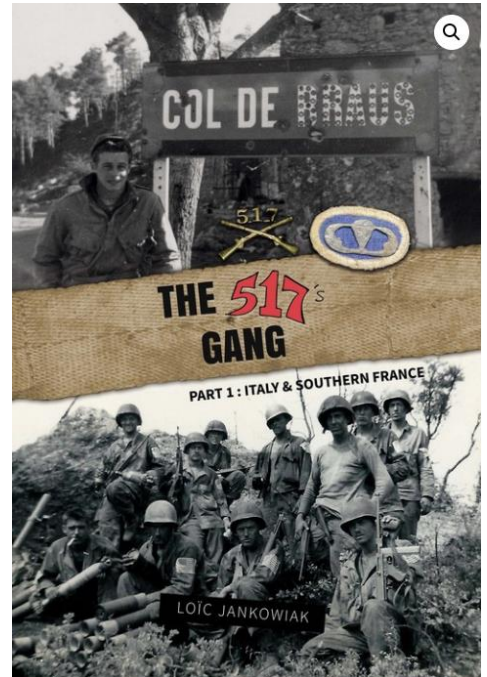
I can see that some of you are part of reenactments groups and that maybe members of it would be interested to learn about a new Airborne History. I think principally about the Airborne Demonstration Team in the United States who had already came in Southern France to make jump demonstration in airborne outfit.

You can also talk to your local bookstores, library to see if they would be interested in ordering one. If you already have a copy, you can order one, especially since the shipping costs are now 19 euros (without bank charges) and give it to a friend or neighbor.

Thank you for your support.
Warmest regards,

Loïc Jankowiak, author of 'The 517's Gang'

<https://1stabtf.com/en/boutique/the-517ths-gang-us-eng-version/>





517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

From the American Battle Monuments Commission website www.abmc.gov :

World War II Timeline Experience

AS OF DECEMBER 1944

World War II Timeline

1944

Allied Control ■
 Axis Control ■
 Neutral Zones ■

Linked to a Campaign Interactive

View time as:

Filter events by time

1919-1938 | *The Pre-War Period* | 1939 | 1940 | 1941 | 1942 | 1943 | 1944 | 1945 | *The Post-War Years*

World War II: A Visual History

Experience the history of World War II with this interactive timeline. View maps, watch videos, see photos and read about the events that shaped the war.

ROME-ARNO CAMPAIGN

Notes

22 Jan 1944 through 09 Sep 1944

As the Naples-Foggia Campaign (18 August 1943 – 21 January 1944) ground to a halt, the Allies faced the formidable defenses of the Gustav Line cutting across Italy from the Gulf of Gaeta to Pescara. The Allies resolved to outflank this line with an amphibious landing at Anzio while diverting German attention and reserves with preliminary attacks across the Garigliano and Rapido Rivers along the Gustav Line. The Rapido crossings were bloodily repulsed, but more than two divisions came ashore near Anzio virtually unopposed on 22 January. These were quickly reinforced by two more. See the Anzio Campaign (22 January – 24 May 1944). The Germans reacted to Anzio quickly, drawing divisions from northern Italy, France and the Balkans to counterattack the Allied beachhead. After fierce and costly fighting, with naval gunfire providing crucial support, Anzio stalemated in early March. Roughly equivalent forces dug in around the beachhead, and were unable to dislodge each other. Attempting to break through to Anzio and continue on to Rome via the Liri River Valley, the Allies mounted major attacks on Cassino and Monte Cassino in February and

Summary

APPROVED

United States of America | Great Britain | Canada | Nazi Germany

ROME - ARNO

Interactive: Liberating Rome: The Anzio and Rome Arno Campaigns

View time as:

Filter events by time

1919-1938 | *The Pre-War Period* | 1939 | 1940 | 1941 | 1942 | 1943 | 1944 | 1945 | *The Post-War Years*



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Each of the major battles, identified on the maps by year, also have short videos:

