



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2420

August 15, 2019

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

1944 – 2019 75th Anniversary of Operation Dragoon



Last minute details.



The waiting game.



Briefing.



Pondering.



Hook-up.



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



Preparations in Italy



First Airborne Task Force, US Forces, before Dragoon Jump

Operation Dragoon YouTube Video:

<https://youtu.be/ax5Mt6X5Vd4>

Send news to MailCall@517prct.org



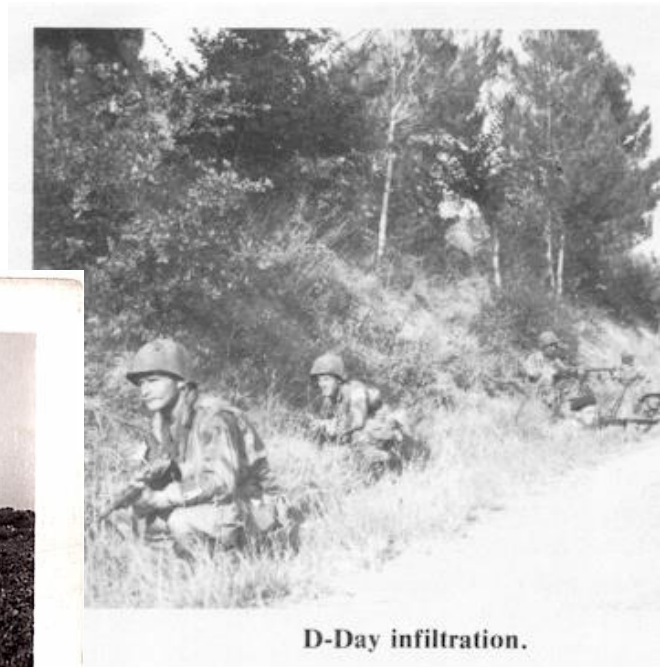
517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



Hit the silk!



Troopers of the 517th Parachute Infantry, First Airborne Task Force, in Operation Dragoon, Southern France



D-Day infiltration.



D+2 Aug 17-44 - 2nd pl. H Co. 517.



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august 14, 1944

Tomorrow is the big day! Today is checking and double checking all the things we have gone over a million times, but do it once more. Food for three days, entrenching tool, toilet paper (who knows if we can find satisfactory leaves!?) canteen full, change of clothing, especially socks.

Yesterday full dress of exactly what we will wear tomorrow, marched to Motor Pool where three mechanics were having their fun spraying us with black, brown and green paint...made sure we had plenty of Vaseline covering our face and hands, and double socks over our precious paratroop boots (can't get paint on them!!!_) and we had our camouflage complete.

Spent the rest of the day writing letters to girlfriends and family...if we put our invasion data in there, it won't make any difference, as the mail won't go out for a few days. All of our other gear and clothing packed to come over by ship.

Hope to get some rest as we hit the airfields around midnight, and no sleep till God knows when.

Can't think of anything else...sack time, hopefully! Also hopefully, more tomorrow!! Suppertime around 6 tonight and then the Chaplain will be around after that.

love to all,

phil mc spadden

This operation was to be an all airborne invasion of Southern France, landing in the middle of the German Army and taking prisoners and destroying the forces of occupation of this part of France. Some 5630 paratroopers would be involved, utilizing 396 old reliable C-47's to deliver the troops and tow the gliders carrying some ground troops. The main force was the 57th Parachute Regimental Combat Team, consisting of the 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment, the 460th Parachute Field Artillery Battalion and the 596th Parachute Engineer Company. Supporting units were both British and Canadian Paratroopers, the joint US/Canada Special Forces, other parachute units and the 442nd Anti-Tank Company.

The convoy of planes would depart from 10 different dirt runways scattered across Italy, north of Rome. Once airborne and in formation, this train of C-47's would be 100 miles long.

Aug 14, 2130 hours: Formation, one more check, dog tags, proper containers for eye=glasses, dentures, personal items to go into the knapsack just before the jump. Cooks had coffee and sandwiches available if anyone wanted any. Who knows when we will get to eat again? Issued weapons and ammunition, weapons loaded, on safety secured in canvas weapons bag and secured to harness.

2200, board trucks to go to airfield. Eerie feeling! This is what we have trained so hard for, and now the day is here!

Aug 15, 0100, on board the plane, buckled up and waiting for take-off. Like all military, it's a game of 'hurry up[and wait'. but finally, the propellers began to buzz, and this is the big moment we have been



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waiting for. Take off...but with the dirt run-ways, by the time the third plane was in position, the dust was so thick the pilots couldn't see the ground and had to rely on instruments. Up and away! seemed like hours of circling before we were in line to head for France. Now for the long ride! Boring! Some tried to snooze, others looked like they were praying, others so hyped up they were in constant motion. Me? Not sure what I was doing, couldn't sleep, I know, thoughts running thru my head, trying to envision what awaited me once we were on the ground. Would I make it? Would I be frightened? Would I hold my on against an armed enemy? I didn't know the answers, but I sure hope I hold up my end of this war.

There were only 6 men to each side of the plane, versus the usual 11, as the back part of the cabin was full of bundles of food, ammunition and other supplies that the jump master would throw out once the troopers had gone. And there were lots of drums of gasoline as the planes had to refuel in flight for the flight back. We had been flying at 2500 feet so far, but as we approached the coast of France, the planes lowered to 1500 feet, a level from which we would jump. As the planes descended and speed was cut back, the doors were opened, and we were really getting ready for this. The planned for clear skies were gone! Looking out the door, it was pitch black, like we were in the middle of a storm cloud. Red Light on! Stand Up, Hook Up, Equipment Check...Thank god for all of our training we were able to do this without hesitation. GREEN LIGHT! First man shuffled out the door, followed closely behind. was this trip necessary??? Outside the plane, felt the jolt as my chute opened, Thank God for that! Couldn't see my canopy, but it felt good, now to get ready for the landing! WHAM!! That French soil seemed harder than that of the US! Landed my usual, heels, butt and head, but no injuries, up and out of my chute, rolled it up and got my weapon at ready. I know one password was Lafayette, but can't remember the rest...tried my 'clicker' one like I used to get in Crackerjacks, but didn't like the sound of it...sounded too much like pulling my bolt back, and if I could hear it, so could the Nazis. Couldn't see anyone, friend or foe, which was a little scary! Heard a rustle, and a trooper from my plane showed up, along with 2 or 3 others, then a Frenchman showed up to help us find out way to the assembly point. Once there, began to get organized, but due to the weather, scattered all over, some were 25 miles from where they were supposed to land. Took many hours before we were all together.

Lost all sense of time, but several day later arrived in Nice, where all the lampposts had Nazi sympathizers hanging from them...

We were on the lines for 93 days before we were relieved...only to arrive in Northern France on Dec 10, Bulge broke out on Dec 16 and we were back in action on Dec 19th! Short vacation!

love to all, **phil**



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On August 1, 2019 at 10:49 AM Claire Giblin <clairejgib@comcast.net> wrote:
Hi, Bob -

In a little more than a week, we will be gathering in France!

The jump list, as I know it, is:

Morris McDowell

Team Broudy: Bruce and Liz, and Eileen and her husband Michael Shaw

Team Frice: Karen, Wayne and Fisher!

Team Johnson: Allan, Claire and Jim

Am I missing anyone???

