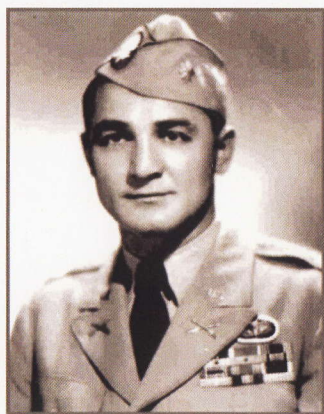




A VETERAN'S REMEMBRANCE

By John A. Alicki



World War II Survivor

WORLD WAR II HONOREE

John A. Alicki—U.S. Army

John is a veteran of Pearl Harbor; served with the 8th U.S. Cavalry Regiment, and in 1942 was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant. He graduated from Parachute School, Counter Intelligence Corps School and Strategic Intelligence School. He served with the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team (PRCT) in Rome-Arno, Southern France, Rhineland, Ardennes-Alsace and Central Europe campaigns and made the heroic jump into France.

He still maintains contact with his war buddies and belongs to the 517th PRCT organization.



To Ben and Bob Barrett
the two most Dedicated
Men I Know.

"Our deeds are seeds of fate.
Sown here on earth but
bringing Harvest in eternity."

John A. Alicki
12/15/05

John "Boom Boom" Alicki

A VETERAN'S REMEMBRANCE

By
John Aloysious Alicki

A Member Of The
517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team
World War II



Military History
1936-1957

A Veteran's Remembrance

John Aloysious Alicki "Boom Boom"

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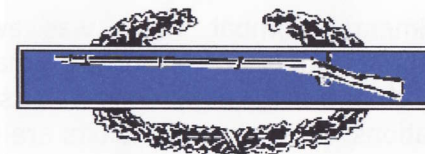
Special thanks to *Howard Hensleigh* and *Merle McMorrow*

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USA

Dedication

Although this book was primarily written for my immediate family, whom I love very much, it is dedicated to those brave paratrooper heroes of this passing generation with whom I was granted the privilege of serving.



THE AMERICAN PARATROOPER

He had in his veins some of the best of American patriotic blood.

"No language would be too strong nor eulogy too high to pronounce upon him who did his duty during that long and dreadful war, who manually braved its dangers, patriotically endured its trials, cheerfully obeyed the orders, who was ready to march and suffer, to fight or die, without once calling into question the wisdom of the orders or necessity for the sacrifice."



The 517th was one of the most challenged paratrooper outfits in World War II. It was a regimental combat team sent to where they were most needed. They were formed in 1943 and were in continual combat for 180 days. They were often moved from one division to another and made a heroic jump into Southern France, some of them landing from 250 feet.

The 517th Regimental Combat Team was awarded 1,576 purple hearts. Many troopers received more than one bronze star, and the French and Belgian governments issued the entire 517th commendations. Their brave exploits are told in several books and on their web site.

517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



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

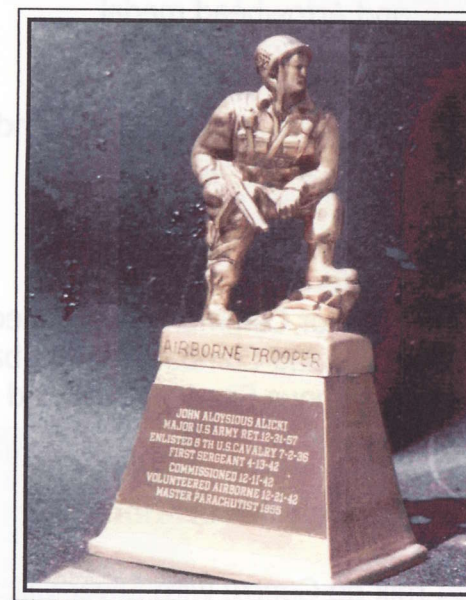
www.517prct.org

MailCall: Ben Barrett (H Co.)
Ben517@aol.com

Website: Bob Barrett
webmaster@517prct.org

Ben Barrett and his son Bob's dedication and devotion to the 517th website will never be forgotten.

John Aloysious Alicki, Major, AUS (ret) was a veteran of Pearl Harbor, World War II and Korean War, he enlisted in 1936 in the 8th U.S. Cavalry Regiment first Cavalry Division, fort Bliss, Texas. He served with the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team in Rome-Arno, Southern France, Parachute Assault, Rhineland, Ardennes-Alsace and Central Europe Campaigns



A 12-inch statue made by Mrs. Jean Dixon (deceased) wife of Lt. Col. Dixon (Ret) 82nd Airborne Division

Medals Awarded To John "Boom Boom" Alicki

Bronze Star
Purple Heart
Good Conduct
American Defense/with Foreign Clasp medal
American Campaign medal
Asiatic-Pacific with Bronze Star
European-Africa-Middle East with Silver Star
and Arrowhead medal
WW II Vic` tory medal
Occupation Japan medal
Korean Service with Bronze Star and
Silver Star
National Defense
United Nations
Armed forces Reserve medal
and Pearl Harbor Commemorative medal
Master Parachute and Combat Infantry badges
New York State Conspicuous Service Cross and Service Star

Foreign Decorations

French Croix de Guerre with Silver Gilt Star
French Liberation medal
Belgian Liberation medal
Belgian Commemorative medal
Korean War Service Medal
Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation



John alongside his medals



Foreign decorations





CONSULAT GENERAL DE FRANCE A ATLANTA

Mr. John a. Alicki
129 Roberts Lane
Lenoir, NC 28645

October 20, 2005

Dear Mr. Alicki :

In recognition for your noble contribution during World War II, and in remembrance with endless respect and affection to those who sacrificed their lives for the cause, the Consulate General of France will organize a ceremony at which time the "Thank you America" certificates will be bestowed upon.

This ceremony will take place at the :
American Legion Post 262
1940 Donald Ross Rd
Charlotte, NC 28208

On **Wednesday November 16th 2005 from 2:30 to 4:30 pm.**

Please confirm your attendance with Yvonne Robert at yvonne.robert@diplomatie.gouv.fr or (404) 495 1681 before November 9.

If for any reason you cannot attend this event and would like to receive the certificate by mail, you can also let us know and we will be glad to comply.

In hopes of meeting you on November 16, I would like to thank you again for the incredible service you rendered to my country and assure you of my deepest gratitude.

Sincerely,

Philippe Ardanaz
Consul General

Prominence in Buckhead - 3475 Piedmont Road NE - Suite 1840 - Atlanta GA 30305
T. 404.495.1660 / F. 404.495.1661
Info@consulfrance-atlanta.org - www.consulfrance-atlanta.org

France Salutes American
Veterans



2:30 PM
November 16, 2005

American Legion Post 262
1940 Donald Ross Road
Charlotte, NC 28208

"Thank You America"

Welcome	Bob Weeks <i>Director, Mecklenburg County Veterans Service</i>
Pledge of Allegiance	Audience
National Anthems <i>United States France</i>	
Remarks	Parks Helms <i>Chairman, Board of County Commissioners</i>
Introduction of Guest Speaker	Millie Cox
Presentation of Certificates	Philippe Ardanaz <i>Consul general of France</i>
Reception	American Legion Post 262

American Military Role in WWII

In the spring of 1940, in the wake of months of fierce fighting, France was invaded and humiliated. In the space of just four weeks its army--ill-prepared for the war but facing the enemy courageously--had lost 120,000 soldiers who had sacrificed their lives in vain to save their country. France's population was fleeing before the aggressor. The government had collapsed. Those were the grimmest of days. Days of darkness and despair. Under the brute strength of tyranny, an entire people found itself suddenly deprived of liberty and freedom. The future looked bleak and there seemed to be no reasons for hope.

In the midst of total disaster however, one man stood tall, surrounded by just a few. General Charles de Gaulle went to London and, on June 18, 1940, speaking through a microphone of the British Broadcasting Corporation, called for the French to join him, refuse to lay down their weapons, and resist. Resist and fight!

With an astonishing premonition of what would happen four years later, on the longest day following the longest winter, General de Gaulle rekindled hope in the hearts of the French people by saying: "France does not stand alone! She is not isolated. Behind her is a vast empire, and she can make common cause with the British Empire, which commands the seas and is continuing the struggle. Like England, she can draw unreservedly on the immense industrial resources of the United States."

On June 6, 1944, General de Gaulle's vision became a reality. Under the command of General Eisenhower, 70,000 Americans, together with British, Canadian, French and other allied companions-in-arms, set foot on the beaches of Normandy. Our American allies were following the path of Pershing's army during World War I and answering the call of Lafayette during the War of Independence. Like the men of Rochambeau in Yorktown, they had crossed the sea in the service of liberty: they were soldiers of free nations up in arms against oppression.

In the cold mist of that gray morning, the powerful armada of Operation Overlord brought the liberators to the soil of France where they broke through the wall of fire set off by the enemy. Omaha, Utah, Juno, Gold, Sword... the code names given to the beaches resonate today as many synonyms of freedom. A freedom paid dearly by those who fell in the sand never to rise again. The soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice--among them the twenty-one brave boys from Bedford--were young men in the prime of their lives. They served their country and its core values in the world's most powerful and well trained army. But they were also good sons, nephews, boyfriends who had left behind the warmth of their homes tucked away in a generous country. Their future was stolen from them by a faraway war. Yet what they fought for were universal values. And in defending a battered Europe under the Nazi yoke, they defended the very foundations of their nation and their country's collective past and future. They joined forces with The French Resistance--the underground Organization of 500,000 men and women--who had secretly paved the way for their D-Day landing. Their conjunction would in a few weeks liberate Paris, and in a few months all of France, opening up the path to the final Victory.

June 6, 1944 to May 8, 1945



Never Forget By Sandy Sigurdson

I held the hand of a stranger today
Our heads were bowed in prayer,
We stood to honor our nation's brave
And showed how much we cared.

We care that men have spilled their blood
On fields of foreign lands,
And gave us a chance to stand in peace
While holding our brothers' hands.

We remember the wounds that they sustained
Some missing arms and legs,
And some who lost more than body parts;
They lost parts of their souls instead.

For those who never came back home
Lost in jungles and paddies of rice,
We silently stand and give them praise
For paying the ultimate price.

Now, as we stand here, our hands enjoined
We can share a common goal,
To tell the world, we'll never forget
A single courageous soul.