World War II Timeline Experience

SOUTHERN FRANCE CAMPAIGN

Notes
 15 Aug 1944 through 14 Sep 1944
 Since 1943 the western Allies had planned an invasion of Southern France to complement and support the Normandy Campaign (6 June - 24 July 1944) and the Northern France Campaign (25 July - 14 September). Drawing troops from the Rome-Arno Campaign (22 January - 9 September 1944) and French North Africa, a Franco-American Army landed in the Riviera beginning 15 August. Objectives were to capture Marseilles, Toulon and other ports, destroy German forces south of the Loire River, and link up with Allied forces in Northern France for the drive into Germany. The American VI Corps landed successfully and attacked aggressively. Within a week it overwhelmed resistance within the lodgment area and pushed on to Montelimar, threatening German withdrawal routes up the Rhone River. Meanwhile French divisions encircled and attacked Marseilles and Toulon, both of which fell on 28 August. The Germans suffered heavy losses retreating through gauntlets of fire or when their delay positions were successively overwhelmed by pursuing forces. By 3 September Lyon was behind Allied lines, and on 11 September Allied forces from Northern France and

Summary

Approved by: *David Thompson* (logged by) / *H. A. Schmidt* (approved by)

APPROVED

United States of America, Great Britain, Free France, Nazi Germany

View time as: Map | Chart

Filter events by time: 1919-1938 | The Pre-War Period | 1939 | 1940 | 1941 | 1942 | 1943 | 1944 | 1945 | The Post-War Years

SOUTHERN FRANCE

Western Pacific Campaign

Map: BELGIUM (Luxembourg, Paris), GERMANY (Dijon, Besancon, Geneva, Milan), FRANCE (Marseilles, Toulon), SWITZERLAND, ITALY, MEDITERRANEAN SEA

Video: 0:00 / 0:54

World War II Timeline Experience

ARDENNES-ALSACE CAMPAIGN

Notes
 16 Dec 1944 through 25 Jan 1945
 While the Allies closed to the German border in the prolonged Rhineland Campaign (15 September 1944 - 21 March 1945), the Germans attempted to regain the initiative with a surprise offensive through the Ardennes to seize the vital port of Antwerp. Perhaps a third of the Allied forces in the west could thus be cut off and destroyed, Allied logistics would be dealt a crippling blow, and German mobile forces could then be shifted east quickly enough to thwart an anticipated Soviet spring offensive. The German attack, beginning during overcast weather on 16 December, penetrated through the Losheim Gap, trapped two infantry regiments on the Schnee Eifel, and pushed on towards the vital road junction of Bastogne. Determined American resistance north and south of this narrow corridor greatly delayed German advances, and confined them to restricted road networks in difficult terrain. Particularly noteworthy in this regard were the defense of Elsenborn Ridge, a five day delaying action at St. Vith, and holding the southern shoulder near Echternach. The Americans hastily deployed the 101st Airborne Division into Bastogne and built a defense of that

Summary

Approved by: *David Thompson* (logged by) / *H. A. Schmidt* (approved by)

APPROVED

United States of America, Great Britain, Canada, France

View time as: Map | Chart

Filter events by time: 1919-1938 | The Pre-War Period | 1939 | 1940 | 1941 | 1942 | 1943 | 1944 | 1945 | The Post-War Years

ARDENNES ALSACE

Western Pacific Campaign

Map: HOLLAND (Antwerp), BELGIUM (Liège), GERMANY (St. Vith, Bastogne), FRANCE (Paris, Haguenau)

Video: 0:00 / 1:07



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Posted by Stan Smith on the Currahee Military Museum Facebook site:

