



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2460

January 17, 2021

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

MailCall News

From: [Camp Toccoa at Currahee, Inc.](#) (Facebook)



Thanks to a generous donation of \$5,000 from Harbin Family Foundation, Inc and the volunteer efforts of a Carlton Lowry led team of William Tucker, Mark McGinnis and Matthew Lathan the 517th (barrack 4) at CTaC now has a new exterior of siding that matches the pavilion and the 506th (barrack 1). CTaC plans to get it painted right away. Some on the interior walls, original windows from Camp Toccoa and insulation have been installed as well. The progress continues at Camp Toccoa at Currahee. Come see the changes. Currahee!

[Camp Toccoa at Currahee, Inc.](#)

I wanted to thank all of the volunteers that have helped to rebuild and enhance Camp Toccoa at Currahee. This last week and weekend was cold, but it didn't stop our volunteers. They worked putting siding up on Barracks #4 and interior wall panels. Even in 36 degree temperatures, some worked preparing the ground where the C-47 will be parked (that's my son with the shorts on), I told him it was going to be cold.

The Camp project would never have happened without our VOLUNTEERS.





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The list of volunteers continues to grow, if you are interested in helping, stop by the Camp some weekend and find out how you too can help preserve a piece of history. We post on Facebook 2 weeks to 10 days in advance of when we are going to have a work week. It is posted on Camp Toccoa Work Week. Come join us, we have several projects under way and can use the help. Currahee!





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I'm wondering if any of the crew here has information to the wellbeing of Deanne Jensen, widow of **John Jonientz** F Co. We have been keeping up with her with postcards over the past few years, but this Christmas our letters came back "return to sender." Any information would be appreciated.

Thanks

Scott Ross
Grandson of **Norman L. Ross Jr.**
I Co. 3rd Bttn.

Hi Scott,

With some internet searches, there is a Deanne D Jensen (Age 92) that shows up at an address in Blaine WA.

Regards,

Bob Barrett

RE: Morning Reports,

At one time I had copies of the morning reports concerning my father, **Walter J Graham**, but my computer crashed. Listed as Headquarters 1st battalion, in Christmas roster. I know he had 2 purple hearts. I remember morning report when he arrived as a replacement but lost my copy. Can you please help me?

William H Graham, son.

Hi William,

I see Walter Graham listed in these Morning Reports, but I don't have the images. I'll ask around.

COMPANY	STATUS	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	MI	RANK	DATE	CODE	ASN	MOS	LOCATION	NOTES
HQ Co 1st Bn		Graham	Walter	J	PVT	11-Aug-1944	A	3349401	521	8 Miles SE of Rome, Italy	asgd & jd Co fr ARTC as of 10 Aug. 1944
HQ Co 1st Bn		Graham	Walter	J	PFC	11-Aug-1944	A	33494401	521	8 Miles SE of Rome, Italy	Above 5 EM asgd & jd Co fr ARTC as of 10 Aut 1944.
HQ Co 1st Bn		Graham	Walter	J	PFC	6-Feb-1945		33494401	7604	Brenenberg, Germany (062-354)	Dy to abs sk DS hosp NBC LD basi cstatus changed fr asgd to atchd unasgd MOS7604
HQ Co 1st Bn		Graham, Jr	Walter		PFC	30-Sep-1944	50	33494401	521	Cheraw, France	fr dy to abs sk LWA to trfd to 7th Army Det of Pat.
HQ Co 1st Bn		Graham, Jr	Walter		PFC	9-Oct-1944	A	33494401	7521	Cheraw, France	reasgd and jd to Co fr 7th Army Det of pat LWA.

I can probably dig these up.

Bob Barrett



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I recently picked up a digital copy of *Yank Weekly (European Edition)* from Sept 1944. Some of you have probably seen the cover picture, which is a picture of the 517th on the way to France on August 14, 1944.

This picture is of Lt. “Chopper” Kienlen, facing PFC Chester Kochersperger and behind him is Pvt. Albert J. Ernst (KIA) – Per a similar picture in *First Airborne Task Force*, by Michel D. Trez.

There is only a short article about the invasion of Southern France in this edition. It was probably still hot off the press. I found it interesting that the invasion is never referred to as “Operation Dragoon” in this magazine. Maybe code names were not officially used publicly.