TOP SECRET

HEADQUARTERS 517TH PARACHUTE INFANTRY CT
APO 758, U. S. ARMY

11 August 1944

1. The following general considerations should be noted in the operation now being undertaken.
 - a. For most of us this is our first combat jump. Consequently some may be a little apprehensive. Remember that the advantage is with the attacker, as the enemy does not know exactly how or when he is going to be struck. Particularly in an airborne operation in which we land in his rear areas where his CP's, lines of communications, and supply echelons are set up, our activities will give him grave concern. The enemy consequently will be a lot more apprehensive than we are. That the enemy will react to our landing by movement of forces towards our area should be expected within a few hours. However by that time we expect to be pretty well set for him and deal out a lot of punishment. It must be remembered also that he will be engaged at many other points by other airborne units and the large scale attack by the amphibious landing. There can be no doubt of the success of this operation if we use our heads and keep our confidence, work quickly but smoothly and act aggressively using good tactics and security measures.
2. It will be dark when we first land. It will be difficult to see what is going on around us. Therefore, we must not start firing promiscuously at anything that moves. You must be certain it is the enemy before you fire. After the first unit lands many of our men will be moving around the area, some already in assembly or moving to assembly positions and others recovering bundles. Don't fire first and find it is one of your own men later. Weapons, on landing, should be loaded and locked, and fired only on orders of an officer or in case of an emergency. The sound of enemy weapons is known to you and should disclose the location of enemy forces if present. Enemy flares may be fired around the area to give the appearance of enemy strength and to cause us to be alarmed. Remember that more casualties can be caused by some of our own men getting trigger happy than from enemy fire. It is possible that your stick may land some distance from the DZ. Your action in this case should be

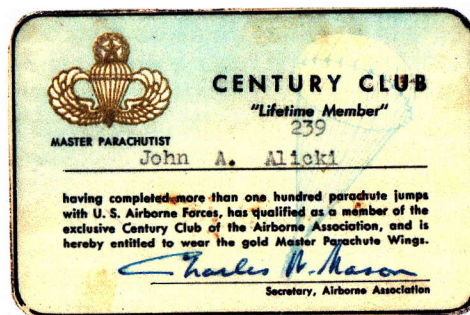
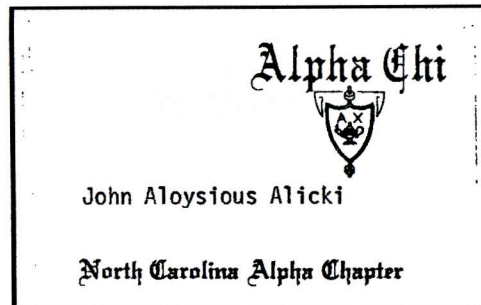
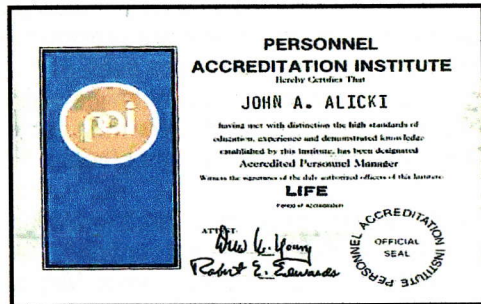
considered. The general idea is to move to your Battalion assembly area and if the Battalion has already left for its objective join them there. If this is impossible join up with friendly troops preferably of this unit and assist them in accomplishing their mission. In either case do as much damage as possible on the way, for example a staff car or a truck load of Germans may be driving along the road unaware of your presence in the area. In case no officers are present with your group the senior NCO should be prepared to take over. All men will be issued instructions regarding the terrain, important towns, streams etc. also a map in the escape kit. Remember that a few men can create a hell of a lot of trouble if they happen to be in the right place.

3. Due to lack of transport in landing and the difficulties of supply, don't expect an easy time. However, I am confident that this outfit can take care of itself in any situation that may arise. May success reward our efforts, and good hunting to each and every one of you.

R.D. GRAVES,
Lt. Col. 517th Prcht Inf
Commanding

TOP SECRET

Affiliations



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A VETERAN'S REMEMBRANCE

It was in the year 1936 when our country was in a deep economic depression; unemployment was rampant and industry idle. The winds of war were developing in Europe with the French and German dispute over the remilitarization of the borders in violation of the Versailles Treaty, and the speeding up of Germany's rearmament. In the Far East, Japan began to beat the drums of war with economic pressure on North China since their forceful seizure of Manchuria.

In these existing uncertain conditions the year 1936 was a turning point in my life as an 18-year old. I decided to quit my recently acquired job as a die-maker apprentice to travel and see the world. I was then young, foolish and a dreamer, dreaming of far horizons and an insatiable desire to know and see places I read about in history and geography books. I started by hitch hiking, riding the rails, and walking hundreds of miles visiting and seeing many places in these great United States. Finally, with about 35 cents in my pocket, hungry and a long way from home, I reached El Paso, Texas. It was in El Paso that I decided to join the U.S. Army. In order to meet the Army weight requirement because of being underweight, I spent the last 35 cents for bananas. Bananas in those days sold for a penny a piece. Eating all the bananas easily increased my weight by more than 10 pounds. As a result, I was sworn into the Army in July 1936.



Fort Bliss, Texas—1937

I was assigned to "A" troop, 8th U.S.A. Cavalry Regiment (mounted), First Cavalry division, Ft. Bliss, Texas. Recruit training was intensive, rugged with beneficial and productive results. During recruit training, the fact of coming from Brooklyn, N.Y. and never having ridden a horse, I was determined to succeed. It did not take me too long to learn how to saddle a horse, mount, sit in the saddle, and properly control the horse at the cost of developing blisters on both sides of my buttocks. During the grueling Equitation Training and later riding the open range of Texas, one could classify me as a proficient horse rider and truly be called the "Original Cowboy From Brooklyn."

My corporal (and instructor) was named Fagan. He was hard but fair, and gave me some good, sound advice, which influenced my Army career. He said, "Do what you're told cheerfully and willingly, and ask questions later." In following his advice, I found out there was very little need to ask questions or complain.

My Troop Commander was Captain Reardon. Out of earshot, we troopers called him, "Leap Mule Reardon." A nickname he acquired while training new remounts. Later, while with the 517th outside of Rome, Italy, in preparation for our parachute jump into Southern France, I had the pleasure of meeting and introducing him to Colonel Graves, Commander 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Regiment. Our 8th Cavalry Regiment insignia consisted of the head of a white horse with eight stars and motto, *Honor and Courage*. Also, I remember that the 8th Cavalry Regiment was adjoined in barracks next to the famous 7th Cavalry Regiment (Gary Owens). This was Wild Bill Custer's Regiment, which was massacred at Little Big Horn in



Montana by Sioux Indians under Chief Crazy Horse, better known as "Custer's Last Stand."

Then there was "El Toro Blanco," our First Sergeant, "Bull" White, a WW I veteran who growled with his thunderous voice and scared the daylights out of us cavalrymen. His actions were just a camouflage as we later found out. He had a heart of gold and truly was a father figure to us all.

During my first enlistment tour at Ft. Bliss, Texas, I had the honor and privilege to see the famous WW I General "Black Jack" Pershing. He visited and stayed at the Officers Quarters for an unknown period. Also, it was at Ft. Bliss that I learned to fly the famous Piper Cub airplane. In those days the cost of Flight Training was \$1.50 per hour. The second pilot experience was clearing out the stables to remove horse manure by, "Pile it" here and "Pile it" there.

After serving three years in the U.S. Army Cavalry, I once again looked for those challenging far-off horizons with a desire for Foreign Service. My choice was for the Philippines. However, Foreign Service to the Philippines was closed because of ominous winds of war created by the Japanese military expansion in the Far East. I was then given a choice of the hot and humid Panama Canal Zone or the fascinating Polynesian Territory of Hawaii. My choice was Hawaii and so on January 10, 1939, I departed on Army orders to the Port of Embarkation, New York, via the Panama Canal to San Francisco's Angel Island, California. Angel Island was the Port of Embarkation for the Pacific area. During my short stay on Angel Island and in commuting to and from San Francisco and Angel Island, the government ferry always stopped at Alcatraz Federal Prison. The trips gave me an opportunity of seeing this grim and foreboding prison where few criminals have tried to escape.

Upon arriving in Hawaii, I was assigned duty with the U.S. Army Hawaiian Department, Fort Shafter, Territory of Hawaii (TH) under the Command of Lt. General Walter C. Short with Headquarters and Headquarters Battery 64th Coast Artillery (AA) Regiment. Later in mid-1941, I transferred as Sergeant to Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 53rd Coast Artillery Brigade (AA) Regiment in Communication when we were hit by the Japanese surprise attack on December 7, 1941. Other than the infamous attack by the Japanese, I will always remember the day I stood for four hot grueling hours at rigid attention as Guard of Honor in front of Headquarters Hawaiian Department when the Japanese Ambassador, Admiral Kishiburo Numura, stopped by prior to the infamous attack to confer with Lt. General Walter C. Short and Admiral Husband E. Kimmel, Commander in Chief Pacific Fleet.



Lenoir News Topic of Lenoir, NC

2002

Remember Pearl Harbor

A sneak attack changed his life. Today John Alicki lives in a round house surrounded by oriental gardens, a quiet stream, and seclusion. He can hear you coming.

Sixty-three years ago at Pearl Harbor, he heard the warplanes coming from so far away. John Alicki, depending how you might view his experience, was either in the right place at the right time or the worst time in history.

Either way, John holds no regrets that he was just about to enter a church overlooking Pearl Harbor when more than 350 Japanese bombers began their surprise attack from the air on December 7, 1941. He was packed and ready to board a ship to go home to the United States the next day.

John had already spent more than six years in the armed forces and he was ready to get out. But 10 months later in October 1942, John was still at Pearl Harbor and for the next fifteen years he continued active service to his country.

Later in World War II, John also fought against Nazi Germany as a paratrooper with the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team. He also fought in the Korean conflict in the early 1950s. During his military career, he collected some 18 medals and citations including the Purple Heart and Bronze Star medal.

The fact he was at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, is recorded on his official 1957 honorable discharge from the U.S. Army as a Major.

"This sneak attack changed my entire life," he said in a recent interview at this two-story house on the base of Hibriten Mountain.

"After that, nobody could tell me what was going to happen to me...except that I was in for the duration."

On December 7, John was a U.S. Army sergeant in the 53rd Anti-Aircraft Brigade. On the day of the infamous attack, which brought American military forces into World War II, John had made special arrangements to attend church service with some of his men in the outfit, and some Hawaiian native friends.

"It just so happened that on that Sunday morning they got me up a little early and held me to my promise to go to church. While we were entering the church just before eight a.m., we heard something in the distance like firecrackers. As we went into the church the sound became more audible. Then we saw

planes overhead. They had to pass over us to get their bombs to the ships. It so happened we had a Colonel in the church and he said, 'Wait a minute'. He got up and went out, came back and said, 'We are under a Japanese attack. You men in the church get back to your stations'. The explosions started shaking the church. When I stepped out of the church I could see the red disk emblem on the side of the planes. From where the church was, you could see the whole harbor. To me, it seems like it was only yesterday."