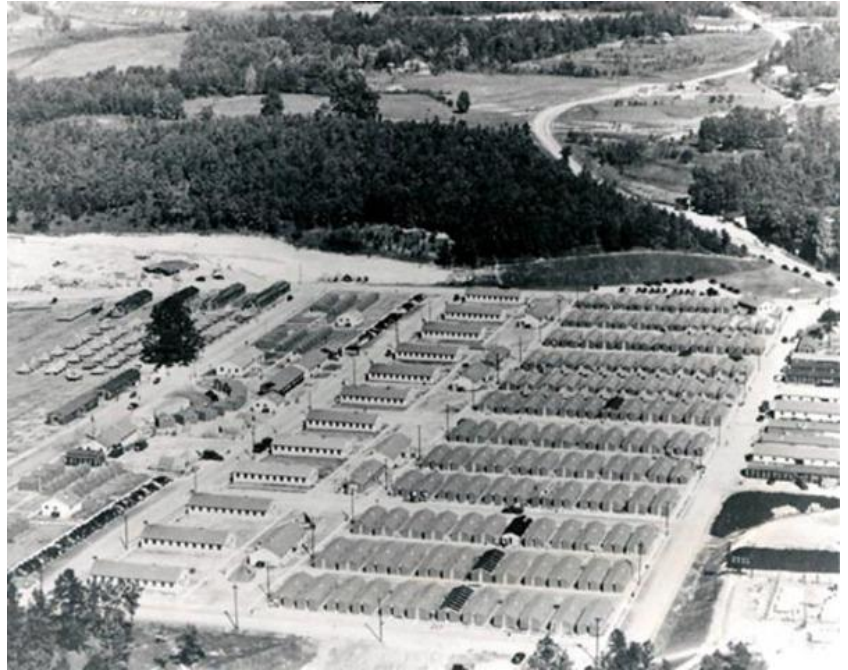
Without much advance warning to the locals, a large military base seemingly appeared out of thin air around Currahee Mountain. Camp Toccoa had neighbors. We find a closely knitted community in Ayersville which had existed there for generations and welcomed these men who were here from across the nation. The soldiers of Camp Toccoa soon realized these people didn't realize the danger the curious locals were facing and issued this warning found in the archives of the 1942 Toccoa Record.

Citizens Are Warned Of Danger Along Camp Firing Line

Lieut.-Col. R. F. Addington today calls attention to the general public of the DANGER area of various types of firing at Camp Toccoa, which begins about one-quarter of mile south of the Camp at the Post Range on Dick's Creek, extending West to Ayersville-Boydville Road, then following this road to a DANGER sign beyond Currahee Courthouse, thence in a Northwest direction back to Camp.

The depth of the firing area, which is part of the Government Reservation, is approximately 4 miles.

DANGER signs are posted on all old roads leading into said area, and the cooperation of everyone in observing this warning is requested.



Update June 11, 2020

Starting June 25th, the museum will open
Thursday, Friday and Saturdays only.

Admissions to the museum will be 10am to 3pm.

No entrance after 3pm.

Volunteers and Staff will observe Covid social distancing guidelines while visitors are in the museum or gift shop.

The date for regular hours and days for the museum to open daily has not been determined. Please check the website, Facebook, or call the office for more information. 706-282-5055 or email contact@toccoahistory.com
Thank you for your interest and support.



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Subject: ICO the late **Daniel R. Sada**.

Hello,

I am Chief Davilacorrea and I was curious regarding Mr. Sada's role in the war. I am good friends with his daughter Maricela Jameis and spouse. Thank you.

Best regards,

FTC Leopoldo Davilacorrea
Cell 3603403950

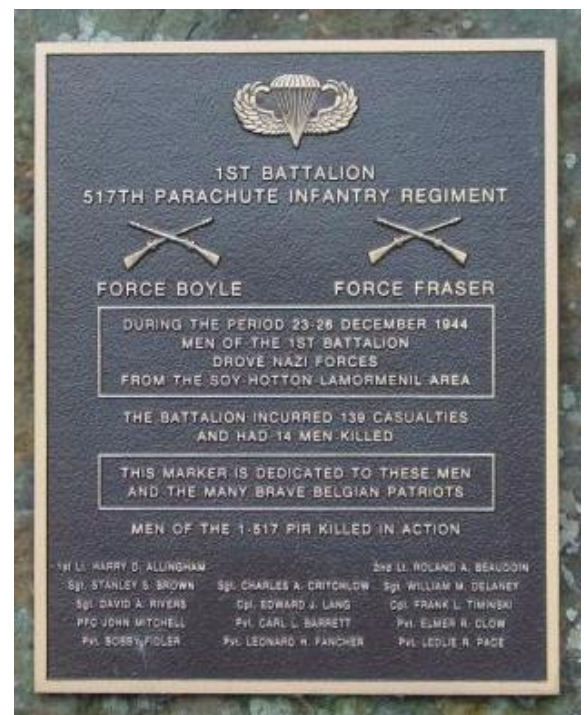
I don't **know Dan Sada** and he's not on any of the old Thunderbolt mailing rosters that I have, although I do not have any rosters before 2003. I do see one note in MailCall 838 on January 2004 from **Leo and Joyce Turco** – BB

