

# Soldier's Manual for 511<sup>th</sup> PIR Reenacted



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REGIMENT IN WORLD WAR II

See also: [www.511pir.com](http://www.511pir.com)

## **Preface:**

When my book, WHEN ANGELS FALL, on the 511<sup>th</sup> PIR came out in the fall of 2019, I thought that it would be the culmination of a labor of love that included over 15 years of researching my grandfather's historic regiment, plus countless hours spent writing and editing.

Then came a dream one night where I found myself walking into what I gather was Fort Benning's Officer's Club with its upper balcony lined by paratroopers in their Class As. The bottom floor was equally packed, and every face was looking at me as I walked in.

I quickly realized that they knew me and were smiling as they made a path for me to follow. I walked into the center of the large room and a trooper walked up to me. He looked familiar (after studying so many wartime photos a lot of them did) and he reached up to remove his Captain's Bars then he placed them in my hand. I was stunned when he said, "Thank you for telling the world our story. It is your responsibility now."

Then I woke up. I didn't know it yet, but the day before D-511's Captain Steven Cavanaugh, a main source of my information on the regiment from Camp Toccoa to Tokyo, Japan, had died.

As reenactors, or living historians, you share in that responsibility. If you desire to represent the Angels, then you accept the responsibility to tell their story *and* to represent them *well*.

Whether you are reenacting the 511<sup>th</sup> as "a campaigner" with a full encampment experience or just wearing a uniform for a parade or military memorial event, I challenge you to do so with the highest level of honor and respect given to the young men of the 511<sup>th</sup> who "jumped from heaven to hell" during World War II.

Thank you for your interest in and passion for the history of the 511<sup>th</sup> PIR. When I told the last living wartime members of the regiment that there were those who were carrying their story to the world, they all said, "Thank you. Now the world will know what we did over there."

So, thank you for all your hard work, your time and energies (and monies) sacrificed, and for your dedication to "getting it right." I hope this guidebook will help you and your unit prepare for and put on incredibly successful events and experiences, both for yourselves and the public.

May we always honor and remember the Angels' legacy. If you ever have any Angel-related question, please feel free to email me. AATW!

**-Jeremy C. Holm**

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## 1. Unit History

General Douglas MacArthur's "secret weapon" and heroes of the Los Baños Raid, the 511th Parachute Infantry Division was officially formed at Camp Toccoa, Georgia on January 5, 1943, under Colonel Orin D. "Hard Rock" Haugen.

The regiment went battalion by battalion to Camp Mackall (Hoffman), North Carolina to become the first fully formed unit of the new 11<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division under Major General Joseph May Swing. After completing Basic Training at Mackall and attending Jump School at Fort Benning, the 511<sup>th</sup> returned to Mackall for additional training and participation in the Knollwood Maneuvers of December 1943.

On January 4, 1944, the 11<sup>th</sup> Airborne reached Camp Polk, Louisiana for final examinations and additional training before heading to Camp Stoneman, California in April. The 511<sup>th</sup> PIR left Stoneman two weeks later and sailed onboard the SS *Sea Pike* to Dobodura, New Guinea. The division was in strategic reserve which earned them their first of three battle stars, but instead of being committed to combat the Angels spent the summer and fall of 1944 in theater training and acclimatization.

Then in November of 1944 the division first engaged the enemy on the island of Leyte where for 33 days the 511<sup>th</sup> PIR distinguished itself against Japan's 16<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> Infantry Divisions in the island's mountains and jungles during monsoon season. The regiment spearheaded the division's push west across the island's mountains and endured 75% of the division's casualties during the campaign.

Countless paratroopers became deathly sick with malaria and/or dysentery while they fought the Japanese further into the mountains, carrying their wounded with them. Coming down from the mountains on Christmas Day, the Angels marched into Ormoc after destroying 5,760 of the enemy and earning 1 Medal of Honor, 96 Silver Stars, 6 Soldier's Medals, 90 Air Medals and 423 Bronze Stars.

On February 3, 1945, the 511<sup>th</sup> PIR made their first combat jump of the war on Tagaytay Ridge, Luzon, just south of Manila. Once the rest of the division arrived overland, the 511<sup>th</sup> PIR spearheaded the division's push towards southern Manila where they encountered and destroyed the intimidating Genko Line, the enemy's defensive line that utilized concrete pillbox, machine gun nests, naval and anti-aircraft guns, mines, and other deadly obstacles. The regiment then spearheaded the division's push once again and was heavily involved in the Battle for Manila. During the battle, the regiment's beloved commander Colonel Orin D. "Hard Rock" Haugen was mortally wounded and his Executive Officer LTC Edward H. "Slugger" Lahti took over.

With minimum artillery support, the Angels fought into the city and liberated Cavite, Fort McKinley, Nichols Field, and more.

On February 23, 1945, the 11<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division pulled off their daring raid on the Los Baños Internment Camp wherein they rescued 2,147 men, women and children from behind enemy lines before the Japanese could massacre them. For a full treatise on this historic raid, please visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=673He1u1fH4>

The Angels then turned east and then south to eliminate heavy areas of enemy resistance around Los Baños, Mt. Malepunyo and ultimately the Angels participated in Task Force Aparri, the last combat airborne operation of the war. In the fighting, the 11th Airborne earned 1 Medal of Honor, 9 Distinguished Service Crosses, 1 Distinguished Service Medal, 10 Legion of Merit medals, 326 Silver Stars, 1,126 Bronze Stars, 27 Air Medals and 884 Purple Hearts.