We are looking forward to attending events and seeing friends again - friends who keep the memory of the 517 alive. Of special importance is that Dad will be present as the plaque is dedicated to **Private Gruwell** in Montauroux. Regular Mail Call readers will remember the story of earnest attempts to locate his grave. Though never found specifically, it's thought to be in their town's cemetery, and we are grateful that his sacrifice will be remembered and honored these years later.

Please pull pictures from the Facebook feed for Mail Call!

So glad to be returning to France! Airborne! All the way!

Claire Giblin

daughter **Kaare Allan Johnson**, 596

Sent: Saturday, August 10, 2019 7:27 AM

Subject: Re: for mail call

Good grief!! And **Team Rossi: Jeff and Jesse and their wives!!**

We allegedly land at 150 pm. Allegedly.

On August 10, 2019 at 10:07 AM J R <casadirossi@hotmail.com> wrote:

Just notified by Delta our flight has been delayed 3 hours. We'll see you in Draguignan. Don't know if this will affect our car rental.

Well then, we may just see you at the rental counter!!

Claire G

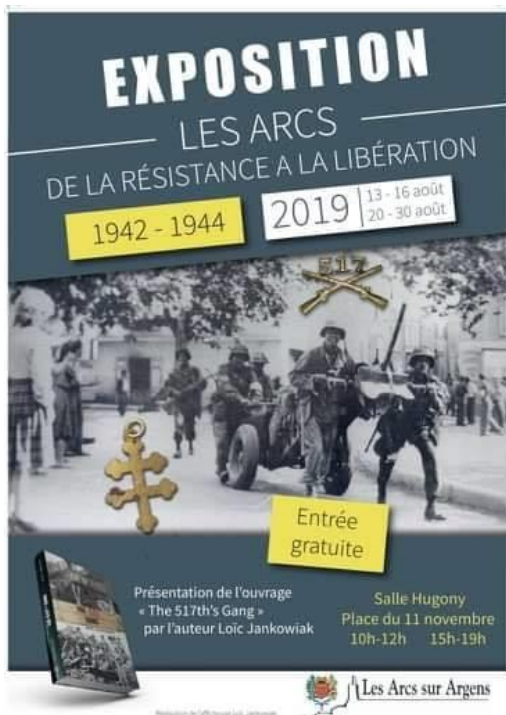


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August 9:

Going to Provence tomorrow to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the liberation of southern France where my dad **Joseph Broudy** jumped on August 15, 1944

Bruce Broudy



Program of the collective D-DAY Provence
Find the associations of the collective Forty Four Memories, Memoires Languedoc 44, jeep memory Provence, museum of military memory and partners Tanks Engineers Division, Association Groupe ETO 30, Assoc Var Reconstitution Historique from the August 15th on the following events:

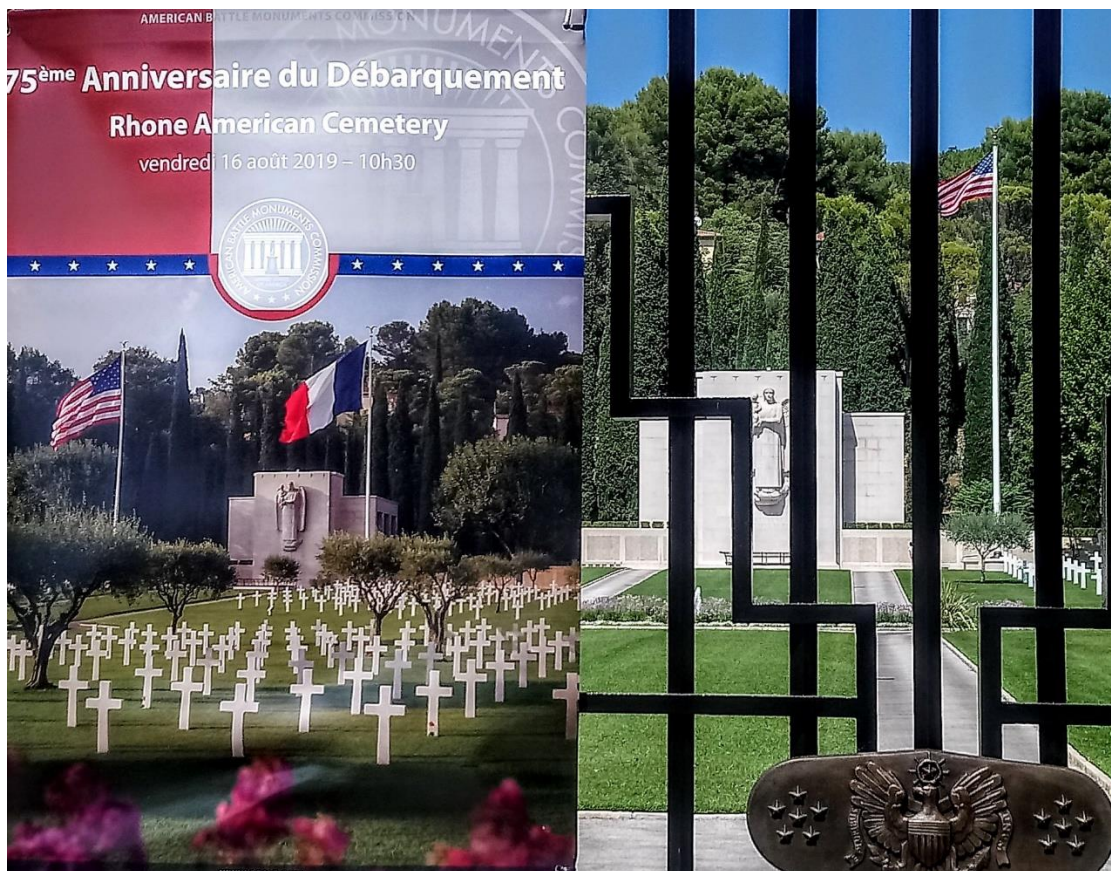
- 15 August Saint Tropez and cogolin
- August 16th the muy and vidauban
- August 17th!
- August 18st. ESTÈVE JANSON
- August 19th newlyn and vauvenargues (ffi stele)
- August 20th vauvenargues, Saint Marc Jaumegarde and bridge bridge
- 21 August aix in Provence
- August 22th salon of Provence
- August 23th!
- August 24th and 25th!

The bows of the resistance to liberation is in seven days!
Don't hesitate to put the visit of the exhibition in your agenda!
I will be present to present my book on August 13th & 15th at this exhibition.
I will also be present on August 14th at la motte.

- Loïc Jankowiak



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Official ceremony at the [Rhone American Cemetery and Memorial](#) Friday, August 16, 10 pm

10 h30- 11 pm: arrival of the American and French authorities and emblems.

Speeches by the mayor of draguignan, Richard Strambio, Secretary of state geneviève darrieussecq, and the American Ambassador to France, Jamie Mccourt.