THE FOURTH FRONT

PRACTICALLY all the campaign-hardened dough-foots who led the assault on Southern France felt this invasion was different from the others they had known. They had waded onto hostile shores in Sicily, at Salerno and at Anzio, not as odds-on favorites, but as pioneers in a new and uncertain kind of warfare. Now these veterans of the Mediterranean campaigns were picked to spearhead an attack on the mainland of Europe. And they went in brim-full of confidence despite the unusual hazards attached to the landings.

The first hazard was lack of surprise. Already the invasion of the Riviera has undisputed title to being the worst kept secret of the war. The place of the landings, on once fashionable beaches between Toulon and Cannes, was the most obvious spot that could have been picked. The Germans certainly expected it.

But whatever the invasion lacked in surprise, it made up for in power. This power was demonstrated as early as 13 days before D-Day when Allied airmen turned to Southern France with a furiously-concentrated interest that probably was a tip-off to the Germans. But the Germans didn't, possibly couldn't, do anything about it. Bombing of bridges over rivers northwest of Nice went on for a week. On August 9, medium bombers went after German anti-aircraft batteries, coastal guns, radio communications. Then, on the last two days before D-Day, heavy bombers added their enormous weight to the attack by striking at fortifications along the entire length of the Riviera.

No softening-up for an invasion was ever more complete. And where the Air Force left

off, the Navy took up. Battlewagons threw the thundering might of 16-inch guns against coastal strongholds. Rocket ships turned the hazy pre-dawn atmosphere into a roaring, flaming red. Around the sides of the big ships were sub-chasers, corvettes and destroyers.

BEHIND the coast parachutes were falling thick as snowflakes. Hours before the infantry went ashore, more than 14,000 airborne troops were dropped back of the shore defenses. A steady flow of reinforcements was kept up by troop-carrier planes, and at no time during the operations were less than 1,000 paratroopers swinging in the air. Towed gliders formed a train 50 miles long and seven miles wide. The gliders landed at strips already marked.

Just before H-Hour, 500 bombers gave the coast defenses a last-minute pounding.

At 0800 hours, the infantry went ashore. Within two hours, seven waves of 2,000 men or more had been landed. By noon they were three miles inland. Meantime, tanks and self-propelled artillery, followed by trucks, jeeps and weapons carriers, made the beachhead secure.

Three veteran infantry divisions led the assault. The 3rd scored an outstanding success in Sicily a year ago when it landed back of the German lines and captured Messina. It made the landing at Anzio on D-Day. Back of the 36th was Salerno and a large part of the campaign from there to Rome. The 45th made landings in Sicily and at Paestum, and spent a long period in the line at Cassino and Anzio.

Against a titanic naval force of 1500 ships the

Germans offered only a feeble defense. Air opposition was negligible. The only naval craft encountered was a single corvette, overtaken and captured by a U. S. destroyer. The same destroyer set afire a tanker trying to escape.

More than a third of the ships of the vast invasion fleet flew the U. S. flag. Others sailed under the colors of Britain, France, Canada, the Netherlands, Poland, Greece and Belgium. The convoy was to a large extent made up of small craft built especially for the job. It was unlike the North Africa invasion fleet of two years ago, with its high proportion of converted merchant ships.

AIRMEN who got a panoramic view of the invasion fleet came back with vivid descriptions of its immensity. “I saw both Salerno and Anzio and this was bigger than both of them,” said 1st Lt. Arthur J. Porter, a Marauder pilot. “There were more ships than I could count, and the air cover was stupendous.”

The Germans' inability to face the overwhelming might of this amphibious assault highlighted the decline of the Nazi armies since they rolled over Poland five years ago this month. They fought then according to the classic Prussian strategy of concentrating all strength on one front. Now they are again fighting in Poland but it is only one of four fronts, and in all cases they are doing blitzkrieg in reverse. To the desperate situation confronting them in the East, in Italy and in Northern France has been added another headache — the opening of a major front in Southern France.



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I will include some more excerpts and photos in the next MailCall. In the meantime, here is another page that got my attention:

and work with them on trolleys and buses. The President's Fair Employment Committee so ordered.

The Army issued a pamphlet warning GIs about dangers on furloughs: jaywalking, swimming in strange waters, driving after drinking, etc.

The huge Lake Placid Club, expensive and exclusive resort in the Adirondacks, was taken over by the Army for rest billets for battle-worn GIs. Thirty-five fine buildings on the lake front were built to accommodate 1200 guests and there are two golf courses, many tennis courts, ski and bridle trails and a theater.

