

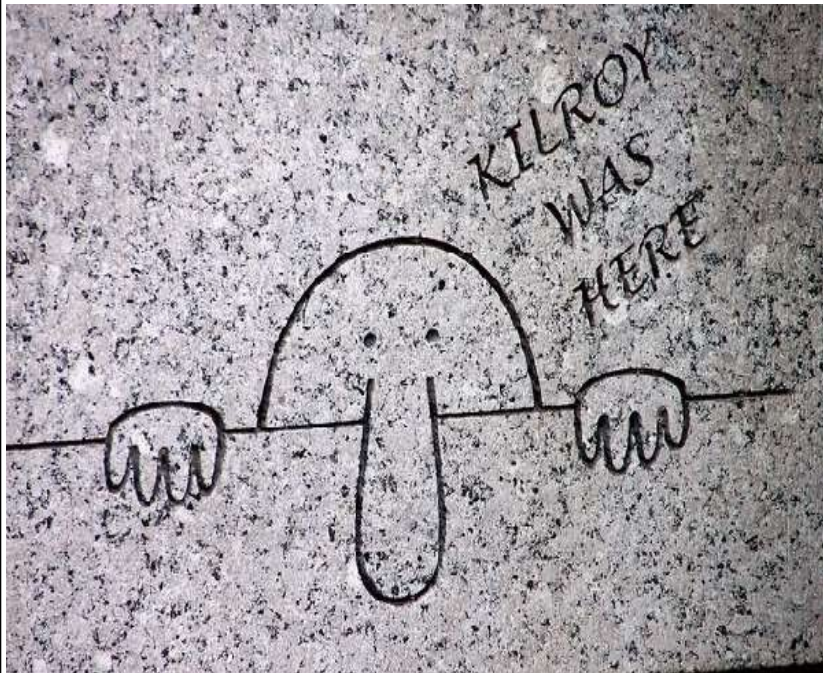
GERONIMO!

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What was the 509th up to during the 4th quarter of 1944, during WWII? (see page 4)



America's First Combat Paratroopers!

OUR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2019-2020



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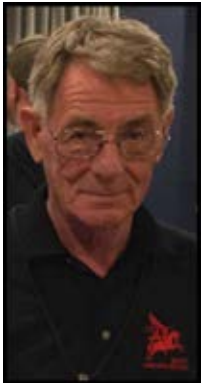
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It is an honor and privilege to serve the 509th Parachute Infantry Association and all its' members!

We, as individuals and as a group, aim to represent all past, present & future paratroopers while serving on this board.

Thank you all for your time, effort, and dedication to the Association!



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Kilroy Was Here!

He is engraved in stone in the National War Memorial in Washington, DC- back in a small alcove where very few people have seen it. For the WWII generation, this will bring back memories. For you younger folks, it's a bit of trivia that is a part of our American history. Anyone born in 1913 to about 1950, is familiar with Kilroy. No one knew why he was so well known- but everybody seemed to get into it.

So who was Kilroy?

In 1946 the American Transit Association, through its radio program, "Speak to America," sponsored a nationwide contest to find the real Kilroy, offering a prize of a real trolley car to the person who could prove himself to be the genuine article. Almost 40 men stepped forward to make that claim, but only James Kilroy from Halifax, Massachusetts, had evidence of his identity.

'Kilroy' was a 46-year old shipyard worker during the war who worked as a checker at the Fore River Shipyard in Quincy. His job was to go around and check on the number of rivets completed. Riveters were on piecework and got paid by the rivet. He would count a block of rivets and put a check mark in semi-waxed lumber chalk, so the rivets wouldn't be counted twice. When Kilroy went off duty, the riveters would erase the mark.

Later on, an off-shift inspector would come through and count the rivets a second time, resulting in double pay for the riveters.

One day Kilroy's boss called him into his office. The foreman was upset about all the wages being paid to riveters, and asked him to investigate. It was then he realized what had been going on. The tight spaces he had to crawl in to check the rivets didn't lend themselves to lugging around a paint can and brush, so Kilroy decided to stick with the waxy chalk. He continued to put his check mark on each job he inspected, but added 'KILROY WAS HERE' in king-sized letters next to the check, and eventually added the sketch of the chap with the long nose peering over the fence and that became part of the Kilroy message.

Once he did that, the riveters stopped trying to wipe away his marks. Ordinarily the rivets and chalk marks would have been covered up with paint. With the war on, however, ships were leaving the Quincy Yard so fast that there wasn't time to paint them. As a result, Kilroy's inspection "trademark" was seen by thousands of servicemen who boarded the troopships the yard produced.

His message apparently rang a bell with the servicemen, because they picked it up and spread it all over Europe and the South Pacific.

Before war's end, "Kilroy" had been here, there, and everywhere on the long hauls to Berlin and Tokyo. To the troops outbound in those ships, however, he was a complete mystery; all they knew for sure was that someone named Kilroy had "been there first." As a joke, U.S. servicemen began placing the graffiti wherever they landed, claiming it was already there when they arrived.

Kilroy became the U.S. super-GI who had always "already been" wherever GIs went. It became a challenge to place the logo in the most unlikely places imaginable (it is said to be atop Mt. Everest, the Statue of Liberty, the underside of the Arc de Triumphant, and even scrawled in the dust on the moon.

As the war went on, the legend grew. Underwater demolition teams routinely sneaked ashore on Japanese-held islands in the Pacific to map the terrain for coming invasions by U.S. troops (and thus, presumably, were = the first GI's there). On one occasion, however, they reported seeing enemy troops painting over the Kilroy logo!

In 1945, an outhouse was built for the exclusive use of Roosevelt, Stalin, and Churchill at the Potsdam conference. Its' first occupant was Stalin, who emerged and asked his aide (in Russian), "Who is Kilroy?"

To help prove his authenticity in 1946, James Kilroy brought along officials from the shipyard and some of the riveters. He won the trolley car, which he gave to his nine children as a Christmas gift and set it up as a playhouse in the Kilroy yard in Halifax, Massachusetts.

And The Tradition Continues...

EVEN Outside Osama Bin Laden's House!

509th in Action September - December 1944

02 Sep 44 - Cleared area vicinity La Turbia

08 Sep 44 - Pushed through Menton to Italian Border assigned defensive positions in the Maritime Alps along the Franco-Italian border

14 Sep 44 - Participation credit ends for Southern France Campaign

01 Nov 44 - Relieved from assignment to 5th Army and assigned to ETO effective 01 Nov 44 - per AG 370.5/530 C-O from HQ NATO, USA, APO 534 dated 29 Oct 44

22 Nov 44 - Relieved from assignment to Sixth Army Group and assigned to XVIII Corps (Airborne) effective 22 Nov 44 - per HQ, ETO, APO 887 dated 4 Dec 44

Orders to proceed by truck and rail to Villers-Cotterets, France northeast of Paris. Lt. Orval Webb, convoy commander and Maj. Tomasik, train commander.