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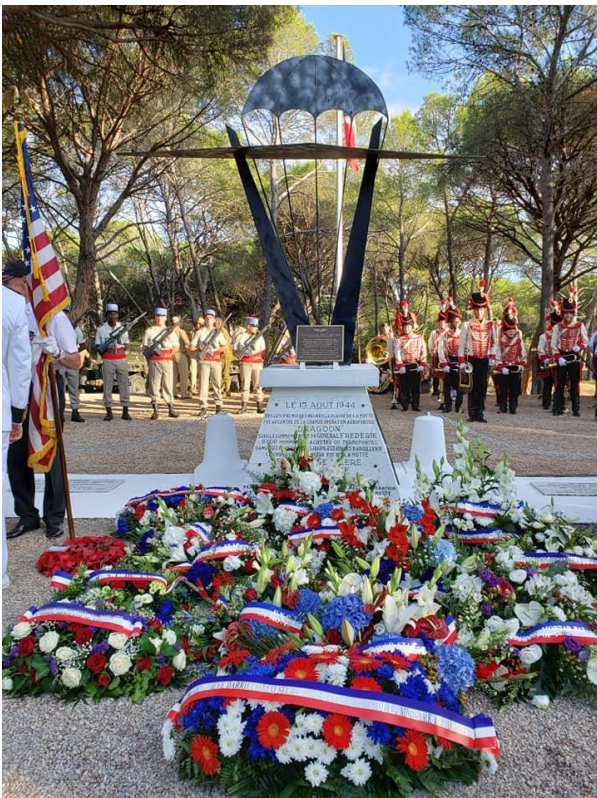
From: [The Franco-American Society of Draguignan, France](#) —
with **Loïc Jankowiak** and **Philippe Natalini** in Draguignan.



On the eve of the ceremonies of the 75th anniversary of the landing and the liberation of Provence, a little spotlight on the work of a team of passionate people with Philippe Natalini.

are many more.... and in particular also the work of [Loïc Jankowiak](#) with his book [The 517th's Gang](#)

And pictures are coming in now from the 517th contingent in France:



Ceremonies in La Motte

La Motte premier village libéré de Provence i



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**Claire Giblin with David Fouan
and Eric Renoux.**



with Ginni Field





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Allan, honored to meet Brad Hicks, grandson of General Fredericks. These are the moments that we're here for, and you just never know when they'll happen.

Leo Dean loved this place





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Got mine signed by the author!!! - Claire

(Author is **Loïc Jankowiak**)





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From **Bruce Broudy**:



On a nice beach in Nice

Negresco hotel where
officers went for R&R during
the “Champagne Campaign
“





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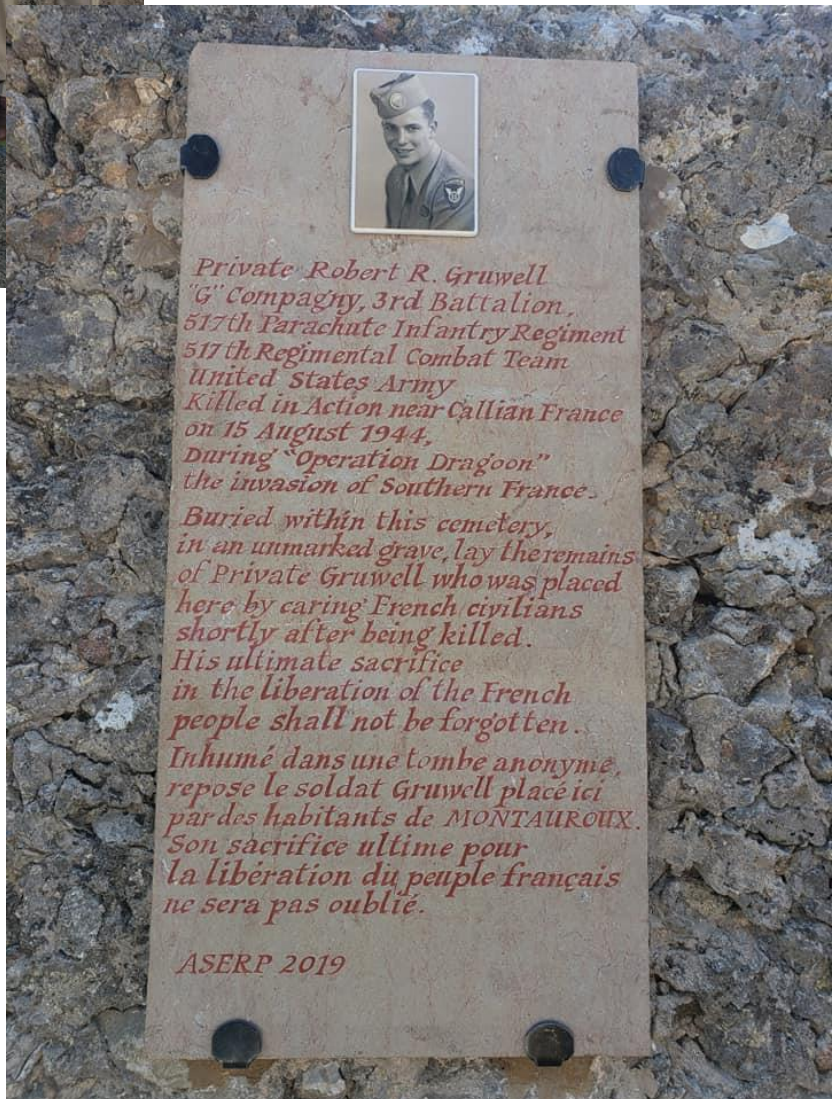


In Montauroux, unveiling the plaque for **Private Gruwell**, killed in the jump.

With **Allan Johnson**

Honoring **Private Gruwell**, killed in the 15th of August 1944 jump and buried in their cemetery. Thank you, montauroux, for taking care of him, all these years

- Claire G





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MailCall News

July 7, 2019:

Bob, I am sending this letter because my wife and I have recently moved and we do not have our computer set up yet. I called **Joe Molina** a couple of days ago and talked to his daughter. She informed me that Joe has died May 26th, 2019 of numerous things. We were both members of D Company, 517 PRCT. Joe was 95 years old and had been blind for many years. He was a great man and soldier. His daughter's phone number is 1-626-333-4767.

I would like to have a phone # until I get my computer set up. My number is 1-253-302-3197. Address is:

Robert Hart
6414 N Park Way, Apt 237
Tacoma, WA 98407-2273

I would like to know if you have any idea of how many of us are left. I talked to **Tom Hill** recently. He's in a VA hospital in Minn. My 95th was June 29th.

Thanks for all you do for the 517th.

Bob Hart

You can send email to my son, Paul Hart PaulSue5051@gmail.com



Joe I. Molina
Rowland Heights, California

Nov 19, 1923 – May 26, 2019



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Dear Bob,

I had received your newsletter for a long time. A lot happened and without boring you with my life, I am simply writing to get back on the mailing list. I had to change my email address, and this is the new one. Hope you 'll remember or still have my name as one of the 'lost fold'. I want very much to reconnect and continue my contacts with the veterans and families here in Arizona. There have been many many times that I had given them one of your articles or newsletters and it literally brought tears to their eyes. Long absent, but not forgotten,

best wishes,

Anne Justice

Hi Anne,

Your new email has been added. Welcome back!

You can always read old MailCalls or search the archives at <http://517prct.org/mailcall/index.htm>

Bob Barrett

Thanks a million! I feel like a new person. I off and on bump into veterans over here, and many feel so dejected. When I can refer them to your website, or tell a relative of theirs to bring it up for them, it brings them and theirs a lot of joy.

As always, my best wishes,

Anne Justice



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Unfortunately, I do not have good records of who might still be alive from the 517th. I have old rosters used for the Thunderbolt mails that I have tried to keep up to date, noting people that I heard have died, and sometimes I note the last time I heard from them, e.g. at a reunion. But for many (most) people who were on the old roster, we have not heard from in years. And there are also many people on the roster that I don't know whether they were soldiers or just friends and family.

