

ALL AMERICAN ALL THE WAY

A / 505 P.I.R. / 82nd AIRBORNE

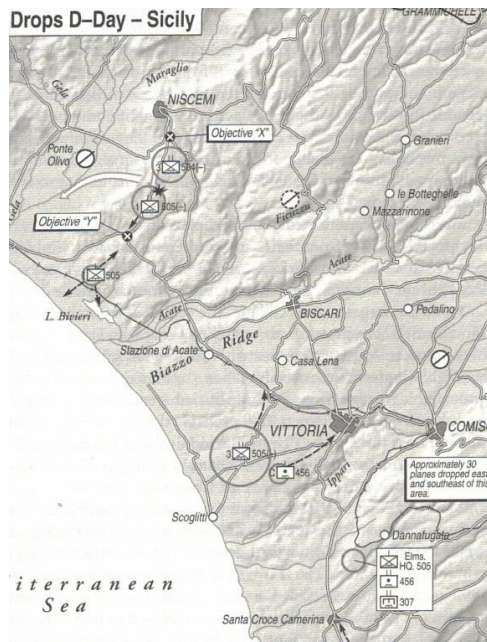
By
Michael Pike

The 505 Parachute Infantry Regiment was formed in July of 1942. The Regiment was nicknamed the PANTHERS and the 505 P.I.R. lived up to the name by exhibiting the courage, speed, and fighting ability of the jungle cat.

Company A (Able) of the 505 P.I.R. made four combat jumps during the World War II; Sicily-Operation Husky, Salerno-Operation Avalanche, Normandy-Operation Neptune, and Groesbeck-Operation Market Garden.

Company A dropped into Sicily on July 9th, 1942. Despite all the problems the U.S. Parachute Force experienced during Operation Husky, Company A landed in good order

(A feat it would repeat in the Normandy drop). Under the command of Captain Ed Sayre, Company A set about to attacking a concentration of pillboxes and strong points around the 505 P.I.R. objective. This objective, "Objective Y", a crossroads seven miles East of Gela, was to be captured and held until the arrival of the 1st Infantry Division. By 10:45 that morning, Company A had captured the crossroads and in doing so had almost single handedly accomplished the mission of the entire Regiment.



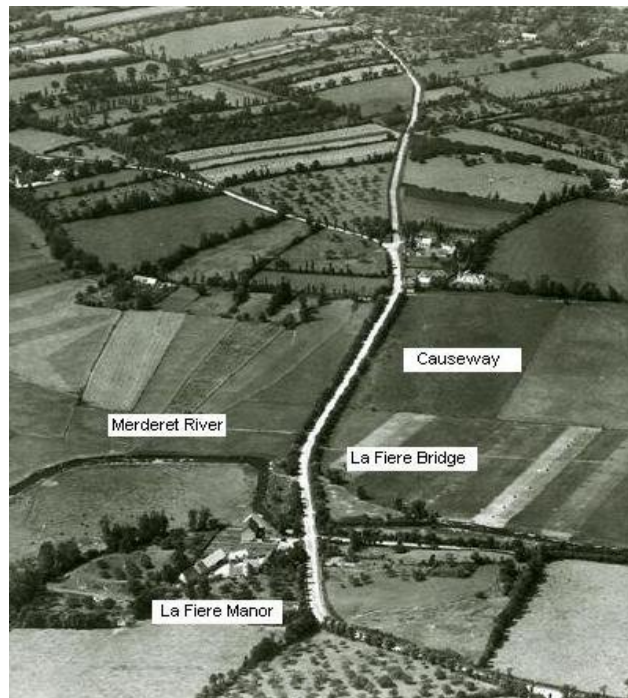
Later in the day, Company A succeeded in defending the objective from repeated counter-attacks by two companies of German Infantry and elements of the Hermann Goring Panzer Division with little more than small arms and a few bazookas. During this action, the Battalion Commander, Lt. Colonel Arthur "Hardnose" Gorham, fighting with Company A, was killed

while attempting to knock out a German tank. Gorham and Sayre were both awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for this action. Company A continued to fight its way across Sicily and later dropped at Salerno, Italy in support of the beach landings.

After refitting in England, Company A participated in the Normandy Invasion. Once again, performing actions beyond the call of duty, Company A captured the La Fiere causeway bridge across the Merderet River and defended it against repeated attacks by German Infantry and Tanks.

The fighting was bloody and intense. Lt. John “Red Dog” Dolan, upon receiving a message from one of his platoon leaders suggesting that they pull back, sent back a reply that is now part of the 82nd Airborne lore, “I don’t know a better place than this to die. Stay where you are.” Company A held the bridge and in doing so, Company A denied the Germans an avenue to move reinforcements to the beachhead to counter-attack the sea landing forces.

Company A went on to participate in Operation Market Garden, Hurtgen Forrest, The Battle of the Bulge, and later crossed the Elbe River into Germany where they met the advancing Soviet Forces.



“Let us carry the fight to the enemy and make the American Parachutist feared and respected through all his ranks. Attack violently. Destroy him wherever he is found.”

General James Gavin, Commanding Officer- 82nd Airborne Division