22 Nov 44 - 509th PIB Attached to 101st Airborne Division

28 Nov 44 - 101st Airborne Division (with 509th PIB attached) withdrew to France for rehabilitation

Doc Alden rejoins the 509th PIB as a result trading surgeons

01 Dec 44 - 509th PIB Will be disbanded at the earliest practicable date at ETO. Personnel rendered surplus by this action will be absorbed within the replacement system and reflected in future requisitions - per AG 322 (29 Nov 44) OB-I-GNGCT-M dated 01 Dec 44

14 Dec 44 - 509th PIB Received battle participation awards for Algeria-French Morocco, Tunisia, Naples-Foggia, Rome-Arno, Southern France, Rhineland, Central Europe - per GO #53 HQ 101st Airborne Division, APO 472 dated 14 Dec 44

16 Dec 44 - Participation credit begins for Ardennes-Alsace Campaign. Germans begin counter attack in Operation HERBSTNEBEL (Autumn Fog)

17 Dec 44 - 101st Airborne Division (with 509th PIB attached) released from reserve to move to the Ardennes to counter the German offensive

18 Dec 44 - 101st Airborne Division entered Belgium

18 Dec 44 - 509th PIB Detached from 101st Airborne Division

21 Dec 44 - Shortly before midnight, Major Edmund J. Tomasik, Commander 509th PIB, answers phone call from SHAEF HQ in Versailles, France and receives orders to move out immediately, caller said, "We are sending trucks to for your battalion in one hour, be prepared to move out for the Ardennes with your entire force at that time." Major Tomasik then called over to Epernay where Captain Ernest T. "Bud" Seigel, Commander A Company, was billeted. Captain Seigel had already been alerted by SHAEF HQ. Soldiers were awoken and ready to depart when the trucks arrived. Lt. Dan DeLeo and Doc Alden depart for Manhay, Belgium as advance party. Several stops were made on the way to Bastogne. At one checkpoint orders changed and the 509th was ordered to proceed to Manhay, Belgium.

509th in Action September - December 1944

22 Dec 44 - 0645 hrs the 509th PIB (690 Troopers) moved out for Manhay, Belgium.

22 Dec 44 - Lt. Dan DeLeo and Doc Alden arrives in Manhay, Belgium as advance party and reports to General Rose, CG 3rd Armored Division. BN Assembly Area is established in Manhay. On the way into town they drive over two enemy parachutes. They captured a female spy who had parachuted in the night before.

22 Dec 44 - Lt. Dan DeLeo drives to XVIII Airborne Corps HQ to obtain maps, encounters German patrol and is seriously wounded.

22 Dec 44 - Major Tomasik reports to General Rose and is directed that A, B, C, Companies of the 509th PIB are task organized under Task Forces of the 3rd Armored Division. BN CP and BN Aid Station (small but sturdy house) are to be established in Erezee, Belgium.

23 Dec 44 - Lt Dan DeLeo while seriously wounded is picked up by a friendly Infantry patrol.

23 Dec 44 - One platoon of A Co 509th PIB (not sure which platoon this was) clears enemy from high ground southwest of Soy, Belgium and holds against several counter attacks.

23 Dec 44 - B Company 509th PIB sends out patrols to Faozel and Hormont.

23 Dec 44 - C Co 509th PIB loads onto trucks and moves out south along Route 15 to the strategic crossroads (crossroad if in German hands would allow them to attack North and West) at (576853) Baraque de Fraiture, Belgium to meet the 2nd SS Panzer moving north toward Liege, Belgium. At what became known as Parker Crossroads, Maj. Arthur Parker an artillery officer who had arrived on 19 December with three 105 mm howitzers with orders to establish a roadblock to protect the supply route to St. Vith. Maj. Parker collected stragglers coming from St. Vith and had been reinforced with 11 tanks from 3rd Armored Division. Maj. Parker was seriously wounded on the 22nd and command was passed to Maj. Elliott Goldstein, 589th Artillery when the 58th Panzer Korps attacked the crossroads multiple times. Maj. Goldsteins Force had exhausted much of its manpower and ammunition when C Co 509th PIB arrived.

23 Dec 44 - GERMANS - the 7th SS Panzer Kompanie (had Panzer IV's) was attached to II "Der Fuehrer" and an assault gun company to III "Der Fuehrer", and given the task of seizing the important crossroads at Baraque de Fraiture. - "The Story of Das Reich Panzers" by Miles Kroffus, AFV News, January 1987

23 Dec 44 - As the C Co 509th PIB Commander Lt. Nick Martinez and the 1st Sgt approached the crossroads they began receiving fire at 400 yards.

23 Dec 44 - "1135 hours. Remainder of 2nd Platoon with Co. Hq. moved forward to support Lt. Martinez and establish CP near road junction." - C Co Journal

23 Dec 44 - "1st platoon under Staff Sergeant William F. Withem moved to position on E side of woods at road junction." - C Co Journal

23 Dec 44 - Bob Halvorson, 2nd Plt. C Co 509th PIB recalls " The Krauts opened up on us before we got to the crossroads. We had to cross an open field before we could get to the building where these guys were holed up. The Krauts were shooting into the field. We finally got in amongst the buildings."

509th in Action September - December 1944

23 Dec 44 - 2nd Platoon C Co established CP in stone house southwest of Parker Crossroads.

23 Dec 44 - Lt. Chandler, 3rd Platoon Leader C Co moved toward Route 15 with the mission to drive the enemy back from attempting to encircle the main line of defense. 3rd Platoon moved toward the woods bordering the highway firing as they advanced. The enemy returned fire. Sheldon Schoodmaker was one of the machine gunners laying fire, firing from the hip as he advanced. 3rd Platoon also received support from a light tank. 3rd Platoon C Co emerged from the woods and crossed the road.

23 Dec 44 - 1st Plt. C Co 509th PIB was in reserve.

23 Dec 44 - On the opposite flank, C Co 509th PIB learned that the roadblock was being overrun. C Co 509th PIB quickly re-crossed the road, one was killed and another wounded.

23 Dec 44 - Lt. Chandler, 3rd Platoon Leader C Co directed fire down the road to prevent its use by the enemy.

23 Dec 44 - "1600 hrs. Heavy artillery barrage on all positions with concentration on Co. CP lasting until 1630 hrs. Lt. Rose wounded during barrage with several other men." - C Co Journal

23 Dec 44 - GERMANS - 1620 hrs. Ostuf. Gresiak in Panzer Tank #701 led eight Panzer IV's north to the crossroads just after 1620, they fought a platoon of Sherman's from the U.S. 3rd Armored Division, knocking out 2 Sherman's and losing 2 Panzers IV's to the Sherman's and 2 more Panzer IV's to a 105 mm howitzer. - "The Story of Das Reich Panzers" by Miles Kroghus, AFV News, January 1987

23 Dec 44 - "1630 Hrs. Counterattack by estimated enemy battalion started, supported by MG and artillery fire, lasting until 1730 hrs. All fire on Co. CP ceased at 1730 hrs. Contact between CP and 1st and 3rd Platoons lost." - C Co Journal

23 Dec 44 - GERMANS - 1800 hrs. Some of the Panzers then approached from the east, finished off the Sherman's, and overran the the crossroads by 1800. Ostuf. Gesiak's company claimed a total of 17 armor kills for the day. - "The Story of Das Reich Panzers" by Miles Kroghus, AFV News, January 1987

23 Dec 44 - The enemy began a counterattack after night fall north along Route 15 with at least one tiger tank firing at point blank range. By this time other units had already pulled out and C Co 509th PIB found themselves alone and low on ammo so they began pulling back along Route 15 toward Manhay, Belgium.

23 Dec 44 - "1830 Hrs. Platoons set up local defense for antitank gun 800 yards W of road junction to defend against tank moving W." - C Co Journal

23 Dec 44 - " 1840 hrs. AT gun knocked out. Platoons withdrew under fire from tank. 14 men MIA. Total losses: 2 killed, 4 wounded, 43 MIA." - C Co Journal

23 Dec 44 - Pfc. Arnold E. Johnson, C Co 509th PIB KIA

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Major Olin F. Brewster recounts the events at Parker Crossroads and the formation of Brewster Task Force, "The roadblock up at the Crossroads was being badly mauled and Lt. Col. Richardson sent me up there to see what the situation was. When I got up there in the late afternoon I found that the Crossroads had been completely wiped out. A few of the men were trying to hold the line. One of them was Lt. Robert Bryan of I Company, 32nd. I talked with him and he told me he had lost all five of his tanks when the Crossroad was overrun. When I called Lt. Col. Richardson and told him that the Crossroads had been overrun, He called A Company of the 509 Paratroop Regiment that had been attached to the 3 AD, and also the remainder of tanks of H Company, 3rd Battalion, 32nd Regiment, which was six M-4 Sherman's. When I got back to Manhay, Lt. Col. Richardson had assembled them and told us our orders were to retake the Crossroads. "

23 Dec 44 - The other two platoons from A Co 509th PIB with additional attachment from HQ 509th PIB departs at 1615 and arrives at 1745 in Manhay, Belgium where they report to Lt. Col. Walter B. Richardson, Commander, 1st Bn. 32nd Armored Infantry Regiment, Task Force Y, Combat Command A, 3rd Armored Division who attaches them to Major Olin F. Brewster's Task Force which included 2nd Section Light Machine Gun Platoon HQ 509th PIB, six M4 Sherman Tanks, one M5 Stuart (which returned to Manhay shortly after starting out), two half tracks, supply trucks and 509th trucks. The Brewster Task Force was sent reinforce C CO 509th PIB who was conducting a stubborn delaying action on the N15 south of Manhay, Belgium.