But here is a list of the people from the old roster that I know for sure were troopers, and that I have not heard have passed. I also included the last time I actually heard from them, but as you can see, many of these I have not heard from in years, if ever. If you know of troopers who are still alive that are not on the list, or you know if any of these people died, let me know. There are only 60 people on this list, but there could be many more on the full roster that I just don't know. www.517prct.org/roster.pdf

Last Name	First Name	Co.	WW2	Last Contact	ST
Amerlan	Robert J.	2nd HQ	x	3/6/2016	IL
Anderson	Robert	596	x		NE
Armbruster	Stephen M.	460-D	x	10/6/2018	NC
Backus	Eugene	A	x		OR
Barnes	Robert D.	H	x		OH
Benton	Jim	D	x		IN
Brown	Fred E.	460-HQ	x	2/1/2018	TX
Cason	Jack J.	460-D	x	6/23/2015	KY
Castello	Jay		x	6/22/2015	CA
Clark	Joseph L.	1st HQ	x	6/22/2015	AZ
Cross (USA Ret.)	Thomas R.	2nd HQ, F	x	6/22/2015	FL
Cross Jr.	Tom		x		
Dail	Robert	596	x		VA
Dallas	Frank J.	I	x		VA
Delesio	Gabriel	460-C	x	6/22/2015	PA
DeVarona	David	RedCross	x		CA
Ehly	Erle E.	1st HQ	x	6/22/2015	PA
Flynn	George W.	F	x	2/23/2016	CA
Garvey	John L.	460-HQ	x	6/22/2015	CA
Goforth, MD	Walter L.	Reg HQ	x		TN
Goodsell	Roger W.	D	x	5/15/2017	TX
Hammel	Richard L.	2nd HQ, E	x	7/6/2015	NC
Hart	Robert D.	D	x	7/7/2019	WA
Harte	John A.	460 -B	x		CA
Henzl	Ed	1st HQ	x	7/28/2015	FL
Hill	Tom D.	D	x	7/7/	MN
Hobson	Keith	3rd HQ	x	6/23/2015	CA
Holzworth	Louis B.	Reg HQ	x		FL
Iasello	Daniel	460-D	x		NJ

Last Name	First Name	Co.	WW2	Last Contact	ST
Johnson	Kaare Allan	596	x	6/22/2015	NJ
Kachalsky	Richard	460-B	x	12/14/2018	NY
Kenamer	Woodie E.	D	x		OK
Kennedy	Robert W.	F	x	6/22/2015	FL
Kochersperger	Chester (Chet)	A	x	6/30/2015	PA
Lawrence	Harold G. (Sug)	1st HQ	x	2/15/2016	TX
Madison	Lyle S.	596	x		NC
Martel	Joseph	E	x		HI
McAvoy	Tom	Reg HQ	x		IN
McSpadden	Philip P.	460-HQ	x	6/22/2015	FL
McWaide	Robert	D	x	2/8/2019	CA
McWilliams	Jim	D	x	6/22/2015	OR
Meline	George E.	3rd HQ	x	6/22/2015	CA
Miller	Dick	460-A	x	6/25/2015	FL
Miller	Harris E.	460-A	x	3/6/2016	MN
Morris	James Frank	460-B	x	6/22/2015	VA
Nelson	Ralph W.	G	x		WI
Pastalenic	John M.	H	x	6/23/2015	NY
Perkins	Leslie E.	C	x	6/23/2015	CA
Perkowski	Walter	F	x	12/22/2016	GA
Phillips	Ed	596	x		ME
Reichwald	Herbert A.	596	x		WI
Rupczyk	John	I	x		PN
Schlacter	Mike H.	460-D	x	6/23/2015	MI
Smith	William H.	2nd HQ	x	11/30/2015	VA
Snyder	Gene J. (Zoot)	A	x	3/3/2019	CA
Strojan	John J.	I	x	6/22/2015	MN
Traver	Myrle E.	F	x	6/22/2015	NV
Webber	Robert	1st HQ	x	11/1/2018	MN
Whisenhunt	Earl	G	x	6/22/2015	NC
Yung	Wah Fook	SVC Co.	x		HI

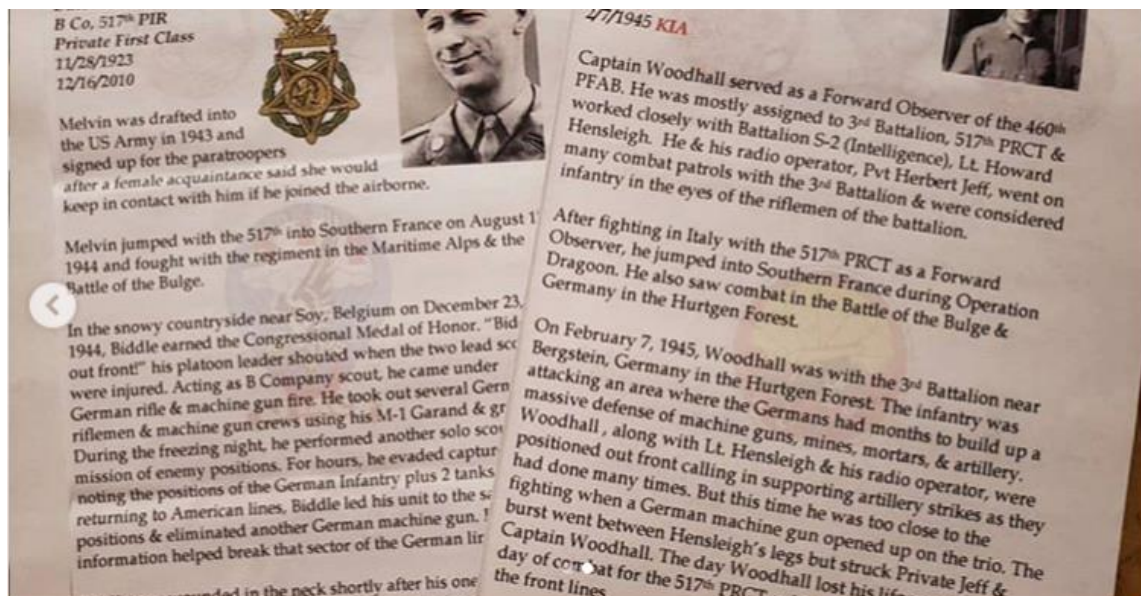
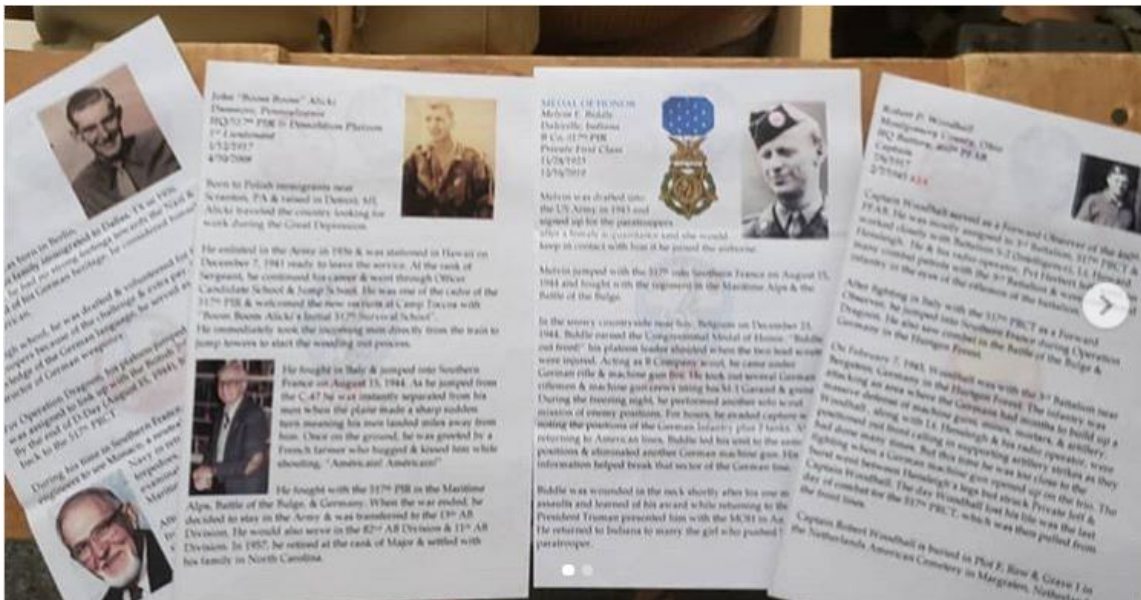