After a brief stay on Okinawa in anticipation of the invasion of Japan which never occurred, the 511<sup>th</sup> PIR was the first full unit into Japan at the end of World War II where they helped form General MacArthur's Honor Guard and protected the Allied dignitaries during the surrender ceremony on the USS Missouri.

And their average age was 21.

For a full treatise of the 511<sup>th</sup>'s history, please consider purchasing the book [WHEN ANGELS FALL: FROM TOCCOA TO TOKYO, THE 511<sup>TH</sup> PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENT IN WORLD WAR II](#) or visit the regimental historical website [www.511pir.com](http://www.511pir.com)





## 2. Regimental Table of Organization and Equipment

When **Colonel Orin D. “Hard Rock” Haugen** was given command of the new soon-to-be-formed 511<sup>th</sup> Parachute Infantry Regiment in November of 1942, his assumption was that his new regiment would be formed as a Regimental Combat Team (RCT) that would quickly be sent overseas (likely to Europe). This was not the case, and the 511<sup>th</sup> PIR was officially activated at Camp Toccoa, Georgia on January 5, 1943.



Of note, Colonel Haugen was pleased to find that he had a complete first-rate band in his ranks led by Warrant Officer Robert M. Berglund. As such, the 511<sup>th</sup> (and later the 11<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division) never lacked for good music.

The regiment's [Table of Organization and Equipment \(TO&E\)](#) was as follows:

- i. **Regimental Headquarters / Headquarters Company** *(18 officers, 168 enlisted)*
- ii. **Service Company** *(11 officers, 144 enlisted)*
- iii. **Medical Detachment**
- iv. **1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Headquarters Company** *(13 officers, 136 enlisted)*
  - o Company A *(8 officers, 119 enlisted)*
  - o Company B *(8 officers, 119 enlisted)*
  - o Company C *(8 officers, 119 enlisted)*
- v. **2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Headquarters Company** *(13 officers, 136 enlisted)*
  - o Company D *(8 officers, 119 enlisted)*
  - o Company E *(8 officers, 119 enlisted)*
  - o Company F *(8 officers, 119 enlisted)*
- vi. **3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion Headquarters Company** *(13 officers, 136 enlisted)*
  - o Company G *(8 officers, 119 enlisted)*
  - o Company H *(8 officers, 119 enlisted)*
  - o Company I *(8 officers, 119 enlisted)*

As noted above, the standard parachute infantry company consisted of:

**Personnel for the 511<sup>th</sup> PIR: 8 Officers and 119 Enlisted**

**COMPANY HEADQUARTERS:** (2 Officers and 14 Enlisted)

- 1× Commanding Officer, Captain (OF-2), armed with 1 M1A1 Carbine and 1 M1911A1 pistol
- 1× Executive Officer, First Lieutenant (OF-1), armed with 1 M1A1 Carbine and 1 M1911A1 pistol
- 1× First Sergeant, First Sergeant (OR-8), armed with 1 M1 submachine gun and 1 M1911A1 pistol
- 1× Operations (Intelligence) Sergeant, Sergeant (OR-5), armed with 1 M1 Rifle and 1 M1911A1 pistol
- 1× Communications Sergeant, Sergeant (OR-5), armed with 1 M1 Rifle and 1 M1911A1 pistol
- 3× Radio Telephone Operators, Technician 5th Grade (OR-4) to Technician 4th Grade (OR-5), armed with 1 M1 Rifle and 1 M1911A1 pistol
- 3× Messengers, Private (OR-1) to Technician 4th Grade (OR-5), armed with 1 M1 Rifle and 1 M1911A1 pistol each
- 5× Basic Riflemen, Private (OR-1) to Private First Class (OR-2), armed with 1 M1 Rifle and 1 M1911A1 pistol each

**3× RIFLE PLATOONS** (2 Officers and 34 Enlisted each)

→ Platoon Headquarters (2 Officers and 5 Enlisted)

- 1× Platoon Commander, First Lieutenant (OF-1), armed with 1 M1A1 Carbine and 1 M1911A1 pistol
- 1× Assistant Platoon Commander, Second Lieutenant (OF-1), armed with 1 M1A1 Carbine 1 M1911A1 pistol
- 1× Platoon Sergeant, Staff Sergeant (OR-6), armed with 1 M1 submachine gun [A] and 1 M1911A1 pistol
- 1× Signal Corporal, Corporal (OR-5), armed with 1 M1 Rifle and 1 M1911A1 pistol
- 1× Radio Telephone Operator, Technician 5th Grade (OR-4), armed with 1 M1 Rifle and 1 M1911A1 pistol
- 2× Messengers, Private (OR-1) to Private First Class (OR-2), armed with 1 M1 Rifle and 1 M1911A1 pistol each

→ 2× Rifle Squads (12 Enlisted each)