On December 7, 1941, I was just a kid, 23-years old and still wet behind his ears and learning about life, and here I am today. I'm thankful to the Almighty to be here."

The Japanese attack lasted for two hours and came in two waves of aircraft about an hour apart, pounding United States ships and installations at Pearl Harbor. The best of American's fleet was at the bottom of the Pacific Ocean. When it was over, 21 ships were sunk or destroyed, 2,403 military personnel were dead and another 1,178 wounded. The entire event is widely accepted as American's single worst military defeat in peacetime.

Of the dead, some 1,177 went down with the USS Arizona in Pearl Harbor on that Sunday morning according to official statistics with the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association (PHSA). The PHSA motto is "Remember Pearl Harbor—Keep America Alert." The PHSA has a current membership of 12,197 Americans who were present on that day in December 1941.

Now that 64 years have gone by, John holds no resentment toward the Japanese people.

"As you can see I am influenced by the oriental people. The Japanese have as much feeling as we have. A lot of them have the same regrets we have. I feel that we need to let the Japanese know that we are truly and sincerely their friends and this silent animosity has to be completely done away with. Then we can get along and live in peace. We have to let them know the past is the past and let's not forget it."

— — — — —



*Sergeant Alicki
Hq and Hq Battery, 53rd
Anti Aircraft Brigade,
Fort Shafter, TH
(Territory of Hawaii)
1941—before being promoted to
First Sergeant, 4-13-42*

Soon after the attack I was promoted to First Sergeant and then in September 1942, I returned to the States to attend the Army Officer's Candidate School, Fort Benning, Georgia, and I graduated December 1942 as 2nd Lieutenant, and volunteered for Parachute and Demolition Training. Afterward, I was assigned May 1943 as cadre for the activation of the 17th Airborne Division duty with the 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment, Camp Toccoa, Georgia. Upon completion of the forming of the 517th unit organization and training, the 517th moved to Camp Mackall, North Carolina for advanced training, Tennessee maneuvers, and preparation for overseas. During this period, the 517th was redesignated as the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team (PRCT). Its mission was to operate as an independent well-trained, aggressive fighting force.

On May 17, 1944, we departed for Europe on the former Grace Lines, Santa Rosa, with 200 young ladies of the Women's Auxiliary Corps (WACS) and some Air Force pilots, arriving in Naples, Italy, on May 31st.

From the memoirs of Howard Hensleigh

Some wag in the transportation department of the Army must have gotten a kick out of boarding the 2,000 troopers of the 517th PIR with 200 WACs for a romantic cruise across the Atlantic. The troopship was the luxury Grace liner, the *U.S.S. Santa Rosa*. The other units of the Combat Team were not so fortunate. The 460th and 596th made the trip to on the relatively sterile *Cristobal*.

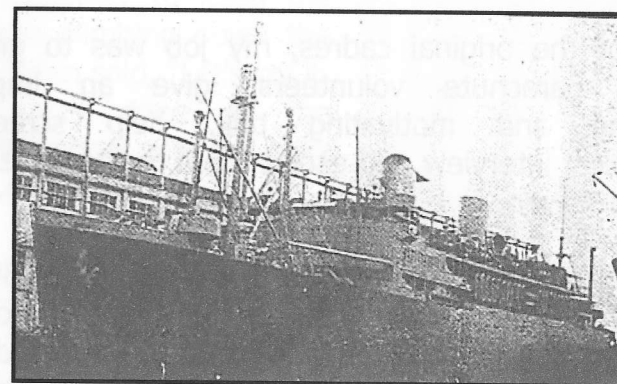
The *Paratroopers' Odyssey* on page 21 contains a paragraph that does not do justice to the romantic escapade of a group of G or former G Company lieutenants. Lt. McElroy, was enamored with the thought of a shipboard romance. The brain trust of the sting operation was *Russ Johnson* who later became regimental S-1. He observed McElroy preening himself on deck and started writing him love notes with his left hand. The fictitious young lady admired the lieutenant's military bearing. In one of her notes, she asked if he would wear something white around his neck so she could more easily pick him out on deck. Mac could not borrow a white scarf from one of the Air Corps replacements aboard so did the best he could. He wore a white towel. This really stirred the young lady's heart strings. It also stirred the imagination of the lieutenants planning the skullduggery. When the love notes had fanned the flames in the young man's heart to a crescendo, the young lady suggested meeting one afternoon in the Lt's "stateroom." (These staterooms that housed two people before the War had bunks from floor to ceiling for 14 lieutenants.) Since everyone was out on deck, McElroy gladly accepted.

The next step took some ingenuity on the part of the plotters, as well as some cooperation of several members of the WAC contingent. Don't get the wrong idea. None of the Wac's virtue was in danger. Lt. *Dick Spencer* was selected as the lovelorn WAC. He needed a WAC's uniform, some undercover

equipment such as a bra and a couple of grapefruit to go with it. Although Dick was a graduate of Iowa U and had a couple of years in the Army, he could have passed for an eighteen year old. In a WAC's cap, and made up with rouge and lipstick, he looked the part. All was set for the entrance of *McElroy*. He appeared right on time and was embraced with a steamy kiss.

Just then the stateroom door opened. Lt. "Boom-Boom" Alicki, the 517th's MP on board, who had scared the daylights out of the recruits arriving at Toccoa, boomed, "Lt McElroy, you have a WAC in your room. You will stand trial before the ship's captain." He took the lovesick Lt. by the arm and led him away toward the bridge. In route he met *Mel Zais* who asked what he was doing with one of his officers. Boom-Boom replied that he was on his way to stand trial before the ship's captain for having a WAC in his room. In a feigned effort to save his officer from destruction, Mel persuaded Boom-Boom to investigate the matter further back in the room. When the door opened, Lt. *McElroy's* thirteen roommates greeted him with one word.

"SUCKER!!!"



U.S.S. Santa Rosa



Camp Mackall—1943

THE MOCK TOWER EPISODE

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 was to put on the harness and hook up the volunteer. My job was

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.

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

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.

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 us an injection of morphine and arranged to send 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 had 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 had kept in touch until his mail was returned to me with "No Forwarding Address."

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

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.

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.

From the book ***From Breckenridge to Bastogne***, by
Merle McMorrow

Some bellowing officer named Lt. John Alicki met us at the station. The station was some small shack out in the middle of nowhere. It reminded me of the stations depicted in the cowboy movies; a small building sitting just a few feet off to the side of the tracks and nothing else in sight.

The first thing the lieutenant said, 'Give me 25 pushups'. I thought what in hell is the matter with this fellow. Didn't he know we had just finished three days on a train? We were tired, hungry, and filled with a lot of anxiety. We thought he was kidding but it was obvious from the tone of his voice he was serious. He still comes to our reunions and he doesn't look so fearful today.

The lieutenant doubled-timed us to a series of trucks parked some distance away. We were trucked to the parade ground of Camp Toccoa where a "mock tower" resembling a plane was the most visible feature on the landscape. It was sitting on poles about 34-feet above the ground. A cable sloped about a 15-degree angle with the ground, passed by the open doorway of the "plane." It didn't take any of us long to determine what the structure was used for.

After we reassembled in what we thought was a very smart formation, this tough, rugged-looking Lieutenant Alicki greeted everyone with a "blood and guts" speech that was intended to scare off the meek and timid. After the speech, every man was instructed to climb the tower for an initiation jump. We were strapped into a parachute harness, tapped on the back as a signal to go out the door, and then required to roll in a forward position as we hit the ground."

Most of the men made it through this exercise, but those that didn't were immediately headed for other places.

Quote from Merle McMorrow to John Alicki

"All the things you did as we stepped off that train in Toccoa made sense later on. Many of us are alive because of it."

517TH PRCT ODYSSEY

The 517th PRCT odyssey in Europe had begun. It was about this time that news was received of the fall of Rome and the invasion of Normandy on June 6th. The 517th struck tents in our temporary camp area and moved to a beach at Naples for the Navy LSTs to transport us to the bombed wrecked port of Civitavecchia. Thereafter, the 517th baptism of fire began as an attack unit attached to the 36th Infantry Division on June 18, 1944 north of Grosseto, Italy, against the German elements of the 162nd Turcoman Division recruited from Moslem minorities in the Soviet Union.

We suffered 40 to 50 casualties. Casualties were several times that number for the enemy. The experience of the first sounds and sight of battle had instilled a greater confidence and lesson that we had the ability to fight and win. The next several days were spent in continuous movement and attack upon the enemy. The Germans were withdrawing and we were pursuing. During the pursuit of the enemy June 22nd on a ridgeline south of Gavarano, Italy, I was caught with the others under German artillery (88th) fire and was wounded. This was the first and last time that I would dive into a stinking sloppy and muddy hog pen for cover.

In the latter part of June, we pulled back into the IV Corps reserve west of Frascati, located south of Rome, in preparation for what we were originally sent to Italy for, the invasion of Southern France. The allies at the Tehran Conference agreed upon the operation for the invasion in 1943 as a secondary attack known as Operation Anvil to draw German forces from the Normandy invasion (Operation Overlord).

However, for lack of enough landing craft and for simultaneous attack on both fronts, Operation Anvil was postponed until after the Normandy Operation.

In the meantime planning preparation continued and completed for the invasion of Southern France. General Eisenhower then urged that Operation Anvil be executed on August 15, 1944, stressing his need for the Port of Marseilles. On July 2nd, a directive was issued to proceed with Operation Anvil now renamed DRAGOON.

As a result of the directive, the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team was released from the IV Corps and moved to join the First Allied Army Task Force near Rome and under the Command of General Robert T. Frederick. I served with General Frederick earlier in Hawaii. He then was a Captain commanding a Battery with the 64th CA (AA) Regiment.

On July 18th, the 7th Army formally assigned the 517th to the First Allied Airborne Task Force.



Italian airfield, in preparation of DRAGOON—August 15, 1944

THE JUMP

One hour after midnight on 15 August, the 517th began its original mission participating in Operation DRAGOON. This operation was the second largest combined Airborne/Seaborne invasion of World War II. It involved 1,000 ships, several thousand warplanes and 300,000 men, which included a 9,100-man contingent of Airborne Troops. The most fascinating and successful Allied Airborne Assault of World War II. In all, 300,000 Allied soldiers (French, American, Australian, British) stormed France's Mediterranean shore, 70 days after the D-Day landings at Normandy (6 June 1944), catching German troops in a pincer so tight that Hitler mentioned to aides,

"This is the darkest day of my life."