*It took us a few years to know that **Dan Sada**, A Battery 460th and it was only that we found out he died of a heart problem when his darling daughter who remembered us from the CA reunions E-mailed us. We kept in touch with her and her mother for a while but now the letters have stopped. We saw that Mrs. Dan Sada was listed as a member but no one told us he was gone.*

I see that **Domenico "Leo" Turco** died in 2005, and **Joyce Turco** died in 2017. They lived in South Carolina and had 5 children, 5 grandchildren and 9 great-grandchildren. Leo's bio is on our website at: http://www.517prct.org/bios/leo_turco/leo_turco.htm

A thankful Memorial Day to the Veterans, family and friends of the 517th Parachute Regiment Combat Team. Be well all.

- **Paul Abbene**





517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Subject: Happy Memorial Day

Thank you for all that you do to memorialize the men of 517 and honor the few still living.

Good luck with your PC problems. It is probably backed up but “hiding”.

Theresa Pugh
Daughter of **Charley Pugh**

Thank you,

Theresa Pugh

Good Luck. Time yo back up the back up LOL

Myron Gadoury

Bob: Happy Memorial Day as we remember and salute your dad and mine. I pray this frustrating lost is over fast.

Pat Seitz

Good luck to restore your system! And thanks for all your good work. Special beer to support you in your work, 517PI jeep from the Ardennes (Manhay). Cheers!

Francois Cammaert





517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Happy Memorial Day.

In honor of my dad, **LT. Warren Caulfield** of the 517th, I was rereading the *Paratroopers' Odyssey* and discussing it with my children and my mother. My children would like to buy copies of this wonderful book. It is not on Amazon and my daughter said it was for sale on line for \$600.00!

Could you please advise where they could purchase this book?

thanks again for all the wonderful work you do!

Shelly Caulfield Azeff

Hi Shelly,

Just catching up on emails now after many weeks offline (dead PC). I don't know if anyone has any extra copies. I have one of the original hardcover copies. Some years ago, the 517th Association organized a paperback reprint version, but I don't know if those are anywhere to be found. You are correct in that you can find it on eBay at an outrageous price.

Let me do a little more research and get back to you.

Bob Barrett

Thanks Bob for all you do to keep our father's so proud. I always get a lift of reunion memories; of all the great men and families I have had the pleasure of spending time with. Happy belated birthday to Allan as I raise a glass, and a good Memorial Day to all. A wish of luck and a little prayer for your file recovery.

Tim Curtis (Lory's brother)

Son of **H.L. "Bud" Curtis** Hdqr. 1st

HAPPY BIRTHDAY ALLAN ! Sharp as always. I'll always remember you being at the top of Currahee to greet us runners on Military Weekend at Toccoa. It inspired us 517th association members to see you see you there after trodding up that hill.

All the best buddy and many more, **Paul Abbene**

Thanks, Bob — For all you do! And God bless Allan! Everyone stay well and safe! Happy Memorial Day!

Shirley Catterson, Daughter of **Edward J. Smith**, D Company

Can you help me find out who was **Gordon Lippman's** platoon leader and what happened to him? Did he move on or was he wounded, captured or KIA?

Appreciate any help you might offer. All the Best. ~ **Rob Lofthouse**



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Good luck with your recovery!!!