- 1× Squad Leader, Sergeant (OR-5), armed with 1 M1 Rifle and 1 M1911A1 pistol
- 1× Assistant Squad Leader/Demolitions NCO, Corporal (OR-4), armed with 1 M1 submachine gun and 1 M1911A1 pistol
- 1× Machine Gunner, Private First Class (OR-2), armed with 1 M1919A4 light machine gun and 1 M1911A1 Pistol
- 1× Assistant Machine Gunner, Private (OR-1) to Private First Class (OR-2), armed with 1 M1 Rifle and 1 M1911A1 pistol
- 1× Ammunition Bearer, Private (OR-1) to Private First Class (OR-2), armed with 1 M1 Rifle and 1 M1911A1 pistol
- 7× Riflemen, Private (OR-1) to Private First Class (OR-2), armed with 1 M1 Rifle and 1 M1911A1 pistol each

→ 1× Mortar Squad (6 Enlisted)

- 1× Squad Leader, Sergeant (OR-5), armed with 1 M1 submachine gun and 1 M1911A1 pistol
- 1× Mortar Gunner, Private First Class (OR-2), armed with 1 60mm mortar and 1 M1 Rifle and 1 M1911A1 pistol
- 1× Assistant Mortar Gunner, Private (OR-1) to Private First Class (OR-2), armed with 1 M1 Rifle and 1 M1911A1 pistol
- 3× Ammunition Bearers, Private (OR-1) to Private First Class (OR-2), armed with 1 M1 Rifle and 1 M1911A1 pistol each

**NOTE:**

The personal weapons listed above is useful as guide, but when reenacting the 511<sup>th</sup> PIR from the Leyte or Luzon campaigns, nearly anything goes.

Not every trooper (especially enlisted men) was given an M1911A1 pistol whereas others stole theirs from nearby friendly units on New Guinea. Also, many officers were given “their pick” of weapons to carry. For example, as a Platoon Commander/Leader, my grandfather 1LT Andrew Carrico of D-511 was offered an M1A1 Thompson, but knowing of the M1 Garand’s stopping power, he elected for the rifle. So, Garands and Carbines are interchangeable if you have a certain role you’re electing to portray.

Some mortarmen elected to carry M1A1 Carbines instead of M1 Garands due to their lighter weight. The same can be said of radio men. Both solid and folding paratrooper stocks were used by the Angels.



As far as M1 Submachine guns, M1A1 Thompsons were rare on Leyte where you see much more usage of the M3 "Grease Gun". Some Thompsons saw use on Luzon, but the M3 far outweighed them in commonality.

After the difficulties of carrying heavy gear during the Leyte mountains campaign, many 511<sup>th</sup> machine gunners begged, borrowed or stole M1918A2 BARs for use in the Luzon campaign. That is not to say that M1919 light machine guns were not used on Luzon, as they were; rather, the 511<sup>th</sup>'s machine gunners preferred the BARs as they were easier to carry, set up and use during the Battle for Manila and beyond. So BARs and Brownings are both acceptable in reenactments.



### 3. Uniforms and Equipment by Locale / Campaign

As expected, the uniforms and kit for reenacting the 511<sup>th</sup> PIR will be dependent upon which period of the regiment's history you plan on representing. The following guide is meant to be a helpful primer for what to wear and carry during your representation, but as with all reenacting, don't break the bank trying to get it perfect.

Especially for the Luzon campaign, mixing and matching and picking up items and accessories along the way in financially manageable purchases is 100% acceptable.

#### **CAMP TOCCOA, GEORGIA – November 1942 to March 1943**

The Camp Toccoa-period for the 511<sup>th</sup> PIR is easy to represent. Unless you are representing the 511<sup>th</sup>'s cadre, which came from the 505th, 502nd and 503rd PIRs and 504th PIB, the standard uniform for the 511<sup>th</sup>'s volunteers would simply be M1942 fatigues and one-piece working suits, both in OD, with Russet Service Shoes and standard M1 helmets (no jump liners).

Once a battalion was fully formed, it would head down to Camp Hoffman (later Mackall), North Carolina. As such, most in the 511<sup>th</sup> only spent 4-6 weeks at Toccoa.

#### **CAMP HOFFMAN/MACKALL, NORTH CAROLINA – Spring 1943 to January 1944**

Things get interesting for 511<sup>th</sup> PIR reenactors when it comes to Camp Hoffman / Mackall. The regiment came battalion by battalion to Mackall in early 1943 for Basic Training, so you're still safe with M1942 HBTs and Russet Service Shoes.

Again, you can also get away with the one-piece HBT working coveralls as they are seen in photos at the camp on details as well as in marches.

Since the 511<sup>th</sup>'s men went to Fort Benning by battalion in March of 1943 and then came back to Camp Mackall afterwards, you may also utilize unreinforced M42 jump uniforms bloused over Corcoran jump boots. Jump wings would of course now be appropriate to wear on "Mackall" uniforms as well as 11<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division patches.

I have seen use of Raincoats, Synthetic Resin Coated, OD, Dismounted (1942), so if you have those and are reenacting Mackall and it's raining where you are, you're welcome.

Standard parachutist kits are now appropriate as well, including M1936 packs, cartridge/pistol belts (dealer's choice), canteens, intrenching shovels, personal first aid kits, jump knives, rope, etc.