Note: At the Rhone American Cemetary north of St Tropez in the little city of Draguignan, 861 graves are marked with crosses and stars of David. The bodies of 1,000 other Americans were repatriated. Headstones among old olive trees and cedar identify brothers, a general, and one rare woman soldier nurse. Above them all, a stone wall is inscribed.

"We who lie here died that future generations might live in peace."

A large bronze relief map shows events of August 15, 1944 and what happened afterward.

My stick (men) jumped between four and four thirty a.m. Although our military planners had hoped for a clear night so that hills and terrain features could be used for guidance, on this night of August 15th, a large high-pressure system moved and settled in over Southern France and over our objective creating a heavy fog. Being the lead stick of my 20-man Demolition Team and looking out the open plane door, I couldn't see anything. About that time, the Red light over the open plane door came on signifying to stand up and hook up and be ready to jump when the Green light signal over the open door came on. At the Green light, I jumped into a thick foggy soup like a frog not knowing whether I would land in water or the good terra firma. Our pilot navigated the plane right on our designated target for I landed directly on the DZ (Drop Zone) near Le Muy (*see map which shows my landing*) and began searching in the dark for my men. I figured they should be nearby as they all jumped from the same C-47, but I could not locate a single one of them.

Then I remembered a split second after I jumped that the plane made a sharp L-Bank and the remainder of my stick parachuted down on top of a German bivouac. A violent

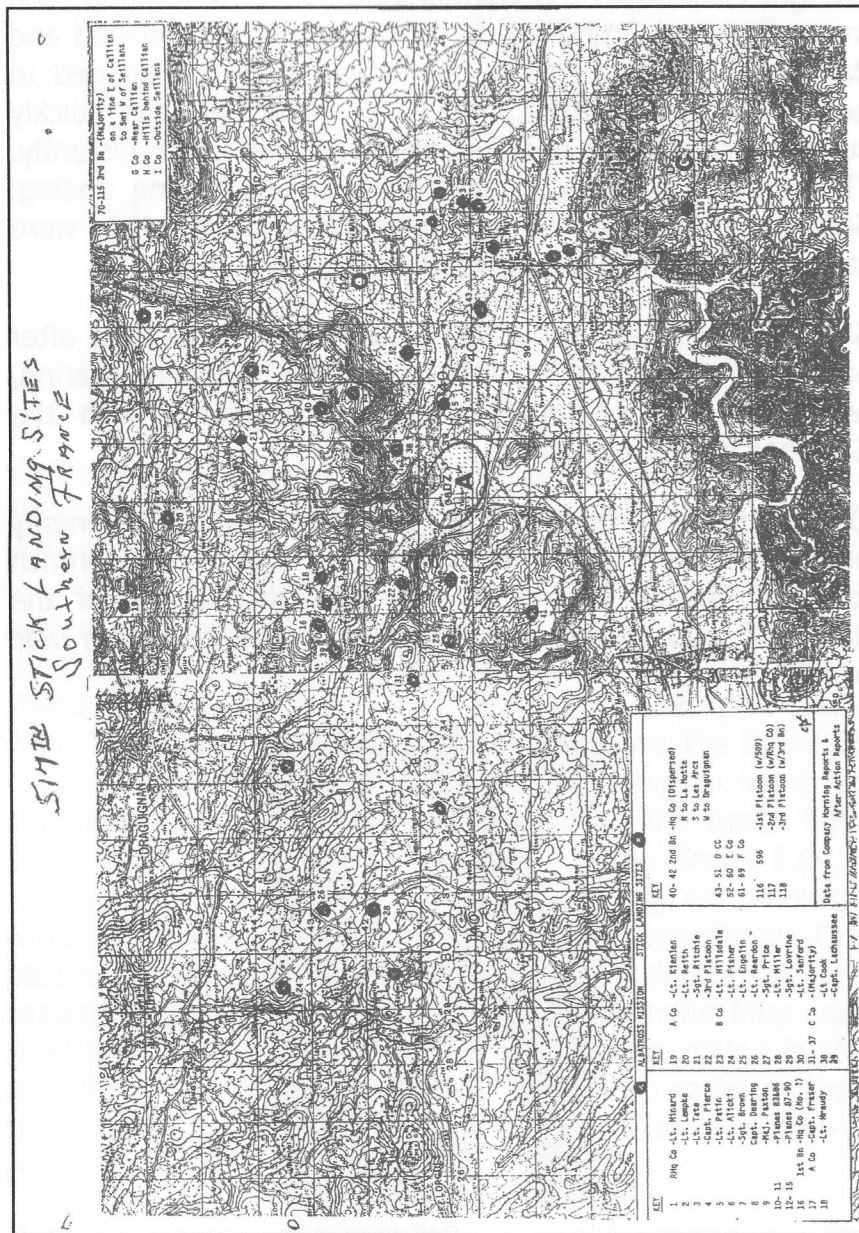
firefight erupted as the Germans attacked my trapped men from all sides. Sizing up the situation in the confusion and darkness, Sergeant Brown, my squad leader, managed to get eight men together, but 30 or more Germans quickly surrounded them. A bullet killed Private Giner instantly. The uneven slugging match could have only one ending. Sergeant Brown and his remaining seven parachutists were captured and taken prisoners to Le Muy.

Shortly after, they and others captured were released after our Regimental S-2, Intelligence Officer, Captain Dearing, who was also captured, brilliantly negotiated with the Germans into surrendering.

On the 16th of November, the 517th after clearing the enemy out of the towns of the Maritime Alps, and the last French town of Sospel, known as the "City at the End of the Rainbow" had fallen, the Southern France campaign was over.



1945



RETURNING TO ACTION

The combat troopers of the 517th were relieved after completing 94 consecutive days in combat. However, the reward of victory did not last too long. With the first news of von Rundstedt's breakthrough, the vision of a turkey for Christmas disappeared and the trimmings turned into guns and blistering cold freezing weather. The 517th was returning to action.

On December 1st, the 517th was assigned to the XVIII Airborne Corps and directed to move to Soissons in northern France. The movement north took place on December 6th for the length of 500 miles resembled a migration of hoboes in the "Great Depression." We moved by rail packed in 40-by-8 boxcars, which indeed bore the legend "40 hommes—8 chevaux." Each platoon-sized group of 35 or more was assigned to a boxcar, a bale of hay and several cases of C or 10-in-one rations (*see page 197, Parachute Odyssey—first three photos on top of page*). Those men are members of my Demolition Platoon and I am the lone individual standing in front on extreme left. Sleeping was done anywhere, and washing and shaving were pretty much out of question. With no scheduled stops and no toilets on board, the question of how to relieve one's self became a matter of urgency. Arrival at Soissons was made on December 9th and settled at Caserne Gourard. The courage and stamina of all troopers on this trip had been proven beyond a doubt.

In the coming winter months our outfit was to undergo its more severe test as the Germans threw in their last reserves in a desperate gamble. Winter in northern France was miserable. During our short stay at Caserne the German Army on December 15-16 launched its greatest offensive of WW II striking weak American positions in the Ardennes

region of Belgium and Luxembourg. Preparations for the offensive had been made in utmost secrecy.

The 517th Combat Team was alerted and on 22nd December sped northward passing worried clusters of Belgians who were concerned of the German offensive on their homeland. The Battle of the Bulge began on Christmas day and days afterwards as the 517th got in the thick of it.

On December 26th, the 517th received one of its most important orders by the XVIII Corps (Airborne) attaching the unit to the 7th Armored Division with the mission to take Manhay, Belgium, at any cost. Mission accomplished. We did!

On January 3rd, the 517th struck again together with elements of the 82nd Airborne Division and in three days ran over two villages of Trois Pons and Bordeaux under almost unbearable conditions. Many Germans were killed and 500 Volksgrenadier captured. To this success Brigadier General R.W. Hasbrouck, Commanding General, 7th Armored Division added,

"I am pleased to forward this commendation, and add my personal appreciation for the splendid manner in which your unit assisted this Division in accomplishing its mission during the recent operations."

Continuing its success, the 517th plunged into the much heavily defended German defenses at St Vith with the 7th Armored Division and staggered the enemy from its last foothold and as a result, the Bulge was choked off.

After three successes we won a brief rest at Stavelot. No sooner had we hunkered down to relax, cleaning up, writing letters home, etc., when on February 4th Colonel Graves our

commander received orders that we were assigned to the newly arrived—as yet not combat indoctrinated—13th Airborne Division. The assignment to the 13th Airborne Division was reluctantly accepted. There was little love between the 517th and the 13th Airborne Division. By early April, the European war was rapidly drawing to a close. The Western Allies were well across the Rhine. The Russians were at the Gate of Berlin.

On April 4th, the 13th Airborne moved to departure airfields in north France. The 517th went to Airfield B-54 at Achiet. The new mission was to be an airborne landing south of Stuttgart, Germany to block the Germans moving south to carry on the war from the Bavarian Alps. These were cancelled. More plans and preparations were made and once more cancelled.

In April and early May, President Roosevelt died, Hitler committed suicide, and the German Armed forces surrendered unconditionally at Rheims. Suddenly and unbelievably the war in Europe was over.

On May 12th, the 517th returned to Joigny. The 13th Airborne Division was scheduled for shipment to the Pacific. While at Joigny, we found our stay to be pleasant and enjoyable. Trains to Paris ran through several times a day and we took advantage to visit Paris, the Louvre, and other points of cultural interest.

In early August we boarded the ships, Oneida victory and Madawaska on our way to the Pacific when halfway across the Atlantic the Japanese surrender was announced. The 517th arrived in New York to receive a grand welcome. "Welcome Home, Well Done," and thus ended the 517th Paratroopers' Odyssey.

Finally, and in retrospect, at the end of our combat in Europe the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team had 1,500 casualties, 1,400 were in the 517th Regiment—70% of its original strength.

Headquarters, 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment			
STATIONS AND MOVEMENTS			
ARMY UNITED STATES	PERIOD COVERED		CHARACTER OF DUTY
	From	To	
INACTIVE			
Camp Tocca, Ga.	3-15-43	8-8-43	
Camp Mackall, N.C. (P)	8-8-43	2-7-44	
Tenn. Mnvr. Area (T)	2-8-44	3-4-44	
Camp Mackall, N.C. (P)	3-5-44	5-7-44	
Cp. Patrick Henry (Ship #0161-C)	5-7-44	5-17-44	
HRPE "SANTA ROSA"	5-17-44	5-17-44	
Naples, Italy	5-28-44		
France			
Belgium			
France			
Belgium			
France, Le Havre Ship-10580-H	8-12-45	8-12-45	
"MADAWASKA VICTORY" N.Y P/E	8-20-45	8-23-45	
Ft. Bragg, N.C.	8-23-45	2-25-46	INACTIVATED

MEMORIES

On June 26, 1944, we were relieved after completing our Italian combat mission and pulled back to the rest area of Frascati, southeast of Rome and made preparations for the parachute invasion of the soft underbelly of "Hitler's Europa," Southern France.