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From Facebook: <https://www.instagram.com/foxcompany517thprct/>

F Co, 517th PRCT (reenacted): Located in Pennsylvania, we are dedicated to telling story of the 517th PRCT, which was comprised of the 517th PIR, 460th PFAB, and 596th AEC.

Some of the handouts we give to the public who stop by our camp at events. Part of telling the 517th's story is putting faces to the names.



I can see sheets for **Boom Boom Alicki** (Reg. HQ), **Mel Biddle** (B Co.), and **"Woody" Woodhull** (460th), but I can't identify the one on the left. Who is that? – Bob Barrett

Answer: **Ernest Kosan**, 596th PCEC



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Hello from **Mel Dahlberg**'s daughter. I'm writing to notify you of my parents' passing. Mae passed on July 1st and Mel on July 6th which was their 73rd wedding anniversary! Bittersweet - knowing they're together but also missing them both!

They were buried together on Monday, July 15th at Ft Snelling US Cemetery.

Dad faithfully read your newsletters, so I thought I would write and let you all know.

If you'd like to read their obituaries, go to www.startribune.com/obituaries

Sincerely,
Mary McCracken

Thanks, Mary.

Yes, I got word of Mel and Mae's passing last week. So sorry to hear. I met Mel at the Fort Benning reunion a few years ago. And my Dad was a big fan of Mel's.

I did include some stories and pictures of Mel in last week's newsletter.
<http://517prct.org/mailcall/2419.pdf>

Bob Barrett

If you have a member ship to Amazon Prime, they currently have available to watch *Saints and Soldiers: Airborne Creed*, the movies based partly on **Harlan "Bud" Curtis**' stories of the 517th.

The screenshot shows the Amazon Prime Video interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'prime video' and links for Home, Originals, TV Shows, Movies, Kids, Your Watchlist, Your Video Library, Settings, Getting Started, and Help. The main content area features the movie 'Saints and Soldiers: Airborne Creed'. It includes a star rating of 4.5 (185 reviews), an IMDb rating of 5.7, a runtime of 1h 35min, and a PG-13 rating. The synopsis states: 'On August 15th, 1944, an invasion in Provence, France was organized by the Americans to support and protect the allied troops marching to Berlin who had already landed in Normandy on June 6, 1944. After jumping over Provence during the night, three paratroopers who have to regroup with their fellow soldiers in the village of Les Arcs, help the local resistance to free some of their members.' The genres are Action and Drama, the director is Ryan Little, and the stars are Corbin Allred, David Nibley, and Jasen Wade. A note indicates that rentals include 30 days to start watching and 48 hours to finish once started. At the bottom, there are buttons for 'Watch Trailer', 'Watch with Prime Start your 30-day free trial', 'Rent HD \$3.99', 'Buy HD \$9.99', 'More purchase options', and 'Add to Watchlist'.



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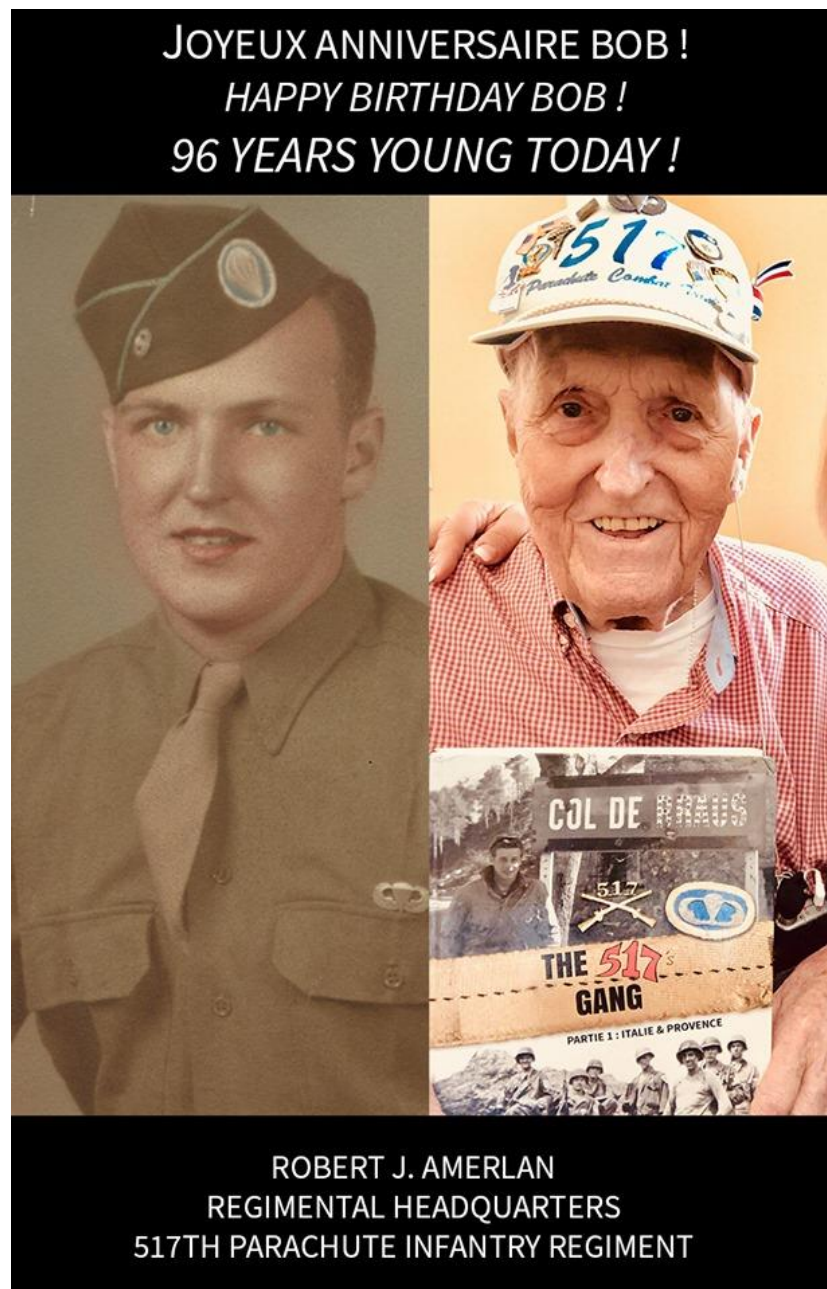
August 8: From <https://www.facebook.com/Operation-Dragon-15-Aout-1944-museum-251521034883354/>

Wish a happy birthday to **Bob Amerlan**. He's 96 years old today!