Class As were commonly photographed by the proud paratroopers to send home to their families, complete with their new jump wings. Perfect for any USO dances you may be heading to or memorial services.

You can also get away with simple khaki uniforms and service shoes as I have photos of those from Camp Mackall (likely pre-Jump School), as well as OD M41 jackets.

And if you do not have any of the aforementioned items, but DO have the standard HBTs and service shoes, you're in luck, especially if you have a pair of Leggings, Canvas, Dismounted, M-1938.

Now part of the newly formed 11<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division, orders came down to the 511<sup>th</sup>'s paratroopers to save their jump boots for jumps only. Instead, they were to wear service shoes and canvas leggings like the "rest of the division." The proud paratroopers hated it and rebelled by wearing their leggings but folding or cutting them down so they could still blouse their pants. The no-jump-boots order was soon rescinded.





### **CAMP POLK, LOUISIANA – January to April 1944**

Camp Polk attire, etc. is the same as Camp Mackall with an emphasis on the HBTs due to all the field maneuvers and training exercises. But if you want to full packing list that the 511<sup>th</sup> used from Mackall to Polk, please use this link:

[http://511pir.com/pdf/documents/Packing\\_List.pdf](http://511pir.com/pdf/documents/Packing_List.pdf)

### **CAMP STONEMAN, CALIFORNIA – April to May 1944**

When the 511<sup>th</sup> PIR, and 11<sup>th</sup> AB as a whole, reached Camp Stoneman in April of 1944, everyone was told to remove their 11<sup>th</sup> AB patches. The parachutists were told to pack their jump boots and uniforms. In order to hide the fact that an airborne division was heading to the Pacific Theater, they were now strictly “Unit 1855”.

As such, HBTs and aforementioned kits are appropriate for Camp Stoneman.

### **DOBODURA, NEW GUINEA – May to October 1944**

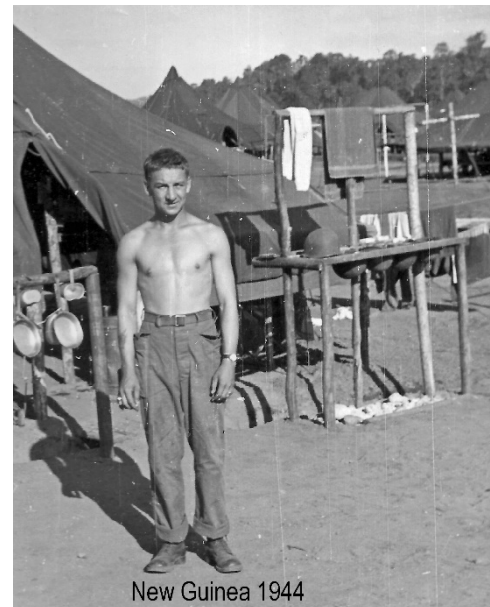
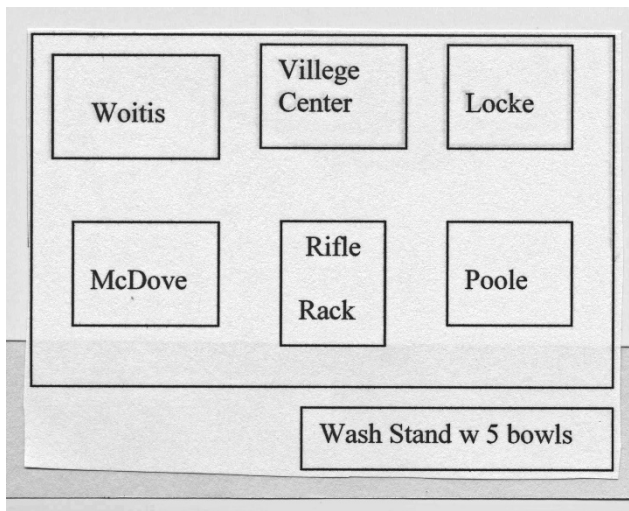
When the 511<sup>th</sup> PIR sailed for New Guinea onboard the SS *Sea Pike*, they were given new khaki summer uniforms which they hauled under the ship to soften enroute.

Jump boots were worn once again as were M42 jump uniforms (some rigger reinforced).

I have also seen canvas leggings worn as well as HBTs (OD) on work details and during trainings exercises.

The 511<sup>th</sup> stayed in tents, five men to a tent. They used bamboo from the nearby jungle to build washstands and drying racks outside their tents (see below)





A note about *SWING CAPS*:

I have seen several outlets claim the 11<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division's famous and unique "Swing Caps" were first used on Luzon, but this is not accurate.

The photo on the right is one of many in my possession that show Angels in Swing Caps on New Guinea, so nearly a year earlier than these outlets claim.



Swing Caps generally resemble the billed fatigue or utility cap of World War II, but with a larger crown. General Swing even wore his cap during the signing of the surrender papers on the U.S.S. *Missouri*.

The 511<sup>th</sup>'s Parachute Maintenance Company initially made the caps, starting in the Philippines, as the company had the machinery and skilled operators, but as demand grew during the occupation, civilian tailors in Japan took over.