As a tribute to our fighting ability displayed on the Italian Front, Berlin Sally through a special broadcast of propaganda had this to say,

"You men of Five Seventeen were much better than we anticipated. But you are fool hardy....You will lose men."

On our side of the fence, General Fred L. Walker of the 36th Division commended the Combat Team for our part,

"In inflicting on the Wehrmacht the worst defeat in the history of the German Army."

After passing our battlefield tests, *magna cum laude*, we were served by the Special Service and USO shows, PX rations with coca cola and cold beer, baseball, boxing, etc., and constant tour to the Eternal City, Rome. Word got to the Vatican that American parachutists were camped near Rome. The Pope sent word that he would like to meet with the American paratroopers. As a result, some of us, including me, had an audience with Pope Pius XII. When it was my turn to meet with his Highness he extended his hand in greeting and I kissed the ring on his finger as a gesture of respect. He then, in English, asked me my name and where I lived. Then he blessed me. This was a most reverent and touching moment I shall never forget.

While in Rome, I had the opportunity to visit and view Michelangelo's frescoes in the Sistine Chapel, strolled along the Corso Umberto, and visited the Coliseum, the Roman Forum, the Victor Emmanuole Monument, the Pantheon, and Arch of Constantine. I walked along the Appian Way, viewed the ancient Roman aqueducts, and the catacombs. While walking along the Appian Way, I had the strongest feeling come over me that I had been on this road before.

I also recall that after completing our mission in Southern France, on 16th November we were granted another rest period.

During this time, I with my Demolition Platoon, were assigned as the 517th Military Police in Nice to enforce law and order during our entire rest period, which was close to

three weeks. I operated out of the French Gendarme (Police) Station with a French-English speaking special investigator. Some of our duties were to enforce curfew, black market activities and general misbehavior of our troopers. Also, my duty was to visit Monte Carlo. Monte Carlo is a town in the state of Monaco and lies on the Riviera nine miles from Nice. The purpose was to keep out all troopers from the gambling casinos. The casinos were "off limits" to all military personnel.

Of course, I had plenty of leisure to enjoy the sunny streets of the Cote d'Azur of the Riviera, visit Cannes, walk along the Promenade des Anglais and Avenue De la Victoire, or idle on the Place Massena. Night life included such pleasure spots as the Queens, Maxim's and Continental Hotel or the Ker Maria.

Some of our troopers were lodged in the villa of Belgian's King Leopold, little realizing that Dame fate held a trick card in her hand which would permit the troopers to repay this courtesy by pushing the Nazis back out of Belgium in the coming Battle of the Bulge. For the officers, it was the Plantation Club, the Cintra, and Hotel Negresco that formed the nucleus for a galaxy of pleasant memories in our three weeks rest on the Riviera.

After being assigned to the 13th Airborne Division and resting in the area of Joigny, France, I remember being assigned sleeping quarters and bath to a French family. These were real nice accommodations. It was here my allergy to the blooming poppies in season, triggered pneumonia, which sent me to the hospital for a few days.

I had the pleasure of entering Paris by walking along the avenue Champs Elyees and under the Arch de Triumph, took a boat ride on the Seine River, viewed the Eiffel Tower, and

visited the Gardens of the Tuilleries. This is the site of a royal palace destroyed by the Revolutionists. The grounds were converted into an attractive, formal public park. I saw the Place de la Concorde. This is the place where the guillotine stood and where Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette were executed. The Cleopatra's needle and Egyptian obelisk once guarded the Temple of Luxor, Egypt, the Elysian Palace residence of the President of France. Also, visited the Palace of Louvre, the Cathedral of Notre Dame and the Bohemian district of Montmartre.

Finally, after my jump on August 15, 1944 and unaware of the fate of my missing stick, I started walking along a country road just as dawn was breaking. Coming toward me was a French farmer who stared in disbelief at my camouflaged face and jump outfit weighed down with the accouterments of war. He spotted the small American flag sewed on the sleeve of my jump jacket at the shoulder.

"American! American!" the farmer shouted over and over, literally dancing with joy. As torrents of tears rolled down his wrinkled cheeks, the Frenchman grabbed me in a bear hug and planted kisses all over my grease-streaked and perspiring face. I was able to extract from him the direction to Le Muy and the location of our designated Command Post (CP) at Chateau Ste. Roseline.

"Memory is a capricious and arbitrary creature. You never can tell what pebble she will pick up from the shore of life to keep among her treasures, or what inconspicuous flower of the field she will preserve as the symbol of *thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears*, ...And yet, I do not doubt that the most important things are always the best remembered.

Henry Van Dyke

AFTER WW II

After the end of WW II in May 1945, I decided to remain in the service with the Airborne and make it a career.

Upon our return to the States with the 13th Airborne Division, our assigned station was Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Shortly after our arrival at Fort Bragg, the 13th Airborne Division was deactivated and retired. Soon thereafter, the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team was deactivated and the remaining elements of the 517th personnel were absorbed into the 82nd Airborne Division, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment.

During this period of transition, I was promoted to the rank of Captain and assigned as Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment. Later, also commanded Company B of the same regiment.

While with the 82nd Airborne Division, I was credited for attending the Officer's Advance Training School, Fort Benning, Georgia, and the Counter Intelligence (CIC) School, Fort Holabird, Maryland. Upon completion of the nine-month CIC training, I decided to change my branch of service from Infantry to Military Intelligence. As a result, I was assigned as the Commanding Officer, 82nd Airborne CIC Detachment.

Completing my assignment to the 82nd Airborne CIC Detachment, orders were received for preparation for Foreign Service in the Far East. In August 1949, I departed by air from San Francisco, California, as a courier with the responsibility of caring for 500 guinea pigs, stopping in

Guam and Okinawa. The guinea pigs were destined for the Army Laboratory in Tokyo, Japan.



As we approached Japan, the first view seen from the air as we prepared to land was Mount Fuji, the highest mountain in Japan (12,394 feet). The Japanese call it Fuji-san. Visitors call the mountain Fujiyama. It lies on the island of Honshu about 60 miles west from Tokyo. The mountain is known throughout the world for its great beauty. The Japanese regard it as a sacred mountain and each summer thousands of Japanese

make the pilgrimage to the mountain top. (*My spouse, Georgia, is credited for making the pilgrimage during my tour of duty in Japan.*) Upon landing in Japan, I was assigned to the 441st CIC Detachment in Tokyo with duties for about six months in the G-2 section, General Headquarters under the command of General Douglas MacArthur.



Mt Fuji, Japan—1950

THE FIFTIES

In June 1950, the North Koreans invaded South Korea, its purpose to gain control of the entire peninsula. President Truman named General Douglas MacArthur Supreme Command for the United Nations Forces in the Far East. This action also extended the CIC mission since we were under the jurisdiction and part of G-2 of General MacArthur's Command.

Note: *CIC is an agency available to the commander to assist him in his Counter Intelligence activities. The overall mission of the CIC is to contribute to the successful operation through the detection of treason, sedition, subversive activity, disaffection, and the detection and prevention of enemy espionage and sabotage.*

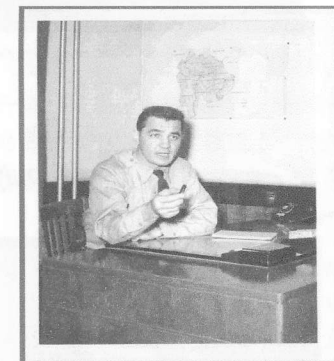
In the 37 months of fighting between United Nations forces and South Korean troops, there were more than 450,000 casualties. About 1,900,000 Chinese and North Koreans were killed and wounded.

After the armistice was signed July 1953 by the communist and United Nations, I returned to the States with duty in Birmingham, Alabama, then to the 11th Airborne Division, Fort Campbell, Kentucky to command the 11th Airborne CIC Detachment. While at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, I was promoted to the rank of Major.

After two years with the 11th Airborne CIC Detachment I was assigned to the XVIII Airborne Corps Headquarters, Fort Bragg, NC to command the XVIII Airborne Corps CIC Detachment. During my tenure at this CIC Detachment, I attended the Strategic Intelligence School at the Pentagon, Washington, D.C.



*Meeting with Japanese Officials while with Military Intelligence—
The Lady is a Geisha girl*



Kofu Japan—1952

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS	
FAR EAST COMMAND	
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF COUNTER INTELLIGENCE	
Certificate	
This is to Certify that <u>John A. Alicki</u>	
has successfully completed the course for Special Agents at the Counter Intelligence Training School, General Headquarters, Far East Command.	
A. P. O. 500. 15 March 1950	For Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2: <u>[Signature]</u> LAWRENCE G. SMITH, Colonel, G-2 Commanding, 11 th Airborne CIC Detachment
	<u>[Signature]</u> W. H. MOFF, JR. Colonel, G-2, Executive Officer



*Alicki's Christmas 1941
Kofu, Japan*

The family in Japan



I was later assigned as Military Intelligence Inspector of CIC locations throughout Japan. Because of this assignment, I was able to learn more about the Japanese people and the land. I will always remember that the land was so crowded that almost every bit is carefully tended and as a result, gives the mountainous countryside a garden-like appearance. Most Japanese lived in small bamboo houses. They followed many customs that seemed strange to those of us from the States, and prided themselves on being particularly polite. Japan's most important physical features are its mountains. The beautiful mountains have been an inspiration for Japanese painters and poets. Because of the mountains, there is little room for anything else. Farms are very small and cities crowded.

After completing my tour of duty as MI Inspector, I was assigned as Operations Officer to the Ibaraki Prefecture CIC north of Tokyo, and just before the onset of the Korean War, I was reassigned to the Kofu Prefecture CIC south of Tokyo.

Note: During my military tour of duty in Japan, I had the opportunity to fly by helicopter and land at the city center of Hiroshima. Hiroshima was bombed on August 6, 1945 by a uranium 235 atomic bomb. More than 67% of the buildings were destroyed or damaged, and of the 343,000 population, 150,000 dead and injured.

Also had the opportunity to visit the city of Nagasaki, which was bombed three days later with a plutonium atomic bomb. Nagasaki had 200,000 population of which 79,000 were killed or injured. 85% of Nagasaki was destroyed.