Radio operator, Bob jumped in the area of fayence in the night from 14 to 15 August 1944. He participated in the 4 campaigns of his regiment, from Italy to Germany.

His exceptional story of his jump can be read in "the 517th's gang" available on this link:

<http://bit.do/the-517ths-Gang>.





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Dear, i have a helmet with a laundry number. I can't find the Person but would be great to know who he was/is. Could you help me out? Thanks in advance.

The laundry number is M6528

Regards,
Tim Hendriks

Does anyone know what a laundry number is? Or how to identify who the owner is? – BB

Bob,

Here is the search page for U.S. Laundry numbers:

<http://wwii-enlistment.com/search/>

Best,
Martin Neaman

Hi Tim,

Martin found a way to look up WW2 laundry numbers. Unfortunately, I do not recognize any of the 91 names from what I know of the 517th. But it could be or more likely someone from another unit.

Good luck.

Bob Barrett

I have often heard the 517th troopers talk about the very tough but thorough training received at Camp Toccoa under **Col. Louis A. Walsh, Jr.** Many claim that the 517th paratroopers were the best trained outfit, and that's why they were called in for the toughest assignments. (and why they were skeptical of any replacements.).

So when I recently heard this quote, it sure rings true. - BB

"We don't rise to the level of our expectations, we fall to the level of our training."
— Archilochus



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From: <https://www.facebook.com/CampToccoaAtCurrahee>

Camp Toccoa At Currahee, Inc. has begun Project C-47 and is now selling bricks to raise funds to carry out this effort. The price to purchase a brick is \$50. The bricks will be engraved with 3 lines, maximum 20 spaces per line. you can dedicate it to a loved one that has past or to anyone you choose within the 3 line, 20 space restriction.



The story of the C-47's during WWII is on our website, along with the form to order the bricks. Choose the wording for the engraving or if you choose to only support this effort by purchasing a brick, it will be engraved as in the photo below.



Thank you in advance for your support for this historic project. Website is www.campoccoaatcurrahee.org

Currahee

*** Hold up on ordering your bricks, the form has not been loaded on the website as of yet. Hopefully next week. Sorry for all the confusion, I thought it had been loaded. *****





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RE: Laundry marks

Hi BB!!! Finally, I know something. Initial of last name and last 4 of service number.

Mine was G5027.

Regards and thanks for your service to the PRCT and associated friends and relatives.

Don Gentry

Cousin in law - **Richard Baysinger**, RIP, B Company 517th

I did not realize that there is a lot more to the history and collectability of short snorters. I recently ran across this webpage with lots of info about short snorters, and examples of some of the most famous:

<http://www.shortsnorter.org/>

And here is a link to a good summary:

http://www.shortsnorter.org/files/May_2010_Coin_World_article.pdf

Paper Money



Images courtesy of George J. Grimm.
This Japanese 5-yen short-snorter was autographed by U.S. Navy Fleet Adm. Chester W. Nimitz (see arrow) while on his way to sign the Japanese surrender documents in Tokyo in 1945. Lt. George J. Grimm, at right, is shown standing on the wing of his PB2Y Coronado "flying boat" shortly after landing in Tokyo Bay. Grimm flew Adm. Nimitz to Tokyo for the signing.



SHORT-SNORTERS

Hand-signed autographs on U.S. and world paper money transform WWII-era notes into a record of historical events

By Michele Orzano

Imagine finding paper money that talks! eyewitnesses to history. And, because his- He said the name for these autographed



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The Short Snorter Project

A 501 (c) (3) charitable organization. Contributions are tax deductible! [Click here for more information.](#)

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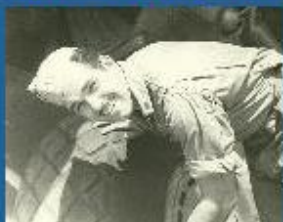
[Virtual Museum](#)

Search

FEATURED SNORTERS

Posted 4.24.11

[Howard "Jack" Fry Short Snorter - B-29 Superfort Pilot](#)



Posted 1.3.11

[Hennon Gilbert Short Snorter 30th Inf. Reg, 3rd Inf. Division](#)



Posted 12.17.10

[Vernon O. Stanley Short Snorter - Made over North](#)



Posted 12.12.10

[W. E. Bill Gernert Short Snorter - B-24 Pilot, 22](#)



Posted 11.11.10 (Veteran's Day)

[Paul W. Nesper Short Snorter](#)



What is a Short Snorter?

A short snorter is a banknote which was signed by various persons traveling together or meeting up at different events and records who was met. The tradition was started by bush pilots in Alaska in the 1920's and subsequently spread through the growth of military and commercial aviation. If you signed a short snorter and that person could not produce it upon request, they owed you a dollar or a drink (a "short snort", aviation and alcohol do not mix!).



Short snorter signed by WWII Marine Corps fighter ace and Congressional Medal of Honor recipient [Joe Foss](#). 1935A HAWAII Silver Certificate. (Courtesy of George J. Grimm)

Presidents to Privates and Prime Ministers to Pilots...

We can actually follow some of the major meetings conducted during the height of WWII where Allied heads of state and their military staffs met and planned their strategies to defeat the Axis powers. The individual web pages arranged here have links to other web sites containing information and historical documentation relating to short snorters.

1. [General Hoyt Vandenberg Snorter](#) - Signatures collected by General Hoyt Vandenberg in June 1942 flight over the mid-Atlantic.
2. [Harry Hopkins Snorter](#) - (Featured on PBS's "History Detectives") Signatures collected by the Presidential Aide at the July 25, 1942, London Conference where the decision was made to launch Operation Torch, the Invasion of North Africa. Snorter also contains signatures collected during F.D.R.'s [1943 trip to the Casablanca Conference](#).
3. [D. Ray Comish Snorter](#) - Signatures collected by the Pan American Flight Engineer aboard the Dixie Clipper flight carrying F.D.R. and his staff to the Casablanca Conference in January 1943.
4. [Averell Harriman Snorter](#) - Signatures collected at the January 1943 Casablanca Conference where the decision was made by the Allied powers to demand unconditional surrender from the Axis countries of Germany, Italy, and Japan.
5. [General George S. Patton Snorter](#) - Signatures collected at the Casablanca Conference.
6. [Snorter signed by Franklin D. Roosevelt](#) and several key advisors and aides en route to the Tehran Conference of Allied powers via Cairo, Egypt, November 22, 1943.



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



[La Petite Musette - Militaria - Carentan, Normandie](#)

August 9 at 11:37 AM ·

I'm putting this down, you're going too!? 😊:D

Loïc Jankowiak will come and present his book on [The 517th's Gang](#), September 7, 2019 in store! 🤖🤖🤖🤖🤖🤖🤖🤖

Because for us normans, it also feels good to hear about other stories of the second war! 😊;) 😊:)

☑️ On is counting on your presence!

☑️ If you already have the book, you can also bring it to get it signed otherwise, it will also be available in lpm! 😊;) 😊:)

<https://boutique.lapetitemusette.com>

Double page on var morning, bandol. Thank you to the journalist for his interest!

- Loïc





517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

LOCAL SOLDIER HONORED FOR ROUTING NAZI GROUP

BRONZE STAR AWARDED S/SGT. RAYMOND E. BUNCE WHO KILLED TWO MEMBERS OF MACHINE-GUN CREW

Credited with routing a German detachment early this year in Belgium, S/Sgt. Raymond E. Bunce, a member of the 517th Parachute Infantry, and son of Mrs. Priscilla Bunce, 427 East Market Street, has been awarded the Bronze Star for heroic achievement near St. Vith.



