

Martin J. (Marty) Teahan – Private

Served with distinction in the Hq1 Light Machine Gun Platoon from October 20, 1942 to June 23, 1944. Marty was killed in action in Normandy. A great loss to his family, country and the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment.



Marty was an outstanding soldier, a reliable comrade, and a cherished friend. He was a distinguished member of the "Greatest of the Greatest Generation."

Marty's niece Elizabeth Farrell and his Hq1 WW II comrades provided information for this summary.

Martin Teahan was born December 3, 1923 in the Bronx, New York. He entered the service in the fall of 1942 at Camp Upton, Long Island, NY.

At the first opportunity, Marty volunteered for the parachute school and was sent to Camp Blanding, Florida to join the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment.

Unknown to Marty, he was involved in an experiment to determine if it would be more efficient to train entire units at the Parachute School rather than continue training individuals and then sending them to airborne units.

Thanks to the efforts of men like Martin Teahan, the experiment was a success -- several regiments were processed through the school in time to participate in WW II.

At Camp Upton, Martin Teahan met James (Mac) McMahon and they became close friends. At Camp Blanding they endured basic training and pre-airborne school physical training that included countless miles of running, innumerable pushups, hand-to-hand combat, and numerous ways designed by the airborne qualified cadre to eliminate "unfit" candidates from the program.

Marty and Mac prevailed. They breezed through jump school; made the qualifying five jumps, and on February 26, 1943 pinned on the coveted parachute wings. They also earned ten day furloughs – their first days off since October 1942.

Thereafter, it was all arduous training and maneuvers before shipping overseas to Ireland, Scotland and finally Nottingham, England.

In the evening of June 5, 1944, Marty and Mac bid each other godspeed and good luck, climbed into different planes, and about 0230 hours, June 6, 1944 they parachuted into Normandy, France. They never met again.

James (Mac) McMahon remembers.

"I met Martin Teahan's sister when she visited me after the war. I was able to tell her about Marty's life overseas.

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I recently wrote to Marty's niece Elizabeth Farrell, in response to her request for information. I hadn't written a letter in thirty years."

Note: Mac's letter to Elizabeth provides unique insights into Martin Teahan's personality, mannerisms, joys and concerns. Mac's recollections are priceless – they serve the purpose for this album - to convey to historians, researchers, students, and others a profile of the kind of men who fought in WW II as paratroopers.

In his letter, Mac told Elizabeth.

"Yes, I knew your uncle 'Marty. 'We were 'buddies' from the very beginning of our Army tour of duty. We went through basic training, parachutist training, and unit tactical training in the United States and overseas.

We met in Camp Upton. At the time, we both had been in the Army 6 or 7 days, and we were together right up to when we boarded our planes to jump into Normandy on D-Day.

Marty was assigned to board one plane and I was assigned to another. Before boarding our planes, we wished each other good luck and shook hands. That was the last time I saw Marty.

As I said earlier, Marty and I were buddies. We were very young. We both liked a good time and when you were with Marty that is what you got -- a good time!

We met girls, went to dances, bars, Army Canteens, etc. They were 'fun' places during the war – there was nothing else.

Marty was a great dancer. He loved those crazy 'Jitter Bug' steps that were so popular in those days. Once he got started on the dance floor, you could not get him off the floor. The English girls loved to dance with him. Moreover, they loved his 'New York Bronx' accent that was rare in England.

Marty had a great sense of humor. Once while we stood waiting in a long line to get into a movie, Marty said to me, 'If I knew how long this line was, I



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would have packed a lunch.’ That is the way he was, always with a little humorous remark in his speech.

Your uncle Marty loved real old time songs like ‘East Side West Side’, ‘Danny Boy,’ etc. He knew those songs, word-for-word. If there was a piano in the room, Marty would get Mac and Marty the piano player to play his favorites, and he would get all the guys in the room to join in singing the songs. In his way, he became the ‘Mitch Miller’ of World War II.

Marty loved and was proud of his Irish heritage. He loved Irish jokes and stories and was never at a loss to tell one. However, he did have some serious moments. For example:

I recall our first night at Camp Blanding. It was bedtime and the bugler was playing ‘Lights Out’– a sad tune. Marty called my attention to the tune saying how beautiful it was, and that next to ‘Taps’ it was his favorite bugle call.

Whenever, I hear ‘Taps’, I think about Marty making that statement so many years ago. Later, at Fort Benning - Marty, two other guys and I were lying in our bunks making small talk about baseball, food, etc.

When the question arose. What are your plans for after the war? Most of the answers were – get married – go to college – I do not know.

Marty’s answer was: ‘I don’t think I will be around after the war. So I am not thinking about it.’

Elizabeth, your uncle Marty was a special guy cherish his memory and be proud of him.”
/s/ James M. McMahon

Owen B. Hill (Hq1) in a letter to Elizabeth Farrell said. “Martin Teahan was an above average paratrooper. He had a wonderful sense of humor, he was a great conversationalist, a loyal comrade, and he was liked by everyone.

Martin loved to sing Irish songs. He provided us with many hours of enjoyment just listening to him sing.

I have no idea why, but after more than 50 years, I can still recall most of the words to Martin’s favorite Irish song – the one he sang most frequently.

To commemorate his memory, I would like to include the words to that song, as I remember them. The song was about a man called ‘Phil the Fluter.’

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*Have you heard of Phil the Fluter from the town of Ballymuck?
Sure, the times were going hard with him; in fact, the man was bruck.
So he sent out invitations to his neighbors one and all, of how he
would like their gaiety, this evening at the ball.
But before sending the invitations, he was careful to suggest to them,
that if they found a hat convenient to the door, the more that they
put into it, the better would be the music.
The better would be the music.
The battering on the floor, with a root and a toot, and a diddle on the
fiddle, walking all around and over to the wall.
Sure and hadn't we the gaiety at Phil the Fluters Ball.*

Perhaps you know of an Irishman who can explain the song to you, or sing it with the brogue - and in the tune that only Martin could."

Martin Teahan earned:

- ?? Bronze Star medal
- ?? Purple Heart medal
- ?? Parachutist Qualification badge with a star (combat jump)
- ?? Combat Infantry Badge
- ?? European African Middle Eastern Theatre of Operations (ETO) medal with an Invasion Arrowhead and Battle star
- ?? Presidential Unit Citation
- ?? French Fourragere
- ?? Numerous defense medals.

Martin Teahan is interred in the Ste. Laurent Cemetery in Normandy -- alongside his many comrades. May they rest in peace and never be forgotten.



**Martin Teahan's Grave, Ste.
Laurent Cemetery, Normandy,**

Martin Teahan's niece is Elizabeth Farrell, 185-01 Hillside Avenue, Apt. 5F, Jamaica, NY 11432

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This Album is Not For Sale

This excerpt from the “We Served Proudly, The Men of Hq1” album contains the recollections of men who in their youth risked their lives in furtherance of our national interests. These memoirs are sacred to them -- especially those events alluding to activities in which comrades lost their lives on the battlefields of Europe.

This album was prepared for perpetual residence in the archives of the Camp Blanding Museum complex, operated by the Camp Blanding Museum and Historical Associates, Inc. Starke, Florida. We are grateful for the support and assistance of the Camp Blanding Museum and Historical Associates, and for their kindness in having the museum make our album available to historians, students, researchers and others interested in our background and brief history.

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Copies of the album have been presented to the Hq1 veterans or their survivors that contributed information for the effort. To facilitate reproducing copies of individual memoirs for relatives or friends, the memoirs have been developed as separate entities.

October 19, 2004

~~George . Stoket~~

Hq1 Album Collator