Tailors made them from olive drab wool or khaki cotton shirts, nominally to match the seasonal uniforms. Despite the olive drab and khaki color versions, photos show some soldiers wearing color mismatched caps and uniforms. Some men also wore the cap with the herringbone twill utility uniforms.

Bill lengths varied as did the height and blouse of the crown. Insignia often included a parachute overseas patch on the side, right for officers and left for enlisted, just as on the garrison or overseas cap, although some surviving caps and photos indicate not everyone wore the parachute patch.



#### **A Note on Jeeps/Transportation:**

Jeeps and trucks were plentiful for the 511<sup>th</sup> on New Guinea (they stole them from everyone else), as well as Luzon and Japan. Leyte, however, saw very, very limited use of wheeled transportation for the regiment, so keep that in mind for your portrayals.



## **LEYTE ISLAND, P.I. – November 1944 to January 1945**

The 511<sup>th</sup> PIR packed their barracks bags and left them on New Guinea when they sailed for Leyte for their first foray into combat. Most of the paratroopers left their M42 jump uniforms packed away since they were just too hot to wear in the tropics.

Leyte uniforms would consist of HBTs (including one-piece coveralls), M1 helmets (without jump liners), M1936 musette bags, role-specific ammo or carrying sacks, M1942 personal first aid kits, ammunition bandoleers, machete (one per four men), bayonets or trench knives, etc.

Jump boots were worn by the 511<sup>th</sup> into the jungle, but many of them began to fall apart due to the island's sharp rocks and monsoon rains and mud. As such, you can also be appropriate with the common double-buckle combat boots.

With most airborne-specific uniforms and gear being shipped to Europe at the time, the 11<sup>th</sup> Airborne was dependent upon the local army groups for resupply. Plus, the double buckle boot were replacing jump boots which is another reason jump boots were uncommon during most of the Luzon campaign beginning January 1945.





## **LUZON, P.I. – February to September 1945**

This is the packing list I took from regimental records for their move from Leyte to Mindoro to await their jump on Tagaytay Ridge, Luzon, on February 3, 1945:

### **Individual Clothing and Equipment:**

#### *a. Uniforms*

1. Voyage to Mindoro; khaki, steel helmets, boots.
2. Combat; HBT, steel helmets, boots

#### *b. Equipment*

1. Individual weapon, bayonet, or trench knife
2. Jungle first aid kit
3. Not more than one machete per four men, nor less than 2 per plt.
4. Gas masks not carried on individuals.
5. Other items at discretion of Unit CO.

#### *c. Packs and rolls*

1. Combat (jungle) pack (on all individuals), socks, sweaters, foot powder, spoon, poncho and combat rations.
2. Squad bundle; HBT, boots, underclothes, socks, blanket, shelter half.
3. Mindoro Roll; jungle hammock and blankets.

#### *d. Rations*

1. 10 in 1 until take-off issued by S-4.
2. Combat rations – two “X” and two “D”.

#### *e. How carried*

1. On individuals:
  - a. Combat pack
  - b. Mindoro roll as far as Mindoro only.
2. Water borne by S-4 for overland supply; squad bundles.

#### *f. Life Vests*

1. One Mae West per ind., issued at Leyte. Leave in aircraft prior to jump.

Given the lack of resupply of airborne-specific equipment for the 11<sup>th</sup> Airborne in the Pacific, the 511<sup>th</sup> PIR on Luzon would look like your “average G.I.” – HBTs, double buckle combat boots, standard M36 musettes and kits, etc. This would include their jumps on Tagaytay Ridge, Los Baños (Company B) and Aparri (Gypsy Task Force).

Some troopers DID wear jump boots, but after Leyte many of their boots were simply ruined.









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## ATSUGI / YOKOHAMA, JAPAN – September 1945

Selected to be the first full Allied unit into Japan, the 511<sup>th</sup> PIR boarded C-46 commandos on Okinawa for their flight to the Atsugi Airfield on Japan. They traveled combat loaded, but one major distinction would be the large “11 A/B” painted on the front of their M1 helmets.

So HBTs, M1 helmets, there were also plenty of khakis and more jump boots are visible in photos. I am still researching when the Angels were resupplied with those, likely when they were anticipating a jump onto Japan during the expected invasion.