Wacs in Washington were getting "steatopygous" (can't you guess what that is) from sitting down too much. So the WD ordered calisthenics for the girls to lose a collective ton in three weeks.

NAMES IN THE NEWS: Bela Lugosi, who is popular in monster roles in the movies, was sued for divorce by his wife in Los Angeles. She charged he was "cruel and unhuman" off the screen.

Tech. Sgt. Charles (Commando) Kelly, hero of the Italian campaign, was fined 90 bucks and got restricted to the company area for three months for overstaying a leave from Fort Benning, Ga.

George Tweed, Navy radioman who dodged the Japs for 31 months on Guam, divorced his wife in San Diego, Cal.

Sgt. Peter B. Saltonstall, 23-year-old son of

the Massachusetts governor, Leverett Saltonstall, was killed in action with the Marines in the Pacific. Naval Air Lieut. Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr., son of the former United States ambassador to Britain, was killed in action in Europe.

Cary Grant, movie star, and his wife, the former Barbara Hutton, five-and-time store heiress, decided on a "friendly separation."

Katharine Cornell and Brian Aherne went overseas to tour in a USO camp show production of "The Barrets of Wimpole Street."

Rear Admiral Don Pardee Moon, task force commander in the Normandy invasion, committed suicide in Washington, apparently out of "combat fatigue." His reputation in the Navy was excellent.

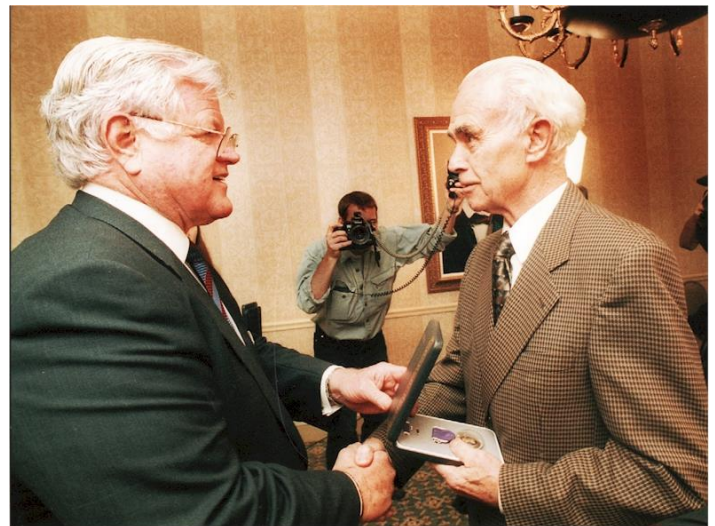
Irving Berlin returned to New York from a tour of Britain and Italy with his GI musical, "This Is The Army." The stage version has earned two million dollars and the movie eight millions for the Army Emergency Relief.

Jon Hall of the movies had his pretty face scarred for life. Friends of Tommy Dorsey, the band leader, were said to have done it in a Hollywood brawl because Jon made a pass at Dorsey's wife. Hall, who gave Dorsey a good working over himself, said he had no hard feelings but the DA began to look into the situation.

Lt. Gen. John L. DeWitt, commandant of the Army-Navy Staff College in Washington, was appointed to succeed the late Lt. Gen. Lesley J. McNair, in an ETO post of "great importance."

In one paragraph on this page, they mention the deaths of Peter Saltonstall, son of the Massachusetts governor, Leverett Saltonstall, and also the death of Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr, the older brother of President John F. Kennedy. As I live in Massachusetts, both these names are part of our history. I actually have very indirect connections to both families. Senator Ted Kennedy sponsored my acceptance to the Air Force Academy in 1970, and in 1996 "Teddy" was our senior Senator and presented my Dad, Ben Barrett, with his long overdue Purple Heart and Bronze Star.

And in my college years, I lived at a fraternity house in Kenmore Square, Boston that was previously the Governor's mansion of Saltonstall. (It had a beautiful oval dining room, supposedly modeled after the dining room of the Lusitania). – Bob B.





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Then & Now

On Jan 7, 1945, 3rd Bn, 517th PRCT was given the responsibility for what remained of the front on the Salm River, while the RCT (minus) moved into 82nd Airborne Division Reserve near Arbrefontaine.