441st Counter Intelligence, General HQ, Japan



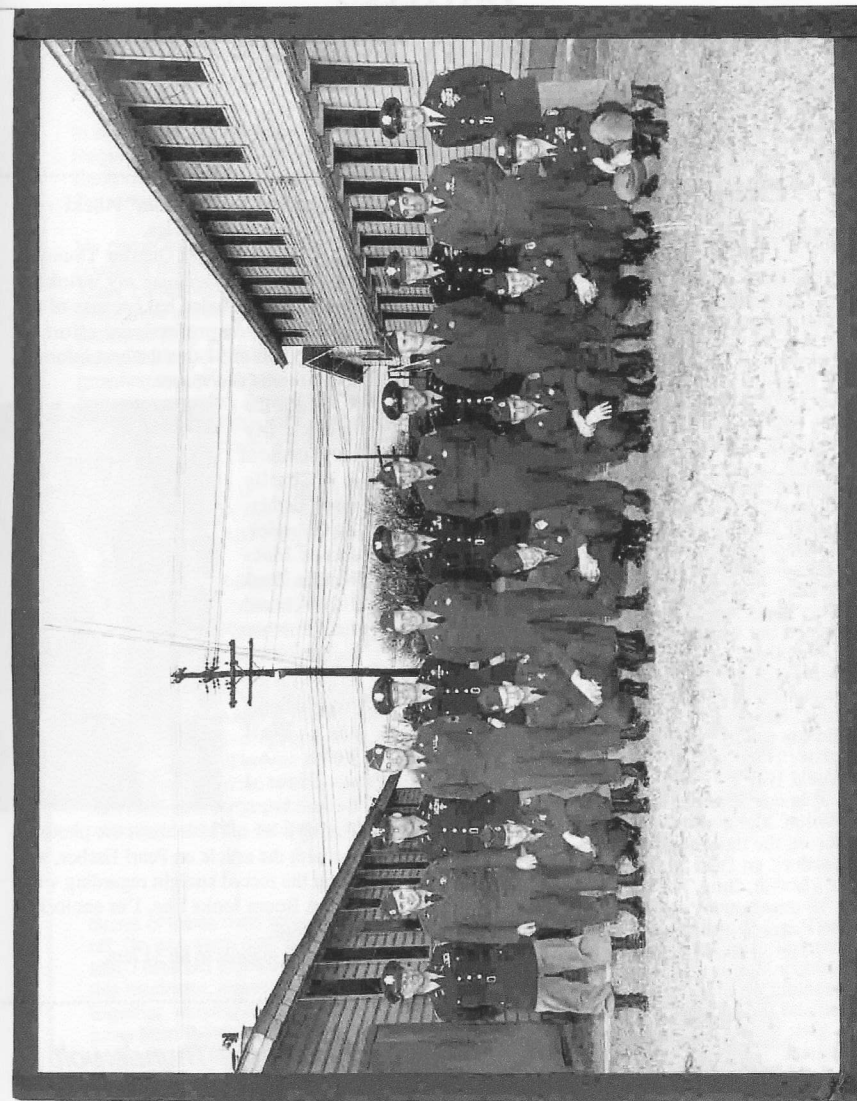
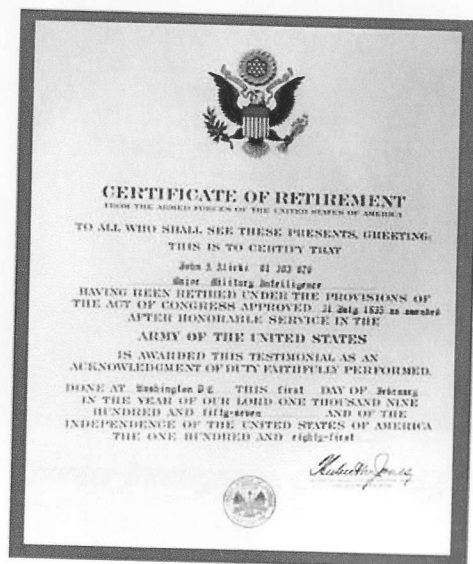
*C.O. 11th CIC Detachment—Fort Campbell, Kentucky
(Inspecting my men before executing parachute jump)*





1956—VIII Airborne Corps CIC Detachment
Ft Bragg, N.C.—1956

On January 1957, after accruing more than 20 years of honorable military service, I retired and returned to live in North Carolina with my wife, Georgia, and daughter, Alicia.



XVII Airborne CIC
J. Alicki and His Men—1956
Fort Bragg, North Carolina

ARTICLES

LETTERS

'Remember Pearl'
at 7:55 a.m. on Dec. 7

TO THE EDITOR:

This is an open letter to all the general managers of Caldwell County radio stations. Dec. 7, 1991, will mark the 50th anniversary of the surprise attack by the Japanese on U.S. armed forces on the island of Oahu, territory of Hawaii. At 7:55 a.m. on Dec. 7, 1941, the first wave of Japanese aircraft attacked the U.S. Navy ships in Pearl Harbor and Army, Army Air Corps and Marine bases throughout the island. In that attack the United States lost 21 ships, sunk or damaged; 328 aircraft, lost or damaged; and 2,403 military personnel killed and 1,178 wounded. Of those killed, 1,177 Navy personnel are still entombed in the USS Arizona. This undeclared act of war by the Japanese forced the United States into World War II. Shortly after the attack, big band leader Sammy Kaye made famous a song that became the battle cry of our forces in the Pacific. The song, "Remember Pearl Harbor," did for our fighting men in World War II what "Over There" did for our troops in World War I.

It is our sincere request that your radio station, along with other radio stations across the nation, play "Remember Pearl Harbor" on Dec. 7, 1991, at 7:55 a.m. Honolulu, Hawaii, time.

There are over 12,000 known survivors in the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association and many of us will be attending the 50th Anniversary Memorial Services and Reunion in Honolulu on that date. Each and every survivor and the relatives of those killed on Dec. 7, 1941, will feel honored if you will grant this request. The motto of our association is "Remember Pearl Harbor — Keep America Alert."

John Alicki
Pearl Harbor Survivor
Lenoir

John "Boom Boom" Alicki
Regt. Hqs.

Enjoyed the 1st Quarter Thunderbolt issue, not because my wrinkled profile was included but because of the dedication and professional effort by the editor to make this the best informative airborne newspaper.

Read the by-laws. My only comment is if Charlie Pugh, Cameron Gauthier, James MacKenzie, Frank Grbinich and Jack Smothers had anything to do with the formulation, I say, Well Done.

Since I have been getting a lot of flack about the photo of me with the article on Pearl Harbor, and to set the record straight regarding what Boom Boom looks like, I'm enclosing this photo.

Best regards to all 517ers.



From the Thunderbolt

CURRAHEE MOUNTAIN

IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD, AND THE WORD WAS GOD

In the beginning, it was the 506TH, 511TH, 501st, 517 TH Parachute Infantry Regiments, then the 457TH and 460TH Parachute Field Artillery Battalions. Each new WWII unit faced a mountain, whose Choctaw Indian word was Currahee.

My name is Currahee. I am a mountain near Toccoa, GA. For centuries, I had a peaceful existence. I let little animals roam over me, happy to be their home. Then, came man. He lived in harmony with all of my other creatures. Later, the white men arrived with "killing sticks," which made a loud noise when killing my animals. They drove off my bronze men, cut my trees and made a road to my peak. During 1941, strange things began in the valley below me. I heard the growling earth movers. I saw trucks dumping concrete. One day the saws and hammers ceased. Apart from rectangular buildings were long rows of tents. The trucks came and dumped human cargo in the tent city. All were uniformed and hurried about. I could not understand this.

As activity picked up, I began to hear strange sounds: FALL IN - TENSION - RAT SHOULDER ARMS - RAT FACE - FWARD MAWTCH -SQUAD HALT - LEF FACE - PRAID REST - FALL OUT.

One morning, I thought at first that my mountain goats had returned and were stampeding up my rear slope. As I looked down, these man creatures were running out of the camp and up that miserable road. On they came, brown boots pounding. Some gasped and fell out. Reaching my peak most collapsed; sweating, heaving, cursing. Shortly, they were up and bounding back to camp. Those who could not reach my peak were sent to other places, as were those who refused to jump in harness from a mock airplane tower. After falling 20 ft., bodies were jerked upright, then road down a cable to a saw dust pile on the ground. They put knives on the end of rifles and tried to stab each other. They ran, ran everywhere and in ranks singing. Weekly, they formed in the streets with rifles and large packs on their backs and marched off into the darkness, returning early the next morning. I did not understand.

Some of these men were so intense that they would run up my road on their day off. On one such day, two of the younger men arrived on my peak and stayed to talk. I listened and suddenly knew what it all meant. Col. Sink was the creator of this madness, determined to build one of the finest fighting machines ever put together, making men out of boys fast, then on to Ft. Benning to learn how to jump from flying airplanes. I learned that a great war was going on all over the world. Soon, these men would parachute into enemy territory to fight and some to die. I wondered, what manner of men are these? What patriotism motivated

them to push their bodies to the limit of human endurance? One said, I wonder what CURRAHEE means?" I would have told them, but decided that in time, they would learn that it means, STANDING ALONE." This condensed from "Currahee," by Robert Flory, B-506, in the FIVE-O-SINK Newsletter, Nov. 1984, Editor, George Vanderslice.

Lt. Howard Hensleigh, HQ Company 3rd Battalion, 517 PIR, went on many missions with *Captain Robert P. Woodhull*. *Robert Woodhull* was a Forward Observer with the 460 Field Artillery Battalion.

The 460th was part of the 17th Airborne Division in the United States, but attached to the 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment when it was shipped to Europe.

The following excerpts were written by *Howard Hensleigh* regarding *Robert Woodhull*.

"Woody" Woodhull of the 460th was a buddy. He had been assigned to the 3rd Battalion as our artillery liaison officer for a long time.

Once on a combat patrol in Southern France, we had a platoon of Germans partially surrounded. When I yelled at them to surrender and several times the Germans stood up with their hands up, the noncom fired his machine gun to thwart the surrender. Woody crawled forward with me to within a few feet of the gun position where we silenced him. I put an M-1 clip into the bush where I thought his fire came from. Luckily, I guessed right, because I don't think there would have been a second chance.