Major Brewster continues, "We moved out of the Manhay area shortly after dark, and by the way the sunset in December at Manhay just after 4:00 PM. After arriving at the Belle Haie crossroads our lead tank got hit by enemy fire but we were able to repair it and get it back into operation. After moving I decided we could not advance and got permission from Richardson to set up a defensive position in the vicinity of Belle Haie."

23 Dec 44 - 1920 hours the lead M4 Sherman tank in the Brewster Task Force was hit by an antitank grenade. Paratroopers dismounted and screened forward of the tanks as they advanced however dense forests slowed the advance.

23 Dec 44 - 1950 hours A Co 509th PIB reported five unidentified vehicles and sent out a reconnaissance.

23 Dec 44 - 2030 hours Scouts of A Co 509th PIB reported no enemy observed. Brewster Task Force proceeded to checkpoint 5 and A Co 509th PIB supported by two M4 Sherman tanks was sent 500 yards forward to checkpoint 6 (Belle Haie which is 4 miles south of Manhay) where they set up security, laid anti tank mines and sent a patrol to attempt to locate enemy positions.

23 Dec 44 - 2230 hours A Co 509th PIB patrol returns and reports German Tank 300 yards ahead. A Co 509th PIB platoons are deployed 1st on the left (East), 2nd on the right (West) and 3rd in reserve around A Co, 509th CP and tanks. With Parker crossroads in German hands Belle Haie was the next best place to stop German advance north to Liege. (Note: A Co 509th PIB only took two platoons, the LMG platoon and an attachment from HQ 509th PIB so likely the LMG platoon and HQ attachment were called 3rd platoon).

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Major Brewster describes the next days events, "We had no problems the rest of the night of the 23rd, but early in the morning of the 24th. The Germans made a move to come through our position. We had what was considered the poorest location in the world for an armored unit. We were just about on the bottom of a steep hill, but with a cut in the road and the forest on each side, the enemy was channeled down the road, and we were able to stop any advance they tried to make. That morning I did get one Air Force strike of P47s over the Crossroads area, and apparently they did quite a bit of damage."

Major Brewster describes the results of their roadblock, "They ran quite a few reconnaissance vehicles toward us and with the position we had our tanks set up in with the cut in the road we piled up quite a few German vehicles. A German POW reported that the air strike knocked out nine German tanks at the Crossroad, so we knew the Air Force did some damage as we could see smoke coming from the top of the hill."

24 Dec 44 - 1st Justin McCarthy is temporarily in Command of B Company

24 Dec 44 - "At 0010 remainder of B Co moved to Soy. Also at 0010 hours all remaining personnel of the Battalion were equipped as riflemen and committed. This included all service sections and the remainder of C Co. This force consisted of approximately 90 men who furnished security for an artillery unit at Briscole (0.5 North of Sadzot)." - HQ 509th PIB Journal

24 Dec 44 - 3rd Platoon led by Sgt Harry R. Spoeneman followed by the rest of B company cross the Soy-Hotton road to the south and begin to move west paralleling the road proceeding toward Hotton. Units of the 517th also move west on the north side of the road toward Hotton.

24 Dec 44 - B Co 509th after clearing enemy along Soy Hotton road returns to Soy where they repel more enemy attacks. Pvt. George L. Bills is killed in action and 18 German prisoners are captured.

24 Dec 44 - "Dec 24 0020 hrs Tank reports that tread is knocked off and it is under fire of SA (Small Arms), rifle grenades, and that there are two American vehicles with the enemy. Another tank is sent after the first one along with 12 man patrol." - A Co Journal

24 Dec 44 - "0045 hrs. Second tank reports hitting teller mine. Our patrol dispersed the enemy inf., capturing one, killing and wounding several." - A Co Journal

24 Dec 44 - "0110 hrs. Third tank sent down to pull out the wrecked armor. Patrol remains for protection. Enemy activity heard in woods to our front. Enemy tank heard in distance." - A Co Journal

24 Dec 44 - "0145 hrs. Third tank returns pulling one tank, A Co jeep and trailer, and 2-ton truck. Capt. Siegel came up to Task Force Y CP where he remained until noon. He and his driver, Henry Eliszewski had been ambushed and captured by the Germans. Although both men were wounded they managed to escape." - A Co Journal

Lt. Shore with the G Co 517th PIB had been dispatched to find what had happen to a unit in vicinity of Parker Crossroads ran into the 509th and an old friend Lt. Frank Souto. Lt. Shore recalls the following about the 509th "We were fed and spent the night and part of the next morning with the 509th. With daylight a German light tank or weapons carrier came down the road

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(north) toward us and stopped about 300 yards ahead of us. A 509th three man .50 MG squad, emplaced across the road. opened fire. The German vehicle returned the fire and for a while the two units fired continuously. I saw a trooper calmly hop out in the middle of the road and empty his rifle into the tank, then just as calmly return to his position. It took a lot of guts to do it, but he stopped the tank long enough." "A US backup tank opened up and soon put the enemy vehicle on fire. An enemy tank sent a shot toward our own tank and before long many tanks on both sides were firing away. The battle developed into a full scale tank encounter, with the CP right in the middle. The CP drew no fire because Lt. Livingston kept everybody from firing. The enemy tanks were too far away to shoot at with bazookas they had."

24 Dec 44 - 0500 hours, One company of the 509th PIB (probably B Co) arrived in Hotton. The company tried to go east and clear out the houses at the east edge of town, which were still held by the enemy. However, that day the paratroopers did not get out of the town.

24 Dec 44 - "0834 hrs. One enemy tank advanced 200 yds. of CP. Knocked out by our tank." - A Co Journal

24 Dec 44 - "0930 hrs. One enemy tank came down by the knocked out tank. Another one went off into the woods. Enemy inf. attacked in force under heavy fire. Our tanks and SA stopped the inf. with heavy losses and knocked out another tank which burned. Pfc. Jewell Bethel killed. One MG section man wounded." - A Co Journal

24 Dec 44 - "1000 hrs. Enemy attack slowed down due to tank MG and our MG fire" - A Co Journal

24 Dec 44 - 1000 hours more enemy tanks were pushing north, Major Brewster called back to Lt. Col. Richardson in Manhay, "Rich, P-47's are buzzing us. They can do much more." Lt. Col. Richardson relayed to the AAF and the P-47's made the strike.

Lt Shore of G Co 517th PIR describes the strike "When it was decided that all of the enemy tanks were committed, our side called on the P-47's. We all dashed for the cellar. It was explained to me that the Air Corps could hit us as well as the Krauts. But they did a good job, didn't come anywhere near us. We left to return the Headquarters (18th AB Corps) but I took away a lasting memory of this company of 509ers and the tremendous job they were doing."