Thank you for posting the meaning of Memorial Day for them vs Veterans Day. So many really don't understand the difference. I can remember selling poppies in my Grandmother's neighborhood when I was a child. When Memorial Day was truly understood.

Best, **Kathryn McKillip Thrift**

How about a little Memorial Day interlude?

Nila Gott

Subject: Memorial Day in Media, PA

Nicely done, enjoy and pass on.

<https://veteranslegacy.org/2020-memorial-day-parade/>

This is the video intended to replace the Media Memorial Day parade originally scheduled for today.

Good luck with the recovery of your storage drive.

Peter Steinman /Holland



From **Ben Arnold** --> [517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team - Families & Friends](#)

General John Neiler served in the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team, fighting in Italy, Southern France, and Belgium. He received a Silver Star, Bronze Star for Valor, Purple Heart, and the Belgian Croix de Guerre.

On 8 January 1945, Lt. Neiler and an officer of the 551st were sent to reconnoiter crossings of the Salm near Rocklinval, Belgium. After they were attacked by Germans and captured, Neiler escaped, passed information back to his unit commanders, and returned to attempt rescue of the other officer, who was found to have been killed.

Major General John H. Neiler's gravesite is at Oak Ridge Memorial Park Oak Ridge, Anderson County, Tennessee, USA



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



11 years since **Bill Boyle** passed away. Seems like yesterday I was seeing him with Babbie and the whole Boyle family at all the reunions. -- BB

Below: This aerial photograph taken in the 1950s shows the new configuration of the Rhone American Cemetery. A palisade is erected in place of the current WALL OF MISSING (Wall of the missing) and a wooden platform (probably for ceremonial use) is built behind the colored masts. They will eventually be replaced by a chapel and a wall for the missing.



Find the history of the Rhone American Cemetery and Memorial in Draguignan on our new site!! 😊

👉 <https://cimetiereamericain.wixsite.com/monsite/le-cimetiere-et-son-histoire>

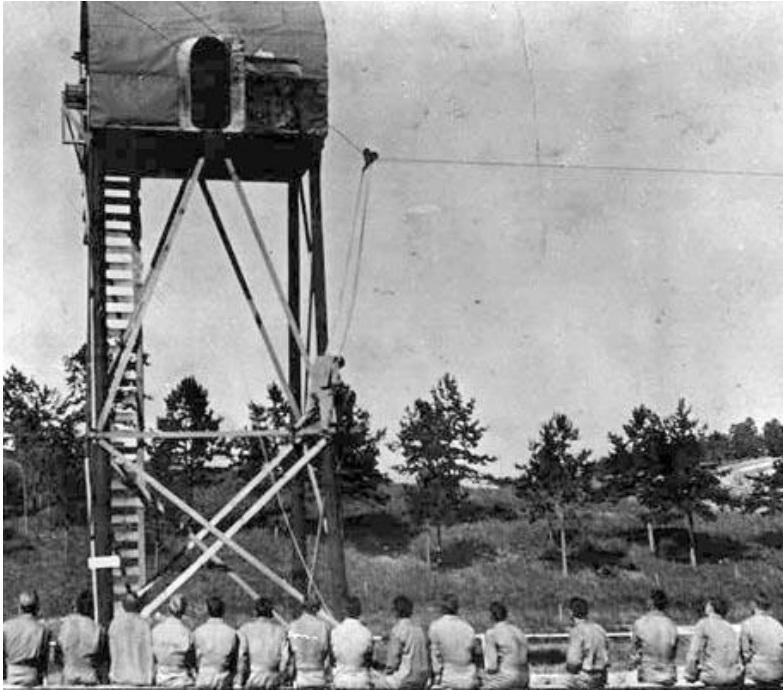


517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

From Stan Smith (Visual Storyteller) as posted on the Currahee Military Museum Facebook page:

A Stage Paratrooper Training
Camp Toccoa, GA 1942

As part of the "A" Stage paratrooper jump school ground training, the **34-foot mock up tower** was connected to a steel cable to lower the men to the ground



Here is another photo of the tower, different view.