In the late 1990s, when I bought the book Paratrooper's Odyssey - A History of the 517th Parachute Combat Team, I've immediately located some of the little pictures (the size of a stamp) taken at Arbrefontaine. Until recently, I wasn't able to find a bigger size. I've finally find a larger size but the quality is low... I wish I could find better copies to post this Then & Now as those pictures were taken a few dozen feet from the house where my mom grew up (1952-1970).

Eddy Lamberty



ARBREFONTAINE



Then

EDDY LAMBERTY © 2021

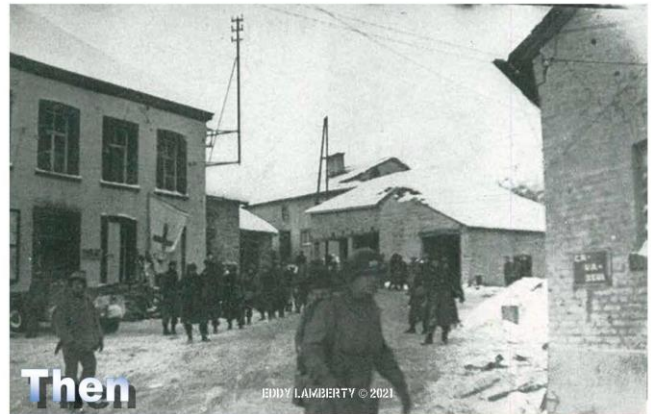
ARBREFONTAINE

Jan. 1945 - Jan. 2021



Now

EDDY LAMBERTY © 2021



Then

EDDY LAMBERTY © 2021

ARBREFONTAINE

Jan. 1945 - Jan. 2021



Now

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517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

A Company
Morning Report

January 8, 1945.

Arbrefontaine, Belgium

11 enlisted men sent to hospital for NBC LD ??

(see below for possible explanation)

Present for Duty: 71

Absent: 99

"Morale Good"

COMPANY			
MORNING REPORT		ENDING	DATE
		2400	9 Jan 1945
STATION		Arbrefontaine, Belgium 68.91	
ORGANIZATION		Co A 517th Para Inf Regt Inf.	
SERIAL NUMBER	NAME	GRADE	CODE
30064889	Bellego, Albert A.	7542	Cpl
fr ab sk in Hosp NBC LD to duty.			
30424884	Boyle, William S.	7745	PFC
31374871	Chavez, Louis	7745	Pvt
13267088	Dietz, Samuel R. Jr.	7745	PFC
30441146	Haig, Marshall W.	7745	Pvt
34802846	Miller, Mason V.	7745	Pvt
6294177	Smith, Richard J.	7312	S/Sgt
33064877	Kocher, Frank, Chester E.		PFC
30127314	Castello, Jesse P. Jr.	7745	Pvt
30282845	Fliger, George H.	7745	Pvt
34732884	Burger, Henry	7745	Pvt
34834889	Dracker, John W.	7504	Pvt
above (11) fr duty to ab sk in Hosp NBC LD			
basic status changed fr asgd to atchd unassgd.			
0-18032888	Burkhard, John D.	1510-9	1st Lt
fr ab sk in hosp. NBC LD to duty basic status			
changed fr atchd unassgd to asgd.			
RECORD OF EVENTS.			
No change weather snow and cold morale good.			

From Paratroopers' Odyssey:

Colonel Graves now placed Major Bob McMahan, executive officer of the 3rd Battalion, in command of the 1st. McMahan had a warm, outgoing disposition; a USMA classmate of Boyle, he thought of his men first and was well liked. Boyle left a big pair of boots to fill, but McMahan quickly picked up the traces. The 1st Battalion remained a formidable fighting force. With all three Battalions on the high ground west of the Salm the front was comparatively quiet for two days. On January 6th the 30th Division made a limited-objective attack south across the Ambleve River, gaining a few thousand yards and pinching out the 2nd Battalion. Next day the 3rd Battalion was given responsibility for what remained of the front along the Salm, while the RCT (minus) moved into 82nd Airborne Division reserve near Arbrefontaine. Regimental Headquarters moved just outside of the village. The 1st Battalion closed in an assembly area to the north, and 2nd Battalion went to Goronne, three miles southeast. The 460th remained in support of the 3rd Battalion.

