



Paul Goldstein <paul.f.goldstein@gmail.com>

Hello to my veteran friends

Rona Simmons <rona_simmons@bellsouth.net>
To: North Georgia Veterans <paul.f.goldstein@gmail.com>

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Paul

I wanted to make you aware of a project I am involved with to identify and memorialize each of America's 400,000 fallen from World War II. This is an all volunteer effort by a few dozen people across the country. At random, and when possible, we write a short tribute to each soldier, sailor, or marine on their birthday and post it to the group's site.

One I recently profiled is James F. Walters of the 101st Airborne who trained in the Currahee Mountains. James was born on May 25, 1921—the day on which we will observe Memorial Day this year. I have attached his story in a PDF and below in the event you would rather not open an attachment. The story is also posted at: <https://www.fold3.com/page/638809872-james-f-walters/>

I don't know if you regularly mail things of interest to the membership, but if you think this worthwhile, please distribute — if nothing else to keep people connected during this trying time. This effort is free and open to anyone who wants to participate (access to [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) and other sources are provided by the founder, Don Milne.) You can also see more at: The Stories Behind the Stars ([storiesbehindthestars.org](https://www.storiesbehindthestars.org)).

Hope all is well with the group and I am looking forward to seeing everyone when circumstances allow.

Rona Simmons
Author
404-606-8911
rona_simmons@bellsouth.net
[ronasimmons.com](https://www.ronasimmons.com)

The Other Veterans of World War II: Stories from Behind the Front Lines
[Kent State University Press](https://www.kentstate.edu/press)

ARTICLE:

Stories Behind the (Gold) Stars

This year, 2020, marks the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II. Whether on VE Day, Memorial Day, D-Day, VJ Day, or Veterans Day, or at patriotic events on the days in between, Americans will pause to honor all those who served or supported the United States and its allies during the war. They'll celebrate in a variety of ways, attending fireworks extravaganzas, public forums, or quiet family gatherings or simply flying our flag. And one small group of volunteers from across the country will post one more memorial for the fallen.

Stories Behind the Stars

Stories Behind the Stars is a virtual group formed to honor the 400,000 Americans who perished while serving in World War II. Their aim is to document the life of each of the 400,000, this year, in brief summaries from facts gathered on the internet. For some of the fallen, the task is rather simple—their lives have been immortalized in books, movies, television series, magazine articles, and even comics. The vast majority, however, perished in relative obscurity, leaving little more than a faded photograph, a letter home, or a posthumously awarded medal.

How You Can Help

The group is the brain child of Don Milne. He needs your help. And what better time to volunteer? Contributing a memorial is simple and costs nothing more than an hour or so of your time—something quite a few of us have to give during our “shelter in place” lives today. If you would like to volunteer or just no more, go to the group’s website: StoriesBehindTheStars.org or check out the memorials completed and posted on Fold3 (a division of Ancestry.com) at: <https://www.fold3.com/wall/>

I saw Don’s request for volunteers and couldn’t wait to contribute. Below is just one of the lives I’ve documented. James F. Waters, a fellow Georgian, all but forgotten.

James F. Waters, Pfc 101st Airborne, Atlanta Georgia

Killed in Action on D-Day 75 Years Ago

Band of Brothers, Stephen Ambrose’s book and the subsequent television miniseries of the same name told the world about E Company. The story of that brave group of men eclipsed the action and sacrifice of almost every other unit in the 101st Airborne. But there was an A Company, a B Company, as well as C, D, F, G, and H Companies. No doubt there are as many stories as of heroism among their ranks as among those in the more celebrated E Company.

James F. Waters was a paratrooper in the 101st’s F or Fox Company and parachuted into Normandy on D-Day along with thousands of his fellow paratroopers. He did not survive the day and was one of 200 killed in action after he jumped from a C-47 in the early morning hours of June 6, 1944.

Few details are known of James’s short life. He was born in Atlanta, Georgia on May 25, 1921, the day we will observe Memorial Day this year, 75 years later. His mother was Mary O. Waters (later Waits). James had only a grammar school education and worked as a paper hanger but gave up his everyday job to serve in the military. The young man enlisted on September 22, 1942, at Fort McPherson and shortly afterward began training at Camp Toccoa, Georgia with the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment. The unit would adopt the word Currahee, meaning “stand alone” for what they knew their objective to be: to stand and fight alone behind enemy lines. In September 1943, James Waters left his home, his friends, and his wife for England with the 101st, never to return,

Late on June 5, 1944, the men of the 506th gathered near the C-47s that would take them to Normandy and a planned drop zone well behind the invasion beaches. Their mission was to seize causeway access to the beaches to prevent the Germans from sending reinforcements to the coast during the invasion. Weather over the channel disrupted the carefully planned C-47 formations, resulting in men landing miles from their landing zones. In the early morning hours, near Ste. Come-du-Mont, the men fought singly or formed small groups, fighting valiantly against enemy fire from well-fortified German positions. Despite tremendous losses, the regiment ultimately seized completed their mission allowing the allies to move inland in the days following D-Day.

The Distinguished Unit Citation awarded the 101st cited their “extraordinary heroism and outstanding performance of duty in action in the initial assault on the northern coast of Normandy, France.” It was issued and signed by General George C. Marshall on January 12, 1945.

Like many of the men who lost their lives that day, and indeed the 400,000 Americans who perished during World War II, little is known. For James there are no photographs or letters to tell his story, only fragments of his life: his enlistment document, his name on the Distinguished Unit Citation, and his mother’s application for a headstone marker which today sits in Crestlawn Cemetery, Atlanta, Georgia, near what once was James’ home.



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James F Waters WWII Fallen.pdf
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