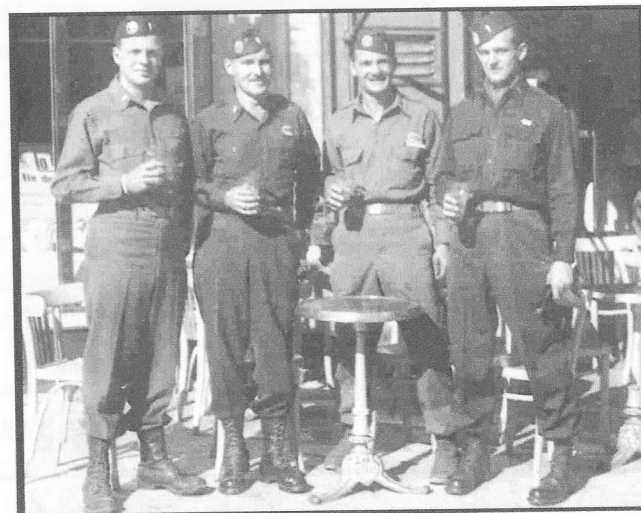
We captured the platoon, all their weapons, ammo and equipment. The German officer slipped away when the fighting first started, as they were ordered to do to preserve the officer corps.

Early February 1945, the 517 PIR found themselves on the frontline near Bergstein in the Huertgen forest and ready to attack. The area of Schmidt, Vossenach, Bergstein and Kommerscheidt was a heavily fought-over area for many months. The Germans beat off the initial attack with incredible casualties to the U.S. forces. The Regiment was to make a diversionary attack in support of the main assault.

We were new to the terrain around Bergstein having just arrived there before the attack. The Germans had been there for several months defending that terrain. They had laid extensive mine fields and had machine gun, mortar and artillery zeroed in to protect well-organized defensive positions. From the outset, our attacking infantry units were in serious trouble. When they hit the minefields, the supporting enemy fire came in with devastating effect. What Woody and I were attempting to do was to give S, H, and I companies artillery support in their attacks. We got too close that morning.

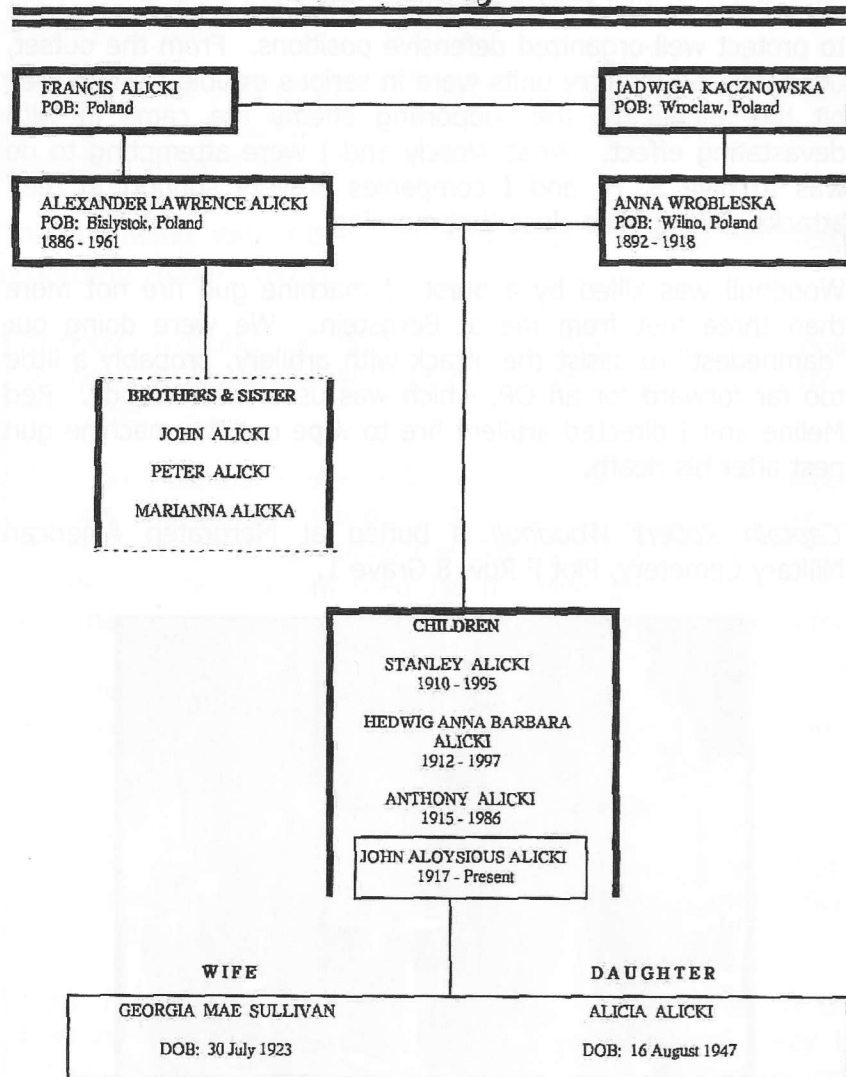
Woodhull was killed by a burst of machine gun fire not more than three feet from me at Bergstein. We were doing our "damnedest" to assist the attack with artillery, probably a little too far forward for an OP, which was usual with Woody. Red Meline and I directed artillery fire to wipe out the machine gun nest after his death.

Captain Robert Woodhull is buried at Margraten American Military Cemetery, Plot F Row 8 Grave 1.



Lt. Woodhull, Major Paxton, Lt. Alicki, Lt. Dickerson—1944

Alicki Family Tree



CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

Most of my childhood and the years into my early teens were very unhappy. I lost my mother when I was only a year old. She died in the 1918 flu epidemic that ravaged this nation, and is buried in a mass grave somewhere in Detroit, Michigan.

My father hurriedly remarried because of his small children, my brothers Stanley and Anthony, my adopted brother Michael, and my sister Anne.

My first stepmother was a cruel disciplinarian who forever whipped me at the slightest whim, making me stand on one leg in a corner for hours. I constantly ran away from home to avoid her cruelty. She finally died, and I shed no tears of sadness for her.

My father did not wait long to remarry, and this also was an unhappy experience. I was in my early teens and felt deserted. My sister and brothers had all departed, and as a result, I inherited the entire burden. Finally, I summoned my father and stepmother to the Children's Court. I asked the judge to be placed in a children's home. The judge asked me why I wanted to be sent away. I simply replied, "I want to be loved." I was sent to Mt. Loretta, a Catholic orphanage for boys and girls located in Staten Island, New York.

After reaching the age of 16 at Mt. Loretta, the court appointed my sister Anne, who by then was married, as my legal guardian. I lived with Anne and her husband, Sebastian Kucszinski, until I was age 18. Then I decided to roam this great country of ours and see the world. I reached El Paso, Texas, with 35 cents in my pocket and decided to join the U.S. Cavalry.

FAMILY MEMORIES



Anne Stepmother Me Father Anthony Michael Stanley

Alexander Lawrence Alicki (my father) was born on 15 December 1886, in Bislystok, Poland. He immigrated to the United States in 1910 and was naturalized on 21 June 1916. He died on 22 March 1961, in Baltimore, Maryland and was buried in Calvary Cemetery, Brooklyn, New York.

Note: His naturalization papers show that he was born in Russia. However, both parents always claimed to be of Polish nationality under Russian rule.

My father had two brothers and a sister who also immigrated to the U.S. before he did.

John Alicki, the oldest brother, immigrated first, followed by *Peter Alicki* and a sister, first name unknown. *Peter* lived in Perth Amboy, New Jersey up to his death in the early 1930s. Very little is known of *John*, other than he lived in Connecticut.

Anne Wrobleska (my mother), was born in 1892, Wilno, Poland and after immigrating to the U.S. she became a U.S. citizen on 21 June 1916. Anne died in 1918, Detroit, Michigan, as a result of the flu epidemic which devastated the country at that time. She was 26 years old and pregnant. The unborn child was a girl.

My father and mother (*Alexander and Anne*) were married in 1908 in Poland. Upon their arrival to the U.S., they settled in Dunmore a suburb of Scranton (Lackawanna County), Pennsylvania. While living in Dunmore, they adopted *Michael Kechta* April 1916, the son of their good friends who died in an accident.

Children of *Alexander and Anne* were:

Stanley Alicki—born 19 September 1910 in Poland. Died 15 January 1995, due to heart problems.

Hedwig Anne Barbara Alicki—born 25 July 1912 in Pennsylvania. Died 25 December 1997 of a heart attack.



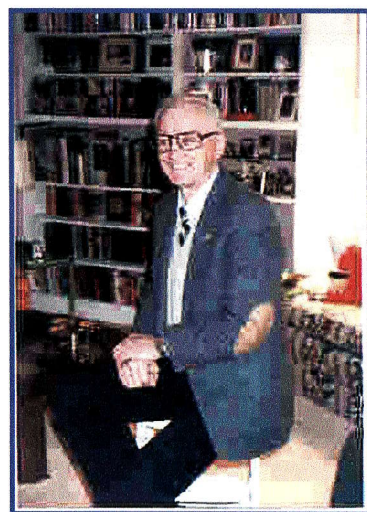
Anne and John
Ann was a veteran of the Women's Auxiliary Corps (WACCS)
WW II

Anthony Alicki—born 15 October 1915 in Pennsylvania. Died 13 April 1986. He died in Chico, California and is buried in Chico Memorial Mausoleum with his wife.

John Aloysious Alicki—I was born 12 January 1917 at 113 Gibbons St, Dunmore, a suburb of Scranton, Pennsylvania. After my birth, the family moved to Detroit, Michigan.



John as a young boy



John today

POLISH FAMILY HISTORY

Written by Anne Kucziniski

The year was 1882, my father, Alexander Alicki was born in Poland, close to the Russian border, as were his parents and grandparents before him in the same village of farmers.

After his service, he married the daughter of a neighboring farmer, his older brother, John, had ventured to the new world a year earlier. His letters encouraged Alex to dream of a better world for his new wife. So with passage money received from the brother, he arrived and settled in Old forge, Pennsylvania. Here he worked as a coal miner, saving enough money for passage for his wife and newborn son. The year was 1914.

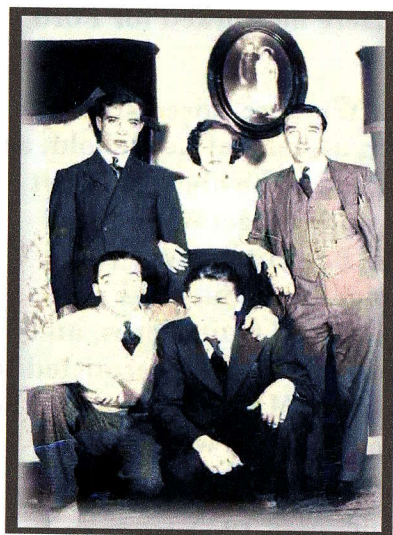
Happy years followed with my birth and two other sons. But my mother was not happy, after each mine disaster she would beg him to give up mining. Relatives living in Detroit, Michigan advised my parents to move here, for this was a land of opportunity. Here he worked for Ford Motor, Co., for many years.