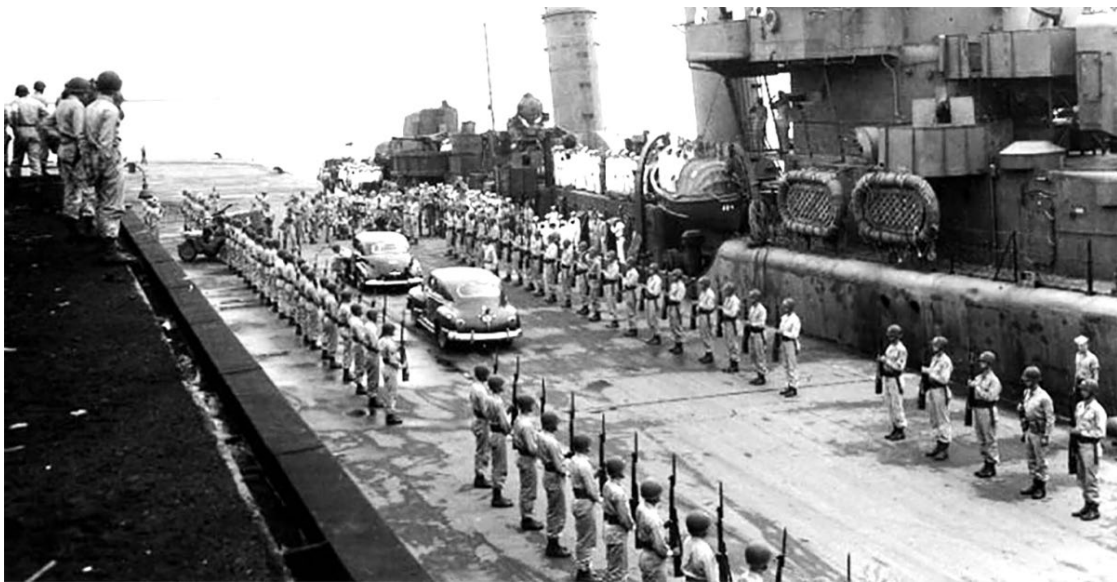


The 11<sup>th</sup> Airborne also formed the Honor Guard for General Douglas MacArthur (see below) for his landing at Atsugi and at the New Grand Hotel in Yokohama. The Angels also helped guard the departure docks for the Surrender Ceremony onboard the USS *Missouri*.









### **\*11<sup>th</sup> Airborne Recon “Snooper” or “Ghost” Platoon – New Guinea to Japan**

One of the 511<sup>th</sup>'s most famous operations was their famous raid on the Los Baños Internment Camp on the shores of Laguna de Bay, Luzon wherein 2,147 men, women and children were rescued from behind enemy lines.

B-511 was the company who made the actual jump on the camp (at 400 feet, no less), although there were several “additions” who jumped at the chance to jump with B Company that fateful morning. Since B Company was pulled from the line right before the jump, they were in the same uniforms and kits as described in the Luzon listing above.

One notable addition to the raid that some reenactors like to portray were the 11<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division's Recon Men, nicknamed “The Snoopers” by the Angels, who made their way to the camp's perimeter before 0700.

The best way to think of these men and their uniforms and gear would be to look at the famous Alamo Scouts (or the Sixth Army Special Reconnaissance Unit) whose graduates helped effect the historic raid on Cabanatuan. Some of the 11<sup>th</sup>'s recon men were also graduates of the Alamo Scout School on New Guinea and their knowledge and experience influenced the Recon Platoon's missions on Leyte and Luzon, including at Los Baños.



## 4. Setting Up Your Encampment

I've had many reenactors ask me over the years about how to "set up camp" when reenacting the 511<sup>th</sup> PIR. I keep it pretty simple and here are my recommendations:

### For New Guinea camps:

Pyramidal tents (1934 OD) with bamboo washing stations set up outside your tent. Folding cots, footlockers, barracks bags, photographs, books, mess kits, etc. A "clean" camp.

### For Leyte camps:

Shelter halves or poncho "tents" over foxholes were the norm. Some division units, such as those on Manawarat, used resupply parachutes for shelter, or abandoned Filipino huts.

The 511<sup>th</sup> packed light on Leyte. Apart from the gear you'd carry into combat, they mostly lived off K-Rations in the hills. Leyte was brutal, bloody and dirty; a true "frontline campaign".

### For Luzon camps:

The Luzon campaign was a broad stretch of "mini-campaigns" for the 511<sup>th</sup>. At times they simply slept in the rubble or burned-out buildings in the city. Other times they used half shelters or poncho "tents". Some used Filipino homes while others built "shelters" out of discarded packing boxes. Pyramidal tents were used extensively in rest camps and the Angels' rear areas in the latter portions of the campaign. So you can take your pick.

Just remember that the regiment was on the move a lot at times, so you can easily get away with a simple setup. Field kitchens were not the norm for the 511<sup>th</sup> on Luzon, so plan mostly on K- and C-Rations.

### **A Note On Sports:**

The Angels were renowned (and reviled) for their athletic abilities, so on New Guinea, portions of Luzon and later Japan, the division played plenty of baseball, football, volleyball, and boxed. So, if you want to throw some fun in for the group, a little athletic diversion is always enjoyed.

## 5. Presidential Unit Citations

Fifteen (15) distinguished unit citations were awarded to units within the 11<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division, including the Presidential Unit Citation and Filipino Presidential Unit Citations.

Of note for 511<sup>th</sup> PIR reenactors, every 511<sup>th</sup> Parachute Infantry Regiment battalions received such citations, so please keep your Class As accurate.