Major Brewster recounts the arrival of C Co 289th RCT, 75th ID, "In the afternoon of the 24th, I was sent a company of men from the 289th. Infantry Regiment of the 75th. Infantry Division. The Company Commander brought his company up and after I briefed him and gave him orders, He assured me he took no prisoners. He took off across open field that was white as snow. They never made it to the line of departure. I found out later, that was their first day in combat and had never heard a gun fired in anger. If I had known at the time, that the company had not seen combat, I would have given them more instruction and leadership."

24 Dec 44 - 1500 3rd AD sends C Co 289th RCT, 75th ID to conduct an attack in sector south from checkpoint 6.

A Co 509th PIB journal describes what happened with this unit that arrived in their sector. "1530 hrs. Much SA fire."

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24 Dec 44 - "1600 hrs. Right flank C Co. 289th doing well. Left pinned down." - A Co Journal

24 Dec 44 - "1700 hrs. blooded ...Company (C Co 289th RCT) withdraws to A Co (509th PIB) positions ... after suffering heavy losses ...into our defensive setup. General strengthening of our positions." - A Co Journal

(Historical Note: Field Marshal Montgomery had been placed in command of the American First and Ninth Armies in the Northern sector. He was concerned with the 82nd Airborne Divisions bulge in their lines and ordered General Ridgeway, commander XVIII Airborne Corps to withdraw units to the road running from Trois Pontois to Manhay. At 1330 General Ridgeway ordered Division commanders to withdraw to the road by nightfall on the 24th. Most US Commanders were upset with this order)

Major Brewster describes the confusion that began to take place as a result of the decision to withdraw to the Trois Pontois to Manhay road, "The instructions had been coming throughout the day we were going to be relieved and change of orders to withdraw from our roadblock later on in the day of the 24th. Later on in the evening I got orders that there had been some change in orders and I was to hold the roadblock at Belle Haie until further notice.

Major Brewster continues, "I had reported about dark that the enemy had bypassed me on my right flank to the town of Odeine and was crossing the crossroads $\frac{3}{4}$ mile to my rear but I had nothing to protect that crossroad. History will show that the 2nd. SS Panzer Division that I had been holding up with my small Task Force over 24 hours had gotten to my rear and moved into the Manhay area while the seventh and ninth Armored Divisions and the 82nd. Airborne Division was reorganizing a new defensive line and history will show that it was nothing but chaos and confusion took place in the Manhay and Grandmeil area that night of the 24th and the morning of the 25th. Later I got a report that we would hold at all cost. Sometime after midnight I got orders to get out if you can, but don't come straight back to Manhay, try going to Malempre, which I did. "

24 Dec 44 - Brewster Task Force remains in position to protect the withdraw of other units toward Manhay. German Commander Generalleutnant Lammerding advanced his panzers at night fall which to their fortune coincided with the planned allied withdraw. Brewster Task Force was bypassed after being held up for 24 hours. Generalleutnant Lammerding also placed a captured American Sherman Tank in the lead adding to the confusion of other units in charge of road blocks south of town. Manhay was captured by the Germans but instead of heading north to Liege to exploit their success they headed west toward Grandmenil, Erezee, Soy and Hotton to assist German forces on their left flank in breaking through.

24 Dec 44 - "2000 hrs. Word to move back on a minutes notice." - A Co Journal

24 Dec 44 - Capt Doc Alden and driver in an Ambulance arrive at Belle Haie Crossroads. Enemy mortar fire starts as they arrive. Enemy fire lifts and a German command car, arriving at the crossroads is fired upon by another paratrooper who kills the driver and Doc Alden kills the SS Colonel with his Thompson. Doc then loads up five or six stretcher cases and directs the ambulance driver to return to Manhay or if necessary Erezee. Doc Alden stays behind

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behind for about an hour and seeing things are quiet decides to walk back to Manhay.

24 Dec 44 - "2130 hrs. Capt. Alden came in from Manhay. Took out some stretcher cases. Mostly C Co. 289th. How Doc got there and then got out, is a big mystery, but that's Doc Alden for you." - A Co Journal

24 Dec 44 - "2200 hrs. Enemy SA on flank. Patrol sent out to keep rear clear."- A Co Journal

24 Dec 44 - Cpl. Travis J. Russell 509th PIB killed in action

24 Dec 44 - GERMANS - 2200 hrs. US 7th Armored Division tanks and other vehicles were retreating NW of B. de Fraiture to Manhay crossroads. 4th SS Panzer Kompanie, Hscha. Franz Frauscher in Panther #431 and another Panther from his platoon slipped unnoticed into the American column using the cover of darkness. On the ascending S curve of Highway N15 just south of town, the Panthers swung out of line and shot up the column and some partially dug-in Sherman's, scattering the American armor in confusion. Nine Sherman's were destroyed. - "The Story of Das Reich Panzers" by Miles Kroghus, AFV News, January 1987

24 Dec 44 - Doc Alden arrives in Manhay after making the lonely trek from the Belle Haie Crossroads. As he reaches the first building he hears tanks approaching at high speed. Closer they are seen to be American. Moments later a German 88mm gun fires and explodes among the American Tanks heading north out of town to take up positions north of Manhay. A tank battle erupted in town. Doc Alden made his way out of town to the west toward Erezee. At Grandmenil he caught a ride the rest of the way to Erezee arriving about 2345.

(Historical Note: The 2nd SS Panzer takes Manhay and begins its move west but is stopped by a lone Soldier from the 75th Infantry Division who had never fired a shot in anger. As tanks approached his outpost 200 yards west on Manhay he fires a bazooka at tracks of the lead tank which comes to a stop sideways across the road. Unable to bypass, the 2nd SS Panzer Division column returns to Manhay to prevent being caught in the open. Later eight field artillery battalions fire on Manhay forcing the Germans to withdrawal. Manhay is once again in American control.)

25 Dec 44 - "0020 hrs. Enemy tank came down road and due to outpost of C Co 289th RCT not being in position was able to shell the second platoon CP, wounding seven men." - A Co Journal

25 Dec 44 - "0050 hrs. Patrol of 8 men from third platoon A Co 509th sent down to investigate enemy SA on our right." - A Co Journal

25 Dec 44 - "0130 hrs. Patrol returned and reported enemy on both flanks and in rear. No action to front." - A Co Journal

25 Dec 44 - "0200 hrs. Enemy working in on all sides and rear. German motorcyclist killed outside our CP." - A Co Journal

Major Brewster briefly describes the withdraw, "When I pulled out on the morning of the 25th. I started out with six tanks, and when I turned east to go to Malempre, I had my lead tank knocked out by a enemy tank judging from the projectile. Then the enemy armor moved in be-

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hind me and got my two rear tanks, which left me with three medium tanks at my disposal. The road was blocked in the front and the rear and the terrain was not suitable for cross-country maneuver. So it was agreed wisely that we should destroy the three remaining tanks, one 2 1/2 ton, two 3/4 ton trucks and the troops walked out on foot safely. I did not make it to Malempre but chose to come out on foot with the Colonel's permission. I went out on foot and got all the troops out of there and ended up in Bra early Christmas morning of the 25th. I made contact with the Regimental Task Force of the 82nd. Airborne Division there."