Our home life was a happy time. We were raised strictly according to rules with my father, as head of household, as King. He had three rules, which had to be obeyed. First was love of *God*, second was love and respect of *Country*, and the third was love of *Family*. Family life was very close-knitted, with outings and picnics on Sundays and holidays, trips to the woods to pick wild fruit, herbs, and wild garlic and onions. Sometime we would be permitted to join the Elders in mushroom picking. Mushrooms would be needled on a string and hung to dry; others would be pickled in brine.

My greatest memories of family life were Christmas and Easter, two very religious and festive holidays. It was with bread and cake baking in the ovens, Polish sausage being

handmade with garlic and spices, and cooking sauerkraut with mushrooms. The air had a substance that renders to the senses and perfumed the entire house; oh, how the memories linger on.

To the Pole, the holiest of edibles is bread. His petitions in his daily prayers has a special meaning for him, for so many times, the Pole had to do without it. A Pole never wastes his bread; he eats the dark heavier bread for his daily fare. Holiday baking calls for beautiful wheat flour. Every crumb of old bread is used for food. Crumbs are used for binding, thickening, lining of baking pans and garnish, vegetables are served with a coating of buttered crumbs. Bread is completely dried, put in a clean brown bag and used as needed. In baking, all ingredients are at room temperatures. Some old Polish recipes call for as many as 15 eggs, 4 cups of flower, 1 pound butter. This would be sweet bread called *Baba*.



1933

Back Row

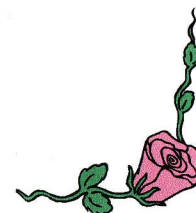
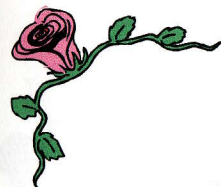
*Sebastian Kucezinski,
brother-in-law*

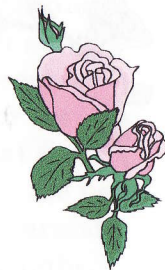
*Anne Alicki Kuczinski
Stanley Alicki*

Front Row

*Anthony Alicki
John Aloysious Alicki*

I married Georgia Sullivan in September 2, 1945 at the main post chapel, Camp McCall, North Carolina. We have a daughter, Alicia, and a grandson, Michael Andrew Burin.





My beautiful wife, Georgia

What a pity flowers can utter no sound. A singing rose, a whispering violet, a murmuring honeysuckle—oh, what a rare and exquisite miracle these be!

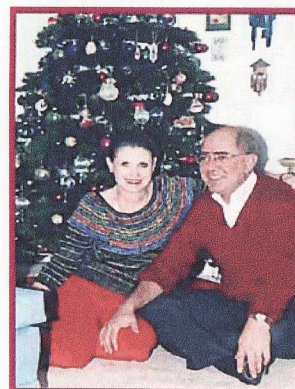
H.W. Beecher



1992—Married 47 years



*Christmas with the—
Burins—1990*



Alicia and Michael Burin



John and Georgia—1988

*Georgia and
Alicia*



A Tribute to John Alicki

Father's Day

June 19, 2005

John Alicki is a very special man, because he does so many things unexpectedly well. He's a photographer, a multi-repairman, a creative gardener, and a tireless volunteer. He can cook, sew, and clean when he desires, or is needed. He's even an artist from time to time. Above all, these accomplishments, and the many I've missed, are equaled and exceeded by his dedication and contributions to his country. He is a much decorated soldier and officer, a world traveler, and a cum laude college graduate. John Alicki is even an advisor to many because his opinion is so respected. I think of him as a true renaissance man, no matter what decade he's living in. He is up with the times politically, culturally, and his wisdom is often helpful to his community, nation, and most of all to this family.

How do I know all these accomplishments of such a remarkable man?

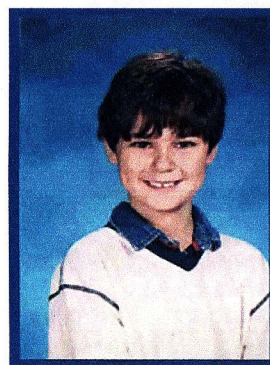
Because I'm Alicia, his daughter, who loves him very much.

Happy Fathers Day, Daddy—I wish I could spend it with you!

I love you very much XXXXX



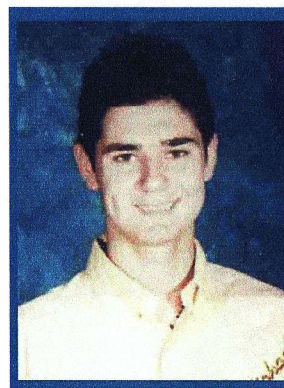
Alicia with husband Michael Thomas Burin



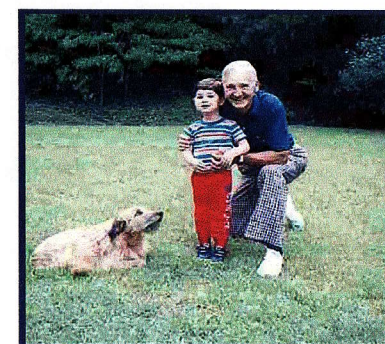
Michael Andrew—10-years old



Mother and son



Michael Andrew—16-years old



Grandpa, grandson, and Charlie

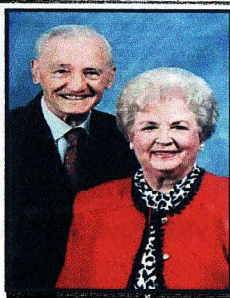
60TH ANNIVERSARY

John A. Alicki and Georgia Sullivan Alicki celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary Sept. 2.

They were married in the Main Post Chapel at Camp Mackall, N.C.

Their family includes, a daughter, Alicia Alicki Burin and her husband Michael Thomas Burin. They are proud grandparents to a grandson, Michael Andrew Burin of Aurora, Ohio.

John, a Pearl Harbor, World War II and Korean War veteran, and Georgia enjoyed traveling around the world during and after John's military service with the Army. After 33 moves and his retirement from the military they moved to Lenoir in 1957.

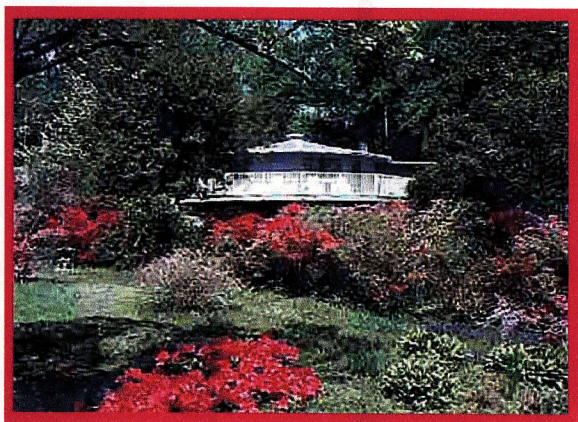


John A. and Georgia Alicki

John retired as personnel director from U.S. Industries Inc., Hammary Division in 1980.

They are members of First Baptist Church of Lenoir.

2005



At Home in Lenoir, N.C

A Tribute To My Dad



My Dad's life spoke volumes in the world,
everyone who truly knew him, loved him.

From the time I was a little girl to today, I remember my dad as a loyal friend to many, and to me.

He was a great provider for his family and a role model, unsurpassed

He was a good man—a gentle man—a lover of life—a Christian man, worthy of our praise.

He was full of patience, kindness, and love for man kind.

He found pleasure in doing for others,
No deed too great or too small.

My dad had high moral standards and taught me to have compassion and to forgive.

My dad was a soldier, paratrooper, brave and true. He loved his country, the flag, his 517th comrades, too.

He was a gentle man, giving me much time, love and concern.

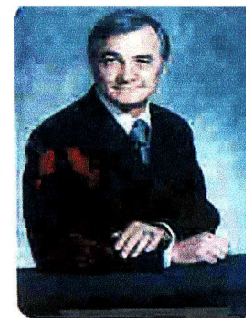
He helped me to succeed by teaching me to believe in God and to believe in me.

Alicia Alicki Burin

A paragraph from a Memorial Day Article by *John F. Buchalski*, DAV Member and nephew of *John*.

When I remember Pearl Harbor, I am reminded of the 15 million American veterans that served in the war—I am reminded of those fierce battles: Coral Sea, Midway, Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Sugarloaf Hill, Bastogne, The Bulge, Anzio, St. Vith, Iwo Jima, and Omaha and Utah beaches at Normandy.

I have personally known in my life two Medal of Honor recipients... I also remember, *Major John A. Alicki*, USA (Ret) of the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team, one of the "elite" combat units of WW II...they helped fortify the liberty of our nation. They loved America, so they spent long years in foreign lands from her shores. They revered freedom, so they sacrificed their own that we may be free. They defended our right to live as individuals, yet yield their individuality in that cause. Many of these veterans bear visible signs of their service, while others carry the evidence inside them...



About The Author

John Aloysious Alicki, Major, AUS (Ret) was born January 12, 1917 in Lackawanna County, Scranton, Pennsylvania.

He graduated from Appalachian State University, cum laude, Caldwell Community College, and attended Lenoir Rhyne and Austin Peay colleges. He is a member of Alpha Chi, a national honor society.

He is a veteran of Pearl Harbor, World War II and the Korean War. He attended Officers Candidate School, Fort Benning, GA, and was commissioned in 1942 as a 2nd Lieutenant. He graduated from the Parachute School, Counter Intelligence Corps School, and Strategic Intelligence School. He served with the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team in Rome-Arno, Southern France, Rhineland, Ardennes-Alsace, and Central Europe campaigns.

From 1949 to 1957, he was assigned to the U.S. Military Intelligence Division, 441st Counter Intelligence Corps in Japan and later with the 11th Airborne Division. He also served with the 13th Airborne Division, 82nd Airborne Division and XVIII Airborne Corps.

Retired from the military, he moved with his family to Lenoir, North Carolina and became Personnel Manager for US Industries, Inc. retiring in 1980.

He was affiliated with the American Society for Training directors, and the American Society for Personnel Administration. The Accreditation Institute, Berea, Ohio, awarded him accreditation in 1976.

Volunteer Guardian Ad Litem for abused and neglected children, and long-time Hospice volunteer. He also served on the mayor's Committee for Employment of the Handicapped for Lenoir and Granite Falls, Chairman, Caldwell County Multiple Sclerosis Society, and Western Piedmont Safety Council.

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*Indicates John Alicki is mentioned.