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In case anyone hasn't heard the story before, I'd like to tell **Lt. John "Boom Boom" Alicki's** infamous story of the mock-tower jump:

They were the first of many. Through the Spring of 1943 trains arrived at Toccoa daily with contingents of from 50 to 150 men. Each group was met at the station and trucked to the parade ground where a 34 foot tall parachute "mock tower" had been erected. Lieutenant John Alicki, favored by fortune with a rugged appearance, greeted them with a blood-and-guts speech intended to scare off the timorous.

"Awright, ya volunteered for parachute duty, now's your chance to prove ya meant it!" Still in civilian clothing, each man climbed the tower, was strapped into a parachute harness, and tapped on the rump. Most made it. Those who did not were immediately headed elsewhere.

- from Paratroopers' Odyssey

"What I learned from that jump"

by **John Alicki**, Regimental Headquarters

All these years no one ever asked me what happened.

My thanks to **Monte Schroeder** and **Lamar Davis** for tracing the whereabouts of **Jim Hewitt** who was my partner in the daring jump from the 34 foot "Mock Tower".

Unfortunately, since Jim passed away in August 1992, I know that his spirit will assist me in telling the untold daring Mock Tower jump episode in Toccoa.

In the Spring of 1943, as you recall, we were in the process of forming the best parachute fighting force ever under the leadership of "Cockatoo" **Lou Walsh**.

As one of the original cadres, my job was to greet the incoming parachute volunteers, give an impromptu challenging and motivating talk, help screen the undesirables, interview and escort them to the towering 34 foot Mock Tower.

It was at the Mock Tower that the saga of the Big Jump began. We were very busy all day with about 150 volunteers, and this was the last group to be tested for the day. Jim and I were up on the Mock Tower. His job, to put on the harness and hook up the volunteer. My job, to observe the reaction of each volunteer when given the Command to 'Stand in the door' and 'Go' signal.

We successfully completed the last group without any failures. This left both of us still on top of the Mock Tower.

Now a word about Jim Hewitt. Jim was recently recruited from the Parachute School for eventual assignment to the Third Battalion. He was intelligent, well built, proficient in Parachute physical training and operations. He was only temporarily attached to the In and Out Platoon.

Back to the Mock Tower. Normally when two were up on the tower, one could climb down the ladder and the other would harness up and jump out of the mock tower, and upon landing tie the harness to the pole.



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

I was about to climb down the ladder when Jim mentioned that while he was at the Parachute School, some of the instructors to the Mock Tower jumped together to keep the other from climbing down the ladder. I then said, "Let's try it. If this was done at the parachute school why not here at Toccoa".

He agreed, and prepared the harness in a loop which was placed around our rumps then placing my left arm around his shoulder, and he with his right arm on my shoulder followed by holding the harness with my right hand, and he the harness with his left hand.

In that position we jumped simultaneously. The going down was okay only to a point. We underestimated the power of the cable. At the point of the final downward lunge of two bodies, the cable reacted like a huge recoiled spring which suddenly was released, catapulting both of us up into the air. We separated and scattered by the force of the cable. Jim going one direction, I another direction, and feeling like the man of the Flying trapeze but without the trapeze.

The last thing I remembered was looking up with the ground suddenly and swiftly coming at me. Then a big flash, lots of stars bursting, then blackout. At that split moment my reflexes automatically responded to the sudden impact of the hard ground by rolling my body with the fall thus alleviating any serious injury.

Both of us were momentarily knocked out, but due to our excellent physical condition and training, came to our senses and stood up on our feet.

About the time when all this was happening, the last group of volunteers were still in the mock tower area and apparently saw what happened. I can still visualize their eyes lit up in amazement, wondering what daring nuts these paratroopers were to hit the ground so hard and still be able to get back on their feet.

Little did they know both of us were hurting. Every bone in our bodies ached.

By this time someone on the ground got the medics and transportation to take Jim and me to the Clinic. I hurt so bad and refused to ride and walked instead.