The 1st and 2nd Battalions got a little rest, although the cold continued unabated and there were frequent heavy snows. Medical inspections were held. **To no one's surprise, it was found that many men who had been unable to remove their boots for over a week were suffering from severe exposure and frostbite. Over a hundred cold casualties were evacuated, reducing rifle company strengths to an average of eighty to ninety men -- from an average of 150 that had begun the Ardennes campaign.**



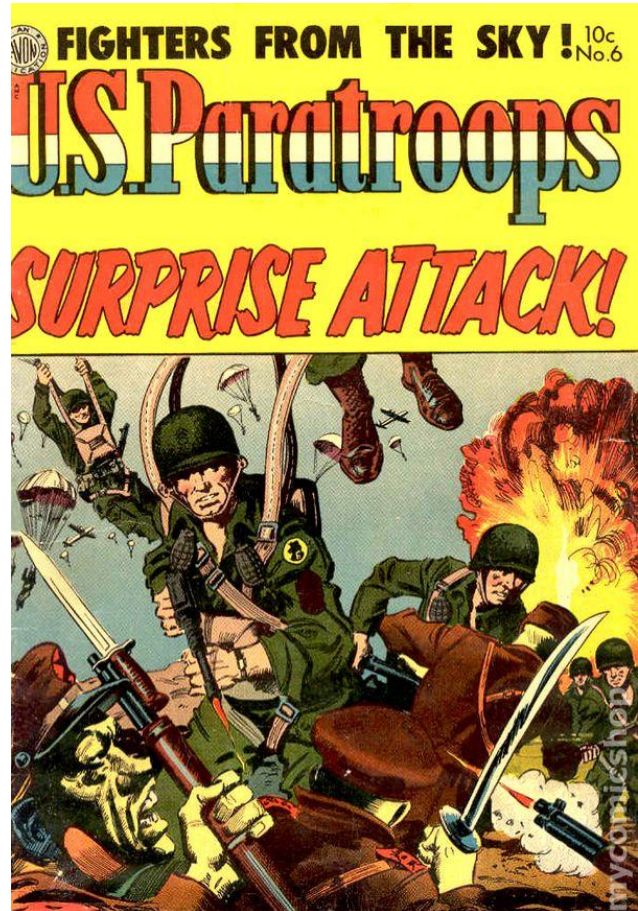
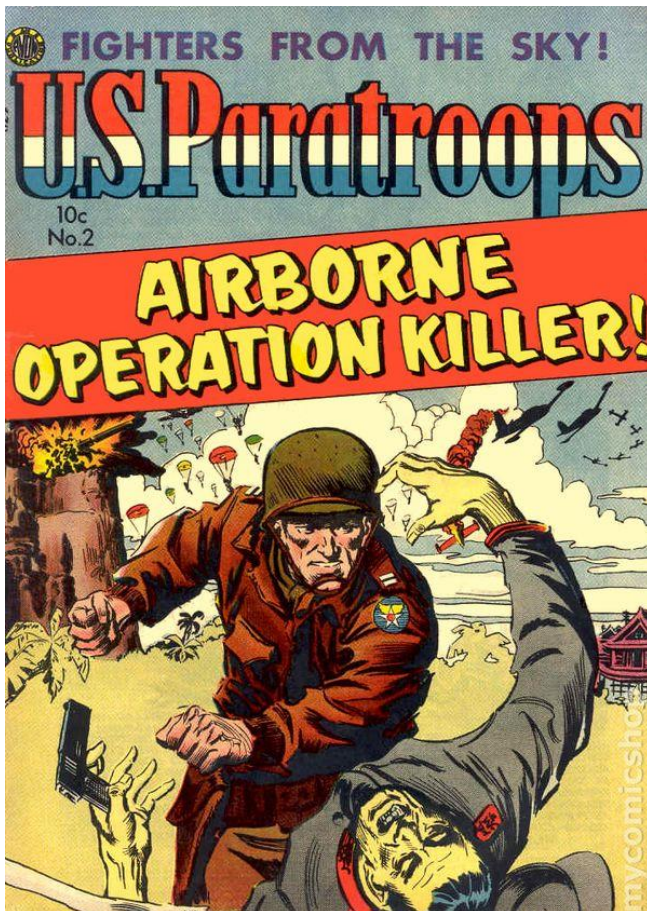
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Administrivia

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- 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.

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US Paratroops comics (1951)