25 Dec 44 - "0400 hrs. A Co, minus one platoon held position across road until 0400 hrs when their positions became untenable as a result of an enemy mechanized flanking action that overran Manhay. Given the order to withdraw toward northeast, mounted tanks under Major Brewster and proceeded to Malempre. Ordered to get out the best way we can. We were told not to return to checkpoint 1 (Manhay). We were to head N then E. Four Germans killed 30 yards from our CP. They are trying to close in." - A Co Journal

25 Dec 44 - "0415 hrs. Moving out. Inf. on both sides of column. Being shelled by air bursts and HE. No casualties." - A Co Journal

25 Dec 44 - "0500 hrs. Enemy roadblock at the town of Malempre. We are trying to break thru with Inf. and tank." - A Co Journal

25 Dec 44 - "0530 hrs. Have decided for A Co. (509th) and C Co. (289th) to try to bypass town. Tanks are going to try to smash thru." - A Co Journal

25 Dec 44 - "0600 hrs. We are bypassing town. Tanks are still fighting. Pfc. Russell P. Cook volunteered to stay with wounded. Three more men joined the six already on the truck." - A Co Journal

"Major Brewster ordered the force to proceed by foot across country to our lines. It was necessary to abandon 5 tanks, 1 half track, 1 two ton truck and 1 jeep, including six wounded men loaded on the truck who were litter cases. Co. proceeded to friendly lines vicinity Bra with one PW." - HQ 509th PIB Journal

The wounded left on the trucks were: Clyde D. Baker (A Co), Glenford Brown, Robert E. Grover, William J. Hiller, Felix B. Marsh, Roman L. Miewiengbowski, Joseph C. Mangialomini (A Co), Teddy M. Abrams, Albert Castro, Paul L. Burns, Eugene C. Jordan. Pfc. Russell P. Cook (A Co) stayed behind to tend to them.

25 Dec 44 - Pfc. Eugene C. Jordan died of wounds

25 Dec 44 - "B Co and one platoon of A Co launched, with other friendly units, attack to restore road from town of Soy to Hotton. Mission accomplished. B Co set up defense to S and W of Soy." - HQ 509th PIB Journal

25 Dec 44 - 0930, the 509th PIB (Probably B Co) arrived from the east, making contact with the company in the town of Hotton.

25 Dec 44 - Remnants of two platoons from A Company, 2nd Section HQ LMG Platoon and an attachment of HQ 509th returns to Erezee, Belgium and Battalion control. 1st Lt Hoyt

509th in Action September - December 1944

Livingston is put in charge of A Co after Capt Bud Seigel was wounded.

25 Dec 44 - B Company and one platoon from A Company 509th PIB return from Soy, Belgium to Erezee, Belgium and return to Battalion control.

25 Dec 44 - Remnants of C Company from Parker Crossroads returns to Erezee and Battalion control. Lt. Harry Pritchett takes command of C Company

25 Dec 44 - C Company 509th PIB is sent to a hill near the town of Clerheid, Belgium and set up defensive perimeter along with 2nd Platoon B Company 290th Infantry 75th Infantry Division. After arriving in town 17 M4 Sherman tanks arrive and two tanks are attached to C Co 509th PIB.

26 Dec 44 - "1000 hrs. Pvt. Hosking wounded in the left hand and leg by accidental discharge of .45 pistol." - B Co Journal

26 Dec 44 - Doc Alden is tending his wounded in the Battalion Aid Station in the town of Erezee, Belgium when he notices an American half track driving up the road. Doc Alden looks back and notices the distinctive coal bucket helmets of Germans sticking up. He calls to his Medics to grab their weapons and they head out into the street to attack the 14 SS Grenadiers as they pile out of the half track. Most were killed and a few were captured. One of the medics fired a bazooka into the half track to ensure it could not escape. About 20 minutes later Doc Alden hears a tank coming up the same road. This time it was an American Sherman Tank with occupants unknown. Doc Alden again calls on his Medics to grab their weapons and take up positions in the street. The Medic with the bazooka fires a round into the track causing the tank to spin and come to a halt. Slowly the hatch opens and out come Americans of the 3rd Armored Division. The tankers were hot but calmed down a bit when they heard about the SS ruse that took place only moments before. Again Doc Alden and his medics returned to their aid station only to be interrupted with heavy bursts of fire on the south side of Erezee. Doc and the Medics once again grabbed their weapons and moved to the sound of the fire. An SS Company was attacking and a fierce fire fight erupted. Major Tomasik dispatched several platoons and the SS Company was quickly driven off to the south. The platoons of the 509th continued the pursuit of the SS for about a mile. Doc Alden moved forward with them to provide aid to the wounded if necessary. The SS finally halted and took up defensive positions. Another fierce firefight took place in the woods between the platoons of the 509th and what they later discovered to be elements of the 12 SS (Hitler Jugend) Division. Doc Alden returned fire with his Thompson from behind a tree at enemy less than 50 yards to his front. As the 509th pushed forward the enemy line broke, six wounded SS lying in the snow. The 509ers and pressed past them about 40 yards when two grenades thrown by some of the wounded exploded behind them. The 509ers returned to them and killed them where they laid. When the fighting subsided Doc Alden returned to his Battalion Aid Station.

26 Dec 44 - With all companies under the 509th control. The 509th PIB is designated as 3rd Armored Divisions mobile reserve. Major Tomasik is told by General Rose not to commit his forces under any circumstances without his permission.

28 Dec 44 - 0130 hrs 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 25th SS Panzer Grenadier Regiment attack

509th in Action September - December 1944

Sadzot, Belgium which was occupied by B Company 87th Mortar Battalion armed with 4.2 inch mortars. 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 289th Infantry 75th Division was suppose to be in position in the woods farther south of Sadzot.

28 Dec 44 - At 0130 hrs Doc Alden is awoken by heavy fighting, once outside he saw about a mile to the southeast the town of Sadzot, Belgium buildings burning illuminating the night sky and heard heavy machine gun fire and explosions.

28 Dec 44 - William DeChastain, Leon Mimms, and several other 509ers were manning the roadblock at the intersection of Erezee - Grandmanil - Sadzot.

28 Dec 44 - Major Tomasik also awakes to the fighting and contacts 1st Lt Justin McCarthy who is positioned closer to the fighting. Realizing the desperate situation and threat he attempts to contact General Rose. Unable to make contact, Major Tomasik risking court-martial decides to commit the 509th PIB to the fight to prevent the 25th SS Grenadiers from gaining control of the Erezee - Manhay road. Major Tomasik directs A Company to attack south on the west side of town, C Company to attack south on the east side of town and B Company would be in reserve but would proceed South down the road to Sadzot. HQ platoons were attached to the companies for the attack. Tank Destroyers also joins in the attack.

28 Dec 44 - "0230 hrs. Company alerted. Much small arms fire around the town of Sadzot. There are three houses afire in the town." - A Co Journal

28 Dec 44 - "0300 hrs. The 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion was given the order to move out to stop enemy thrust through the MLR (Main Line of Resistance)." - 509th S3 report

28 Dec 44 - "0335 Hours A Company skirted Sadzot to the right with the intention of linking up with C Company which in the meantime attacked toward Sadzot to the left, with one platoon of B Co. in reserve." - 509th S3 report

28 Dec 44 - "0400 hours one platoon of three light tanks was in support of this force" - 509th S3 report

28 Dec 44 - "0400 hrs. We have just been told that we will move out at 0435 hrs. to try to flank the town from the south. C Co. will come in from the north. The SCR 300 will be used for communications." - A Co Journal

28 Dec 44 - Pfc. Dick Fisco, Scout Platoon, HQ 509th PIB is attached to C Co. Recalls ammo is collected and redistributed leaving him 70 rounds of ammo for his Thompson and having given up six 30 round magazines. Capt. Jessie Walls, C Co Commander directs Pfc Fisco to be lead scout for his company. Pfc. Fisco guides company down hill and across Erezee - Manhay road where B Co was taking up positions in the ditch as the Co in reserve. He noted there were two tank destroyers and 5 light tanks in support. Coming across a light tank that had been disabled in initial fighting, Pfc. Fisco climbs on and fires the remaining ammo in the machine gun mounted on top. As he moved forward again he found a hand sticking out of the ground, it was Soldier from B Co 87th Mortar Bn and next to him another who had hidden as their position was overrun.