The citation recently received by Mrs. Bunce reads in part as follows: "While leading a reconnaissance patrol, S/SGT. RAYMOND E. BUNCE detected a German ambush of approximately thirty riflemen and one machine gun. Although outnumbered 5 to 1, he moved aggressively forward, signaling his patrol to follow. With a few well-placed bursts from his submachine gun, Sergeant Bunce killed two members of the machine-gun crew and wounded the other."

"Discovering that his weapon had jammed," the citation goes on, "Sergeant Bunce promptly dashed to the enemy weapon and placed it in action. His devastating fire killed and wounded fifteen more of the enemy and forced the remainder to flee. Sergeant Bunce's daring and devotion to duty reflect great credit on himself and the military service," the award concludes.

The Scranton soldier entered service in April, 1943, and received training at Camp Toccoa, N. C.; Camp Marshall, N. C., and Fort Benning, Ga., before going overseas in April, 1944. He saw considerable action in the various campaigns and was wounded on June 26, 1944, in Italy and again on Oct. 10, 1944, in France. He holds the Purple Heart and two Oak Leaf Clusters. A graduate of North Scranton Junior High School, Sergeant Bunce joined the colors while a student at Central High School.

RE: Raymond Bunce News Article

Good Afternoon!

First, thanks so much for all the hard work you do to keep this going. I read every message! While doing family research, I found this news article about my dad in a Scranton Newspaper. I thought perhaps you might be able to share it and then add it to his name on the website.

Regards,

Christine Bunce

Scranton (PA) Times Tribune
August 14, 1945



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RE: MaiCall #2397 – John Rupczyk

I am the grandson of John Rupczyk. I was reading some of the articles written about him and came across this Mail Call asking for more information on my grandfather. If possible, please feel free to pass on my email to the woman looking for more information on **John Rupczyk**.

Thank you,
Brendan Peterson
peterston869@gmail.com

From MaiCall #2397 – October 21, 2018:

Dear Claire,

i have a réunion this evening to prepare the 75th birthday "libération de Saint-Cézaire".

I have need to know, if you know **Corporal John Rupczyk**?

Thank you.
Gros bisous

Elisabeth Atlan

Elisabeth,

This is a little (a lot) late. You asked last October if we had a contact for John Rupczyk. I did not have much info about Cpl. Rupczyk, but today, I just did hear from his grandson. Below is his contact information. What exactly were you looking to find about Cpl. Rupczyk?

Also, I just found this newspaper article about Cpl. Rupczyk from 2014:

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

Bob Barrett

Helo Bob,

Thank you for your reply. I wanted to know if **John Rupczyk** was still alive, to try to bring him to Saint-Cézaire for the liberation ceremony of August 23rd.

Thanks to you i get in touch with Kate Sartain, granddaughter of **Frank Dallas**, she comes with two children and the grandson of Frank Dallas for the ceremony. She also sent me documents about her grandfather.

From France I cannot access with the link you sent me. I am sorry.

Thanks for your help.

Elisabeth



Times Observer

Warren, PA
JUN 23, 2014

He jumped into darkness to find an enemy ahead

“Hell, we were young. We were stupid. You had to be kind of crazy (if) you don’t care too much to jump out of anything.”

It may have been youthful ignorance that prompted John Rupczyk to volunteer for the parachute infantry after being drafted into the U.S. Army during World War II.

But it certainly does not define his service.

Born in February 1924, Rupczyk said that before the war he lived at a house about four miles farther up the road from his current Page Hollow residence, where he has lived since 1946.

Living in Warren County, Rupczyk, now 90, said he knew “nothing” about what was going on in the world during the early years of the war. “We were young. We knew Germany was knocking the heck out of everything in Europe.”

Drafted in March 1943, Rupczyk explained that he was initially placed in the 66th Infantry Division and sent for training at Camp Blanding, Florida.

“I didn’t think that was tough,” Rupczyk of basic training.

He was then transferred to Camp Robinson, Arkansas.

“That’s where I volunteered for parachute school,” he said.

Rupczyk explained, “I had a good friend from Alabama. It was his idea.” He said the friend spent an entire Sunday trying to convince him to join the Airborne. When he eventually agreed, the friend went AWOL. “I don’t know what ever happened to him,” he said.

The training at parachute school was more challenging than basic.

“A lot of it, just physical training,” he said. “A lot of it was just physical exercise stuff, running up those mountains. They’re big. There was about 400 left with me, only half of us made it. They, every Monday morning for three weeks, they said ‘whoever wants to quit, do it now.’ (There was) always a bunch that got up and left.

“I was never in an airplane until then,” he recalled. “Fort Benning, Georgia (was the) first time in my life I got (in) an airplane.” With seven or eight training jumps to complete, at the rate of about one a month, he “never landed in one for seven or eight times,” he said. “I always jumped out of them.”

Does jumping out of an airplane invoke fear?

“You don’t have time to think,” said Rupczyk. “You’re like a dog when it happens. They train ya’ and you react just like an animal. Before you know it you jump out that god darn door. Then you get that opening shock.”

From there, gravity does the rest.



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Rupczyk explained that the training jumps were made at just 1,500 feet. Falling at 20 feet a second, it was quick trip. He said “you could steer by pulling the riser with your hand but that speeded it up.... You ain’t going to have much time at 1,500 feet.”

“Nothing so beautiful in the world as being in a parachute coming down.”

With his jump wings in hand, Rupczyk was officially part of the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team.

And his jump wings bought him a ticket overseas as the 517th sailed from Camp Patrick Henry near Newport News, Virginia on May 17, 1943 to the European Theatre of Operations.

He did not leave a girlfriend or wife stateside.

And that was a conscious choice.

“I just left friends,” he said. “I see guys that were married. They had an awful time. (I) said ‘I ain’t going to have that trouble.’”

Rupczyk said that he sailed on the George Bancroft, a Liberty ship, and traveled in a large convoy into the Mediterranean Sea. Once in the sea, “the Germans bombed us,” he said. “(It is a) good thing they missed my ship. There was 8,000 tons of ammo on my ship.”

Docking in Naples on May 31, Rupczyk said they didn’t waste any time getting off the ship.

“The Gerries were bombing us almost every day,” he recalled. The 517th was stationed close enough to the fight at Monte Cassino that “we could hear the big guns shooting in there.”

“We were just training,” Rupczyk said of most of the 517th’s time in Italy and Sicily.

But then did eventually join the advance north of Grosseto, in central Italy.

They “put us in combat for 18 days to see what it was like to get shot at,” Rupczyk said. “When we started losing guys, they pulled us out.”

The training continued through the summer months and, while the men did not know it, they were preparing for Operation Dragoon, the Allied invasion of southern France.

D-Day for Dragoon was August 15 with the invasion to commence, H-Hour, at 8 a.m.

Just like the Normandy invasion two months earlier, airborne infantry were dropped behind the lines before the infantry assault, to secure key roadways, bridges and objectives.

“We loaded into planes at one o’clock in the morning (and) jumped at 4:40 in the morning. It was quite a long ride,” said Rupczyk.

And they didn’t receive any advance warning.

“They didn’t tell us until the night we were going to jump,” he said. “They told us where we were going. You can’t tell what you don’t know. That’s what they told us.

“It was just a night jump. We were loaded with ammo and everything. The only difference, I was in the second wave, we was not very high. We no sooner left the plane than we were on the ground.”

He said that the combat jump was well under the 1,500 feet they jumped at during training and was “probably just high enough to get the opening shock” and ensure the parachute opened.