Major Vella examined both of us, gave each an injection of morphine and arranged to send both of us for further observation to the city of Toccoa hospital. At the hospital, after being examined thoroughly, I was told nothing was wrong and could be released the next day after a good rest. However because it rained the following day, I was confined for another day as an added precaution.

While in the hospital I inquired about the status of Jim's injury only to receive vague answers.

After my release from the hospital, I lost contact with Jim. Later, I heard along the grapevine that Jim hurt his back.

Years later, while we were preparing publication of Paratroopers Odyssey in 1985, **Clark Archer** gave me Jim's Toccoa telephone number. Since then we kept in touch until his mail was returned to me with "No Forwarding Address".

So much for this past daring stunt, and hopefully may dispel any exaggerated assumptions that might have existed these past [fifty-nine] years. Also after this Toccoa episode, there were no more double exits from the Mock Tower at the Parachute School.

In closing, there was an investigation and reprimand for attempting the risky stunt.

John Alicki - 2002



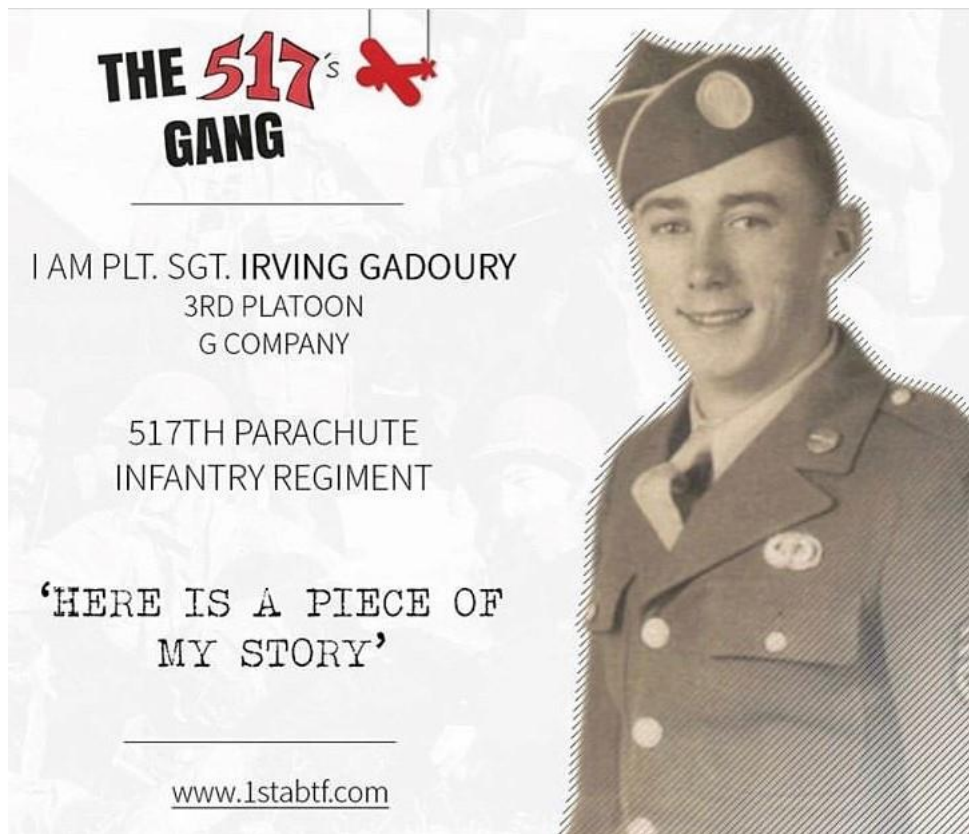


517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

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



Plt. Sgt. Irvin Gadoury was wounded on September 18, 1944 during the final attack on the Tête de la Lavina for the capture of the Col de Braus.

Wounded by a mortar shell burst, he was evacuated. He will never return to the unit and will be discharged. **Irvin Gadoury** underwent surgery in the early 1970s to remove this shrapnel near a vital organ. He died during the operation.

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