### **Distinguished / Presidential Unit Citation:**

- Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 511<sup>th</sup> Parachute Infantry Regiment
- 1/511<sup>th</sup> Parachute Infantry Regiment
- 2/511<sup>th</sup> Parachute Infantry Regiment
- 3/511<sup>th</sup> Parachute Infantry Regiment
- 1/187<sup>th</sup> Glider Infantry Regiment
- Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 188<sup>th</sup> Glider Infantry Regiment
- 1/188<sup>th</sup> Glider Infantry Regiment
- 2/188<sup>th</sup> Glider Infantry Regiment
- Air Section, 457th Parachute Field Artillery Battalion
- Battery D, 457th Parachute Field Artillery Battalion
- 674th Glider Field Artillery Battalion
- 675th Glider Field Artillery Battalion
- Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 11th Airborne Division
- Provisional Reconnaissance Platoon & Company B, 511<sup>th</sup> PIR
- 511<sup>th</sup> Airborne Signals Company





## 6. A Note on Patches

I've had many questions over the years regarding the 511<sup>th</sup>'s unit patch. The most commonly available and discovered patch is the post-war emblem seen to the right.

You will see this emblem on camp signage throughout Occupation of Japan photos and on print materials.

The first regimental emblem, however, was first used at Camp Toccoa, Georgia in December of 1942 on letterhead used by Colonel Orin D. Haugen (it was also used at Camp Mackall and beyond on unit documents). This emblem can be seen below and is a simpler version of the post-war emblem above right.



This emblem (left) shows a light-grey triangle representing a parachute coming down from a blue sky towards the green earth.

The regimental motto of "VIGUER DE DESSUS" is Latin for "STRENGTH FROM ABOVE" and is sometimes written in English on the scroll for the post-war emblem.

The 511<sup>th</sup>'s troopers were only at Camp Toccoa, GA for a month or two before heading by battalion to Camp Mackall, NC where the regiment joined the 11<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division. This is why you won't see the regimental crest used as a shoulder patch; once the troopers got to Camp Mackall they began wearing the 11<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division crest seen below left.

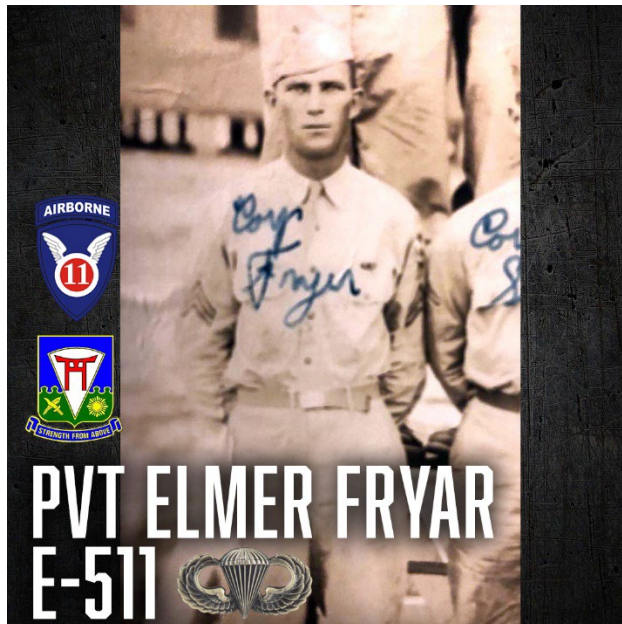


The 11<sup>th</sup> AB patch is seen on uniforms from Mackall, New Guinea, and Japan and in review photos on Leyte and Luzon.

The 511<sup>th</sup>'s paratroopers did wear green and blue jump ovals on both their M42 jump uniforms and their Class As. If you can find them, wearing a 511<sup>th</sup> jump oval will make your Class As stand out even more and will be a more accurate portrayal.



## 7. 511<sup>th</sup> Medal of Honor Recipients



### Private Elmer Fryar:

On December 8, 1944, after weeks of combat the 511th Parachute Infantry Regiment/s 2nd Battalion was attacked outside Mahonag by Japanese soldiers who opened up with machine guns in the mountains of Leyte.

Easy Company effectively covered the battalion's extraction and when the enemy pressed in, thirty-year-old PVT Elmer E. Fryar from Denver, CO went into action. T/5 Neal A. Retherford was near Elmer and said, "I had been wounded by a hand grenade and was bleeding quite badly. Fryar was on the extreme right and he yelled and pointed out

that the Japanese were trying a flanking movement. There were between 40 and 50 of them."

Retherford continued:

"Fryar went forward alone to the top of a ridge and took up his position there to cover the withdrawal of the rest of the company. He opened up with his M1 rifle. There was a lot of firing and soon he came back and found me. He put a tourniquet on my arm and leg while the lead was flying all around us. He said he got plenty of them. He figured about half of them, anyway. He helped me down the trail and we met (1LT Norvin L. "Stinky" Davis) leading a wounded (PFC Marvin D. Douglas)."

Retherford later noted "As we helped each other down the trail, a Japanese jumped up from behind some bushes and aimed his rifle at the lieutenant. The other wounded man (Douglas) and I hit the ground, but Private Fryar moved past us and threw himself in front of the lieutenant."

1LT Davis said, "Private Fryar came from behind me and threw himself into the line of fire. There were seven bullet holes in his chest and stomach, but he drew a hand grenade as he fell to the ground and pulled the pin (killing the enemy)."

It was the twenty-seventh enemy Elmer killed that day.

Davis added, "He died before aid could be brought to him. But as he lay there with a smile on his face, he asked us to write his to his folks and tell them he'd got a mess of the enemy before they got him."

For his heroic actions and sacrifice, Elmer was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.