But even though the specific site of their jump was a secret, the men had a pretty good idea.



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“We were guessing,” he said. “We all were quite sure either Yugoslavia or France.”

Both locations would have forced the Germans to fight on another front, stretching their resources even further.

Rupczyk said Dragoon “was supposed to be the same day as Normandy. (They) didn’t have enough ships. We had to wait while Normandy took first place.

“There were three divisions that came in after we jumped,” he said.

At least at the outset, German resistance was not too stiff.

“We didn’t have too much trouble,” he said of the enemy on the day of the invasion. “They caught up with us on the third day, 20 to 25 miles inland.”

Rupczyk and the rest of the 517th then moved inland up the Rhone River valley through France, liberating a host of towns along the way from Fayence, Callian and Saint-Cezaire to Saint-Vallier, Grasse, Bouyon and La Roquette, pressing into Peira Cava near the coast during 94 days in the Alp Mountains.

A Bronze Star citation details Rupczyk’s involvement there.

“Staff Sergeant John Rupczyk, Jr. ...for heroic achievement in action near Piera Cava, France, 23 September 1944. Staff Sergeant Rupczyk was a member of a patrol which was assigned the mission of destroying enemy replacements situated on the slope of a heavily mined hill. While crossing the mined area, three members of the patrol were seriously wounded by exploding mines. Alerted by the noise, the enemy opened fire compelling Staff Sergeant Rupczyk and his men to seek cover. From his position, Staff Sergeant Rupczyk saw that his three wounded comrades were lying dangerously exposed to enemy bullets. Disregarding his own safety, he crawled across the field, feeling his way among mines and trip wires until he reached the side of the nearest casualty. After removing the injured man to safety, Staff Sergeant Rupczyk repeated his performance in rescuing the other two wounded men. The courage and devotion to duty displayed by Staff Sergeant Rupczyk are in keeping with the finest traditions of the military service.”

The unit was eventually pulled off the line and assembled, along with all other Allied airborne troops, into the XVIII Airborne Corps and moved to Sissonne, France.

“They weren’t going to use us until Spring,” he said. The unit was then moved to Belgium to “clean out four or five buildings. They never told us it was a town.”

Just days later, on the night of December 15-16, the Germans offered one last-ditch offensive to break out of an ever-tightening Allied perimeter.

What ensued is known as the Battle of the Bulge.

On December 21, the 517th received an order to move and join the fight in Belgium. “It was cold,” Rupczyk said. “But I got shot the first time we was in there. I wasn’t out there very long.”

On Christmas, the Germans took the city of Manhay.

According to the 517th unit history, “the fall of Manhay... sent schockwaves throughout the Allied Command” because of how the Germans were now free to attack. “Urgent directives descended... demanding that Manhay be retaken at all costs.”

In that effort to re-take Manhay, Rupczyk was wounded.

“I was wounded the 27th of December,” he said, “right in the Battle of the Bulge.”



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But while he claims he wasn't out there very long, a citation awarding him the Silver Star says otherwise.

"Sergeant John Rupczyk, Jr.,... for gallantry in action at Manhay, Belgium, 27 December 1944. When a heavy concentration of supporting artillery fire fell short and into his company, causing casualties and confusion, Sergeant Rupczyk, although himself wounded, quickly organized his squad and moved forward to the objective. When forced to take cover by an enemy machine gun, he single handedly silenced the weapon and killed three of the enemy. Sergeant Rupczyk led his squad through the town, captured or killed all the enemy in his sector, and then placed his squad in a defensive position on the opposite side of the town. Only after this action and after checking with his flank units to make sure that the line was completely held, did he allow himself to be given medical aid."

Rupczyk said he was "hit right in the hand." He explained that the impact "shot the rifle right out of my hand. (It) laid on the ground in three pieces."

"Airborne squads are small, 12 of us in there. About 30 in my platoon," he said.

Four of those men emerged from the Bulge uninjured.

"I was in the hospital until almost Spring," he said. He spent a week in a hospital in Belgium before flying back to England.

Once his wound sufficiently healed, Rupczyk said the war was "coming to an end. (I) didn't have to go back to the front. We were ready to go but then Patton and them crossed the Rhine and they were going so fast that they didn't need us."

"We were going to make a jump on a Sunday morning in Germany," he explained, "and the sandtables they had they had buildings on there. And we asked questions, where are these things. They actually said they didn't know. What it actually was (was) a concentration camp. Thank God I didn't have to see that."

Rupczyk said he was back in France on Victory in Europe, V-E, Day. "The guys just went right to their regular days work," he said.

But there was still a chance the 517th could have to go fight in the Pacific Theater.

"I fought in the Mediterranean Theatre and the European Theatre," he said. "So we had a choice if we wanted to go to the Pacific or stay in Europe. (I) volunteered for the Pacific. The regimental commander said 'No, these guys seen enough.'"

Rupczyk was discharged on November 28, 1945.

"They started kicking guys out in a hurry," he said. "The government didn't want to pay no Army wages. They talked to us. They wanted the guys to sign up and stay in. I'm glad I didn't. Right after that, Korea hit."

Coming back home, there weren't any big celebrations.

"Just came home," he said. "Neighbor said 'Hi' and that's it."

Rupczyk went to work at the Youngsville Furniture Factory and eventually moved to the Jamestown Metal Corp. fabricating steel.

He met his wife, Ann, in 1948 at a square dance in Busti and they were married October 6, 1951. They have two daughters, Nancy, who lives in Russell, and Sandy, who lives in New Jersey.

"He's my hero," Ann said of her husband.

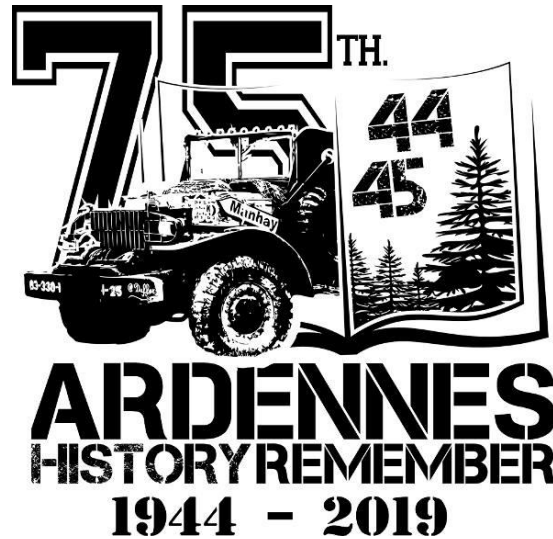


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In addition to the Silver Star, Bronze Star with Oak Leaf Cluster and Purple Heart, Rupczyk was awarded the Good Conduct Medal, American Defense Medal, Victory Medal, E.T.O Ribbon with arrow head and four combat stars, the French Croix and the Belgian Croix.

“You do a lot of things you don’t even think about,” said Rupczyk of his service. “You just do it.... A lot of it is how aggressive you feel. Some guys could do it. Some couldn’t.”

After Operation Dragoon, we can start planning for the 75th anniversary of the victory in the Battle of the Bulge:



Very moving testimony from a WWII Nurse. Please read and share.

#wwii #ww2 #nurse #war #purpleheart



“An eighteen year old boy is carried into the shock ward, and he looks up at me trustingly asking, “How am I doing, nurse?”

I just kiss his forehead and say, “You are doing just fine soldier.”



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Administrivia

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

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- 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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“My God! There we wuz an’ here they wuz.”