28 Dec 44 - "0437 hours report received that A Company was making enemy contact." - 509th S3 report

509th in Action September - December 1944

28 Dec 44 - "0500 hours C Co. and A Co. had joined forces and were engaged in intensive fire-fight. After gaining positions south of Sadzot, the Bn. then cleared the town fighting house to house and continued holding positions south of Sadzot until the end of the 28th. The number of PW's totaled 49 and the number of known enemy dead 289." - 509th S3 report

28 Dec 44 - "0545 hrs. Being fired on by enemy MG on the outskirts of Sadzot. First Platoon returning fire and have forced enemy to fall back with their MG." - A Co Journal

28 Dec 44 - "0630 hrs. Have made contact with TDs to our left. C Co. reports that they are in a draw just north of the town." - C Co Journal

28 Dec 44 - Pfc. Fisco reached a position where a shallow gully runs along a narrow trail. Capt. Walls called to Fisco, "Fisco, I'm making you Sergeant as of today. Take us in." C Co was on Fisco's right at this point and directed C Co to shift to his left. As he approached the woods, four M5 light tanks arrived, he directed two of them to Capt. Walls and told the other two to bound forward in front and push through the woods. Sgt. Fisco recalls at this point seeing the C Co Platoon Sergeant, S/Sgt. William F. 'Bill' Withem killed instantly about 75 feet to his left. Later one of the light tanks comes to a stop on a slight hill, driver raises hatch and is killed instantly. The Germans begin a counterattack, Sgt. Fisco unloads one clip and moves right to a new position while reloading and feels something hit him in the elbow. Lt. Viteritto, from behind him, "Fisco, you're hit" he answered, "I know. In the left elbow." Another 509er helped him back and met a medic Harold Austin who was not far behind. The Medic got him some morphine and took him back to the Battalion Aid Station. The bullet had traveled about 8 inches along his arm to the elbow.

28 Dec 44 - "0700 hrs. Making plans to assault Sadzot. Moving our 2nd Pl. up on the west side of town so they can give supporting fire on the attack. 3 Pl. protecting our rear. 1st Pl. to make the attack with two TDs. Lt Jack Darden to be in charge of the assault." - A Co Journal

28 Dec 44 - "0815 hrs. TDs moving into town followed by 1st Pl. Enemy have guns set up at every house. Much small arms fire." - A Co Journal

28 Dec 44 - 0830 hrs. TDs are firing into every house and the 1st Pl. are mopping up. Enemy putting up stiff resistance, but TDs are too much for them." - A Co Journal

28 Dec 44 - "0930 hrs. Town just about cleared. Have taken about 35 PWs. Have killed at least 60 enemy. Our casualties were: Sgt. Steve D. Justice and Pfc. Carroll E. Herndon, KIA; Pvt. Henry W. Wampler, Percy J. Webre, Tony D. Baltazar, David G. Ayers, WIA." - A Co Journal

28 Dec 44 - "1000 hrs. Setting a defense up on outskirts of town. C Company moving up on left flank of town to take up positions." - A Co Journal

28 Dec 44 - "1200 hrs. Receiving heavy shelling from enemy." - A Co Journal

"Results of our operations: Prevented enemy counterattack in strength estimated to be two battalions from gaining road, and held positions south of Sadzot, sending 'mopping up' patrols into area west of our positions." - 509th S3 report

28 Dec 44 - "1500 hrs. Alerted to move forward to clear woods south and west of town. The plan is to try to close the gap that exists in the line between to battalions just south of us." - A Co Journal

509th in Action September - December 1944

(Historical note: The two battalions south of Sadzot are the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 289th Infantry 75th Infantry Division)

28 Dec 44 - "1800 hrs. Plans have been changed. We will jump off in the morning at 0800 hrs. accompanied by C Co. and one Pl. of B Co. Another Inf. Battalion (2nd Battalion 112th Infantry) will try to fill the gap tonight. Enemy still shelling our positions. Setting up a very tight defense for the night. More tanks have been brought up." - A Co Journal

28 Dec 44 - S/Sgt. William F. Withem, 1st Platoon Leader, C Company, 509th PIB killed in action

29 Dec 44 - "Thinking the gap was effectively closed, General Hickey ordered the 509th to attack southeast from Sadzot with the trail toward La Foss as a right boundary. This attack began early on the morning of 29 December supported by some light tanks of Richardson's force." - 3rd Armored report

29 Dec 44 - Two platoons from B Co and demolitions platoon from HQ arrive in trucks and occupy positions A Co and C Co vacated in their move southeast.

29 Dec 44 - 0845 hrs. A Co and C Co with two light tanks having moved south begins to swing east.

29 Dec 44 - 0915 hrs. A Co and C Co with two light tanks encounter enemy fire. In addition to the small arms and machine gun fire, the Germans were hitting them with screaming meemies (rocket artillery)

29 Dec 44 - "0915 hrs. We were being shelled by heavy stuff. The shells are breaking in the trees. Staff Sergeant Stanley F. Howaniak and Pfc. French C. McClung wounded. We are bringing the tanks up. Tanks are having trouble getting through trees. Enemy still shelling us and casualties mounting." - A Co Journal

29 Dec 44 - Tank finally makes it into position and rakes enemy positions with .50 cal fire.

29 Dec 44 - "1130 hrs. Enemy throwing a counterattack and we are forced to fall back about 150 yards to better defensive position. Have formed a line and laying down very strong small arms fire. Enemy halted. - A Co Journal

29 Dec 44 - "1500 hrs. One of our light tanks knocked out. Enemy have broken and fallen back." - A Co Journal

29 Dec 44 - "1700 hrs. Plans are to comb the woods tonight using A Co, C Co and one platoon of B Co. Other troops are to be on our right. We are to move south and east until we hit friendly troops 2500 yards forward. Have left Sadzot heading south. We have been stopped by Baker. Still waiting to go forward. Most of the men haven't eaten anything since yesterday. Moving forward again.

29 Dec 44 - "1800 hrs. the Bn. after clearing area south of Sadzot, moved Co. A and Co. C to new positions, with one Co. of 83rd Recon. Bn. on left. An attack was launched to the east so that the area was cleared of enemy troops by 0100 hours. The total enemy casualties is estimated to be 289 (killed) for the period. - 509th Bn daily report

509th in Action September - December 1944

29 Dec 44 - Pvt. Gaines L. Morgan 509th PIB killed in action

30 Dec 44 - "0100 hrs. Have reached large clearing and no enemy sighted as yet. Have sent patrols out to the south and west. Patrols in and report is negative. Observe red tracers being fired into the air forward of us. Baker radios for us to turn east for 800 yards as we will hit a road. Have hit road and are on our way in. Have reached our old bivouac area. First hot food in two days. Moving into buildings in the town of Erezee. Have sent 15 men to the hospital today with frost bitten feet. Men are in poor condition." - A Co Journal

30 Dec 44 - B Co and HQ Demolitions Platoon remain in defensive positions south of Sadzot.

30 Dec 44 - "2322 hrs. Total casualties; 1 enlisted man frozen feet; 1 enlisted man concussion; 1 enlisted man KIA." - A Co Journal

30 Dec 44 - Pvt. John E. Roediger Jr., 509th PIB killed in action

31 Dec 44 - Pfc. John M. Van Ess Jr., 509th PIB killed in action

31 Dec 44 - Pvt. Percy J. Webre ,A Co 509th PIB killed in action

The John C. "Pappy" DeVanie Story

Provided by June Houseman, Pappy's Daughter



left to right - Mike Monroe, incoming President of the Association; Tryggvi Larum, Association artist and recipient of the OSM from earlier this year; John DeVanie, WWII Veteran and Past 509th PIA President; SFC Frank Notaro, 1-509th PIR; and Barry Simpson, 509th PIA Treasurer

NAME: John C. DeVanie

ASN: 38487773

PLACE OF BIRTH: Salisbury, MD

DATE OF BIRTH: June 12, 1924

DATES OF SERVICE: 00 Jun 1943 to 00 Sep 1945

UNIT ASSIGNED: A Company, 509th PIB
HHC 509th PIB (Pathfinders)

CAMPAIGNS: Anzio, Rome-Arno, Southern France

AWARDS: Combat Infantryman Badge, Parachutist Badge with one Combat Jump Star, Purple Heart Medal, WWII Victory Medal, EAME Campaign Medal, Distinguished Unit Citation, National Infantry Association awards the Order of Saint Maurice CIVIS

The John C. "Pappy" DeVanie Story

SUMMARY OF SERVICE:

Was attending Louisiana State University for 2 1/2 years when drafted

00 Jun 1943 - Draft into the Army. Reported to the Infantry Replacement Training Center at Camp Fannin, Tyler, TX. DaVanie thought the Infiltration Course was tough until he did the course at Fort Benning.