To learn more about PVT Elmer Fryar, please visit <http://511pir.com/enli.../268-pvt-elmer-fryar-medal-of-honor>



## **Private First Class Manuel “Toots” Perez Jr.**

On February 18, 1945, Able Company, 511th Parachute Infantry Regiment, approached the heavily defended Fort McKinley outside Manila.

As 3rd Platoon’s lead scout, PFC Manuel “Toots” Pérez, Jr. of Oklahoma City, OK was ahead of the main body when he noticed heavily fortified cement pillboxes. Thinking of his comrades’ safety, Manuel rushed into action (Toots was often described as "a whirlwind paratrooper who never let up regardless of how tough the enemy or how

large the odds").

Platoon Sergeant Max Polick said he watched Manuel grab an armful of grenades, then charge the enemy fortifications. In spite of the heavy automatic weapons and sniper fire, Pérez assaulted 11 pillboxes by dropping in grenades. When one exploded nearly in his face, Polick said “Pérez sat right in the middle of it, looking over at us and grinning. He held up his hand and made a circle with his thumb and forefinger. The slugs were cutting the breeze all around, but he didn't seem to care.”

Manuel then focused on the last pillbox, his twelfth. Pérez raised his rifle and fired four times into the fortification and Japanese soldiers came pouring out; Manuel neutralized eight of them.

Suddenly, another enemy soldier moved to charge Pérez from the rear and Manuel’s squadmates shouted in warning. Pérez turned just as the enemy hurled his bayonet like a spear. Manuel used his own rifle to knock down the flying bayonet which sent his weapon spinning. Pérez grabbed up the enemy rifle and used it to stop his opponent.

Four more enemy soldiers then started out of the pillbox tunnel. Pérez eliminated all four, then he entered the pillbox and found one last defender. He stopped him and the division was able to move on Fort McKinley.



While efforts began immediately to put him in for the Medal of Honor, PFC Pérez was killed one month later on March 14, 1945, outside Santo Thomas assaulting another bunker, alone. He had just celebrated his twenty-second birthday and his A Company buddies all said, "it was hard to believe that one bullet could kill such a tough little man."

Manuel Pérez, Jr was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor which was presented to his father on February 22, 1946. Pérez was buried with full military honors at Fairlawn Cemetery which is located in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The state government of Illinois, where Manuel grew up as a child, honored the memory of Perez by naming a plaza located in Chicago's Little Village Square and a school after him.

The Department of the Army Reserve Center of the 221st Unit Army Hospital in Oklahoma City dedicated the Manuel Perez Jr Reserve Center in his honor.

In a fitting tribute, on November 11, 2020, Veterans Day, the new Oklahoma Medal of Honor Memorial at Manuel Perez Jr. Park was dedicated in "Toots'" honor.

To read Trooper Perez's full biography, please visit <http://511pir.com/enlisted-biographies/269-pfc-perez-manuel>

## 8. Notable Regimental Figures

Coming Soon

## 9. "Down From Heaven" – A Song For Every 511<sup>th</sup> Reenactor

While most airborne reenactors worth their salt can bellow "Blood on the Risers" with the best of them, any living historian seeking to honor the 511<sup>th</sup> PIR (and 11<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division in general) should learn "Down From Heaven".

Many of the 511<sup>th</sup>'s paratroopers used to say they jumped "from Heaven to Hell" and "Down From Heaven" is a song that was written in 1950 by Colonel Byron Paige and was selected as a finalist for the official song of the 11<sup>th</sup> Airborne.

The words to this piece can be found on the next page. To learn the tune and cadence of it, please click on this link: <http://www.511pir.com/unit/unit-history/los-banos-raid/86-stateside-training/280-down-from-heaven-the-11th-airborne-division-band>

Baritone Vocal

# 11th Airborne Division March

(Down from Heaven)

**Allegro non troppo** (♩. = 116)

Paul Bordeleau  
arr. by Martin Tousignant

0 **F** **f**

Stand in the door!\_\_\_\_\_

6 **F7**

Stand in the door!\_\_\_\_\_ Stand in the door!\_\_\_\_\_ Down from

13 **A** **Bb**

hea - ven comes E - le - ven and there's hell to pay be - low. Shout Ge - ro - ni - mo,\_\_\_\_\_

18 **C#°7** **F7/C** **Bb**

\_\_\_\_\_ Ge - ro - ni - mo!\_\_\_\_\_ Hit the silk and check your can - o - py and take a look a -

24 **C7** **F7**

round,\_\_\_\_\_ the air is full of troop - ers set for bat - tle on the ground. 'Til we

29 **B** **Bb**

join the stick of an - gels killed on Ley - te and Lu - zon, shout Ge - ro - ni - mo,\_\_\_\_\_

34 **Bb7** **Eb** **G7/C** **Cm** **Eb** **C7**

\_\_\_\_\_ Ge - ro - ni - mo!\_\_\_\_\_ It's a go - ry road to glo - ry but we're

39 **Bb/F** **Dm7(b5)/Ab** **G7** **C7** **F7** **Bb**

rea - dy, here we go. Shout Ge - ro - ni - mo,\_\_\_\_\_ Ge - ro - ni - mo!\_\_\_\_\_