Recruiters for the Paratroops asked for volunteers while at Camp Fannin, DaVanie, Bob Grover, De Laca, and Everet Furr all volunteered together.

DeVanie remembers the tough infiltration course at Fort Benning, GA. It was a muddy ditch with live fire snapping within a foot or so, when he got up at the end of the course the officer checked his muzzle, found it caked in mud so he made him do it all over again. DeVaine also remembers the drag training for parachutes where they would put you in a harness with a parachute and have you lay down in front of a fan. You were then expected to roll up on your feet and collapse your canopy. He spent Christmas 1943 at Fort Benning, GA.

00 Jan 1944 - DeVanie was sent to Fort Meade, MD for two to three days then went to Newport News, VA to board ships at the POE. There were about 100 ships in the convoy. DeVanie was on a Merchant Marine Ship with 500 on board, seas were rough and there were many practice drills. The ship behind them was dive bombed, all were called to prepare to abandon ship and then stood down after the attack was over.

The ship docked late in the late afternoon in Naples, Italy. DeVanie was sent to Piscinola, Italy and reported in. That night he and others were trucked to Anzio, Italy along the beach. There he was assigned to A Co 509th PIB and was trucked forward and assigned to a foxhole. A week later DeVanie was wounded in the leg while crossing a field. Joe Hogan, a Medic, took him to the Battalion Aid Station where Doc Alden told him "hell you ain't hurt"

17-Jul 1944 - SO #51 Pvt. John C. DeVanie 38487773 Placed on Temporary Duty with Radar School (Pathfinder)

Lt. Dan DeLeo was the Pathfinder Leader, they performed several practice jumps then went to Palermo, Sicily to receive training on Pathfinder equipment and how to jump it. They performed three to four jumps a day. A Lt. Jackson while going through the training decided that he would try to jump the 6V battery that was used to power the Holiphane Lamps by tying a rope to it wrapping it around his hand and dragging the battery out the door. Naturally the weight of the battery caused the rope to cinch around his hand and strip the flesh and muscle from his hand. The Lt. was taken to the medics and never seen again. After training was complete they returned to areas around Rome, Italy for final preparations for the invasion of Southern France.

The John C. "Pappy" DeVanie Story

15 Aug 1944 - Pvt. John DeVanie and Pathfinder Team jumped into Southern France from Pathfinder Plane 1. Listed on page 77 in the book "American Airborne Pathfinders in World War II" by Jeff Moran

Pvt. John DeVanie HHC 509th PIBPathfinder jumped into Southern France. Listed on page 11 in the book "First Airborne Task Force" by Michel De Trez

15 Aug 1944 - (Monday) Pathfinder Teams boarded aircraft around midnight and jumped around 0400 in the morning from Battalion Pathfinder Plane 1.

(This list of Pathfinders may or may not be correct. Numbers indicate stick order if known)

1 - 1st Lt. Dan A. DeLeo	Pathfinder Team Team Leader
2 - Pvt. Charles MacDonald	Eureka Operator
3 - Pvt. John C. DeVanie	
Pvt. Charles A. Petty	
Pvt. Armstad	
Pvt. Charles O. Baum	
Pvt. Culture	
Pvt. Theodore R. Houghton	
Sgt. Steve Justice	
Pvt. Warren McGee	
Pvt. Sweetitz	
Pvt. Victor F. Trzesckowski	
Pvt. Anthony Saiz	
Pvt. Vincent Klubster	
Pvt. Roland Rondeau - could speak French	
1st Sgt. James Prettyman	Stowaway
Sgt. Manuel Serrano	Stowaway
Bob Erikson	Stowaway

Lt. Dan DeLeo was concerned with the Troop Carrier pilots not being able to drop the Pathfinder Team on the designated DZ so he bet them a case of scotch on it. The Troop Carrier pilots still owe the Pathfinders a case, they landed about 15 miles off. When the aircraft reached the coast flak hit the right side, the aircraft turned right then went back in and recieved more fire then turned right again. DeVanie was third in the stick when he jumped he noticed the plane had not slowed down and he lost his helmet. Once clear of the aircraft it was quiet, no one was firing, he landed and rolled down hill becoming wrapped up in his canopy and lines in the dark, he cut his way out. DeVanie climbed a hill to get oriented and as dawn was breaking he observed a German trucks in the distance. Rondeau approached DeVanie who had has Thompson at the ready. They went off to the left and found the rest of the Pathfinder Team and Lt. DeLeo stuck in a tree. They had no idea where they were so they went to a home nearby

The John C. "Pappy" DeVanie Story

and Rondeau found that they were 15 miles east of intended DZ, fortunately the owner was with the resistance and led them back.

16 Aug 1944 - (Tuesday) They encountered a German Patrol passing by Serrano got instantly got up and initiated an ambush. Serrano was immediately shot in the



John DeVanie Addressed the 1-509 Troops at a Change of Command Ceremony at Ft. Polk, LA

The John C. "Pappy" DeVanie Story

18 Aug 1944 - Encountered a German Patrol coming up a trail. The Pathfinders positioned on either side of the trail, as the Germans came into the kill zone Lt. DeLeo stood up with weapon at the ready. The Germans surrendered several spoke good english and told them how to sneak into the American lines. That night Lt. DeLeo snuck into the friendly lines to get the current challenge and password and returned.

19 Aug 1944 - (Friday) The Pathfinders linked up with the rest of the 509th and turned over 10 German prisoners.

20 Aug 1944 - (Saturday) 509th was attacking Cannes when C CO 509th PIB got pinned down by fire. 5 or 6 guys were sent up to the castle with wire, field phone and binoculars. From the hill position they were able to see to German rail guns that would fire then draw back into the hide position to reload. A call for fire was relayed to Naval Guns offshore. Unfortunately, Germans had also spotted their position and as the fire naval round hit one of the two German guns, a German mortar crew scored a direct hit on their observation post. John DeVanie was seriously wounded in leg, left arm and head, Marion McGee was even more seriously wounded and the third was killed.

DeVanie and McGee were evacuated to Naples and then flew out a day later. DeVanie arrived at Kennedy General Hospital in Memphis, TN where he spent 13 months in the hospital. He still has shrapnel from the mortar.

00 Sep 1945 - Discharged from the Army

1997 - 1ST Vice President of 509th Parachute Infantry Association.

2001 to 2007 - Served as President of 509th Parachute Infantry Association

20 May 2011 - National Infantry Association awards the Order of Saint Maurice CIVIS - S00616 to John DeVanie

To learn more about the Order of Saint Maurice:



Left -- John DeVanie on the Left With His Brother CP, An Air Force Lifer

Below -- John DeVanie Just Graduated Airborne School



1-509th IN (ABN), OPFOR, Fort Polk, Louisiana



1-509 IN (ABN) recently conducted three change of responsibility ceremonies:

- o 1SG Olson replaced 1SG Wright as Able Company's First Sergeant
- o 1SG Ellis replaced SFC Turner as Easy Company's First Sergeant
- o 1SG Jackson replaced SFC Dougherty as Pathfinder Company's First Sergeant
- o 1SG Gardner replaced SFC Hogancamp as Dog Troop's First Sergeant

Submitted by:

Roberto T. Cerqueira
1LT, IN
Adjutant, 1-509th IN (ABN)

3-509th IN (ABN), Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Anchorage, Alaska



We recognized SGT Margaret Hall from the Camp Shelby Range Control with an Army Achievement Medal for her assistance with the Surface Danger Zones (SDZs) for our Platoon Live Fire. Her efforts allowed us to build a great training event, that we could not otherwise accomplish at JBER. The relationships built with the Camp Shelby Range Control made Exercise Arctic Anvil an extraordinary success.

Congratulations to Joseph Brannock on his promotion from Second Lieutenant to First Lieutenant! Geronimo! (picture on right)



We promoted our Distro Platoon Leader, Jennifer Westfall, to first lieutenant. (picture above)

Congratulations to Neil Harte, Matt Park, Arran Rounds and Devin Stevens the newest 1st Lieutenants of 3G! (picture on right)



3-509th IN (ABN), Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Anchorage, Alaska



Say hello to the 3G Medics! These men and women work super hard to support 3G Paratroopers.



**3-509th IN (ABN), Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson
Anchorage, Alaska**



**Congratulate the newest Jumpmasters of 3G!
Geronimo!
Airborne, All the Way!**

3-509th Veterans: Info Wanted!

Former 3G Paratroopers, we need your help! We're renovating and transforming the 3G headquarters hallway into a museum of photographs that tell the story of 3-509th IN (ABN). The battalion CSM envisions a collection of photographs that spans across each decade. We have a proud history and we want to connect the newest generations of Paratroopers to your outstanding legacy.

If you have digital images, please send them to our email address at 3geronimooatw@gmail.com.

We will accept any photograph file type (JPG, PNG, etc.), but prefer TIFF files larger than 1008x792 pixels for the best print quality. If you would like to send us a physical photograph, please mail it to [Building 643, 2nd St. JBER, AK 99505]. There are no restrictions on the subject or time period of the photograph. Please be sure to provide a title and relevant details for each photograph (5W's). Please send us your submissions no later than December 8th, 2019 so that we can select the best photographs and descriptions for the museum. If you'd like to help with the project in other ways, either direct message us on Facebook or send us an email.

(The deadline is past due, but 3G may still be accepting submissions.
Please contact them at the email address above)

Extra Vet Info

Many disabled veterans and Purple Heart recipients won't see on-base access for commissaries and exchange stores or some recreation options any time soon, according to new guidance issued Wednesday by the Defense Department.

By law, the new access is to start Jan. 1, 2020. However, a policy document issued Wednesday by the Pentagon shows that, while veterans who hold a Veteran Health Identification Card (VHIC) from the Department of Veterans Affairs and caregivers registered with the VA's Comprehensive Program for Caregivers will be able to access the system as planned, all other new users will have to wait for a previously unannounced "phase two."

That's because the VA and the DoD have not developed a solution to securely give those veterans base access, the policy states.

"On Jan. 1, 2020, only veterans with a secure, scannable VA-issued VHIC will be authorized access to in-person commissary, military exchange and morale, welfare and recreation privileges on DoD and Coast Guard installations," it states. "When DoD and VA identify a credentialing solution for all Veterans eligible under the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018, DoD will roll out a new phase of access to accommodate current veterans who are not eligible to obtain a VHIC but are eligible for these privileges."

The VHIC is an identification card given to veterans enrolled in VA health care. It is different from the veteran ID card issued by the VA to all veterans who apply.

Caregivers will be presented a letter by the VA to certify that they qualify for access, the policy states. In addition to that letter, they will need to present a valid form of ID to gain access. And because military installations are federal facilities, IDs must be Real ID compliant, it adds.

Acceptable forms of ID include:

REAL ID-compliant driver's license issued by a state territory, possession or the District of Columbia

REAL ID-compliant non-driver's license issued by a state, territory, possession or the District of Columbia

Enhanced driver's license issued by a state, territory, possession or the District of Columbia

U.S. passport or passport card

Foreign passport bearing an unexpired immigrant or non-immigrant visa or entry stamp

Federal personal identity verification card (when otherwise eligible); VHIC

The Transportation Worker Identification Card

Additionally, before gaining access for the first time, all new users will be required to go through a background check, according to the policy. Those with "felony convictions, felony arrest warrants or other types of derogatory information related to criminal history or terrorism" will be turned away, it adds.

Veterans who are rated as 100 percent service-connected disabled or who are Medal of Honor recipients can continue to access bases as before, using a DoD ID card issued through the ID card office, the policy states.

Those who will be permitted on base to shop as part of phase two can continue to use the online exchange system, a benefit rolled out in 2017.

In 2018, DoD officials estimated that about 80 percent of newly eligible shoppers will need a new identification card to be able to shop on base.

Congress, DoD Step Toward Expanding Access to Commissaries, Exchanges

Tom Philpott

The House version of the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act (FY2019 NDAA) includes a provision to allow mortgage payments.

In addition to the 5% surcharge all commissary users currently pay, new customers, including those accessing the stores with a VHIC, will have to pay a 1.9% fee when using a commercial credit card at the commissary and a 0.5% fee for debit cards. There's no extra charge when paying by cash, check or using the credit card offered by the military resale system, the Military Star card.

Extra Vet Info & Support

~VA Info That May Be Helpful:

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USVA/bulletins/26c0746>

~Vet Tix:

<https://www.vettix.org/>

~National Parks:

<https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/60590/disabled-veterans-eligible-free-national-park-service-lifetime-access-pass/>

~Free Sports Gear for Kids:

<https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/61327/free-gear-tickets-military-veteran-kids/>

~Free Cookbooks & Recipes:

<https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/64482/va-provides-free-recipes-cookbooks-veterans/>

~Free Local Events for Veterans & Active Military:

<https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/66188/find-free-local-events-team-rwb-new-app/>

~Shop VCS.com:

<https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/58357/shopvcs-com-vets-families-employees/>

In Memorial



Mr. John C. Kessler, Jr., 98, of Roanoke passed away Tuesday, January 14, 2020. He was preceded in death by his wife, Nellie Anderson Kessler; and sisters, Ethel Kessler Harder and Ruby Kessler Kennedy. John proudly served his country in the U.S. Army during World War II and was awarded the Purple Heart and Bronze Star. John worked for 30 plus years as a printer with the Roanoke Times. He was a former member of Belmont Presbyterian Church where he served as a Sunday School Superintendent and a Deacon. In more recent years he was a member of Shenandoah Baptist Church. For many years he served as a very successful Sandlot Football Coach with the Williamson Road Recreation Club. Surviving are his sons, David (& Anita) Kessler, Steve (& Brenda Bailey) Kessler; grandchildren, Angela (Warren) Kessler-LaPine, Kyle (Abbie) Kessler, Kenan (& Alexandra) Kessler; great grandchildren, Tara Kessler-LaPine, Tessa, Daphne, and Seth Kessler; and numerous cousins and other family members.

Akira Shinomiya, a former 3G member visited John in his last days and reported that John had a gleam in his eye upon see the 509th emblem on his shirt! Akira was the last 509th member to visit John.

Phillip Handscomb, long time friend and 509th PIA Sergeant-at-Arms attended John's funeral.

"Fair winds and soft landings Sir! You will be remembered!
AATW - GERONIMO!!

Please visit the 509th Soldier Page (by Matt Anderson) for Mr. Kessler:
<https://www.509thgeronimo.org/soldierkesslerjc/soldierkesslerjc.html>

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 P.O. Box 43
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www.509th.org

509th PARACHUTE INFANTRY ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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