

World War II Veteran finally receives medals for his Service

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Central Pennsylvania World War II Veteran finally receives medals for his Service to his Country



Maj. Gen. Gregg Martin, Commanding General at Carlisle Barracks, gives USAWC Coin to Pfc. Mark Paradise, WWII Veteran, during award ceremony, Apr. 10, AHEC.

Tuesday, April 10- Today, in a ceremony surrounded by family and friends, Mark Paradise, WWII veteran from central Pennsylvania, was formally presented with the Bronze Star and Combat Infantryman Badge for his service during WWII by Maj. Gen. Gregg Martin, commanding general at Carlisle Barracks, and Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Blakey at the Army Heritage and

Education Center here.

"It is over 60 years since that day when I was on Utah Beach," said Paradise. "This is a special honor to receive this award."

"I thought basic training was hard -- that was nothing compared to the actual D-Day landing, he said."

During the ceremony, Maj. Gen. Martin called Mark Paradise a true American hero. "Thank you for giving us the opportunity and privilege to award these medals which are so overdue," said Martin.

Martin mentioned that AHEC is a great place to be holding this ceremony since the purpose of AHEC is 'To tell the Army Story one Soldier at a time.'

"I think it's great, quite an honor," said Paradise. "I was surprised, didn't realize I was being awarded the Bronze Star until Col. Ginter told me. "I guess it's my big day."

Army War College faculty member Col. Karl Ginter was capturing the memories of his father's friend, Private 1st Class Mark Paradise, when he recognized that Paradise had earned more than he had received w

hen it came to Army awards and decorations. Ginter conducted the necessary research and paperwork resulting in receiving these special awards.

In receiving the Combat Infantryman Badge, Maj. Gen. Martin said, "There is no greater honor for an Infantry Soldier."

Along with the Bronze Star and Combat Infantryman Badge, Paradise received a Congressional Citation from Pa. Congressman Tim Holden, a USAWC Coin from Maj. Gen. Martin and a case displaying his military medals and decorations.

"This is incredible," said Paradise's son Jeff Paradise. "I've learned more about him in the last few weeks than I ever knew because he doesn't talk about that time. I am glad that he is able to be here, and that we are all able to see this," he added.

"I think it was three years ago when my sons Ron and Jeff decided to take me and my friend to D.C. to see the WWII Memorial and Air Force Memorial and at the end of the day we watched the changing of the Guard. It is that day -- and today -- that I will remember," said Mark Paradise.

L to R - Maj. Gen. Gregg Martin, Jeff Paradise, Pfc. Mark Paradise, Ron Paradise and Col. Karl Ginter

Narrative from the Ceremony

PFC Mark J. Paradise

Born on 29 July 1925 in Tower City, Pennsylvania, Mr. Mark Paradise was drafted into the Armed Forces during the height of America's World War II mobilization. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania supplied nearly 1/8 of the Army's 8 million men, and 1/12 of the total military manpower throughout World War II. Mr. Paradise entered the Army at New Cumberland, Pennsylvania in October 1943, and attended 13 weeks of Basic Infantry Training at Camp Wheeler, Georgia.



Following Infantry training, he was shipped north to Rhode Island, where he embarked a troop carrier headed for Newton-Abbott, England, and was assigned to Company E, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division as a Rifleman. During the Spring of 1944, PFC Paradise and his Regiment conducted amphibious assault training throughout the Moors of South England. On the 6th of June 1944 -- D-Day -- PFC Paradise's Regiment assaulted Utah Beach, penetrated Fortress Europe, and arrived in the vicinity of [Pavenoville, France](#) by D-plus one. It was the beginning of a long, tough slog across France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and Germany, and the final liberation of Europe.

PFC Paradise was wounded in the hedgerows of Normandy on 15 June 1944, returning to England for hospitalization and recovery. He rejoined his Regiment in October 1944, just in time for the assault on the city of Aachen, Germany -- timing is everything, isn't it?!

By the time PFC Paradise was mustered-out of the Army at Fort Indiantown Gap in January 1946, his World War II campaigns included Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland, Ardennes-Alsace, and Central Europe. His awards and decorations include: the Bronze Star Medal, the Purple Heart, Good Conduct Medal, European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal w/Silver Campaign Star & Bronze Arrowhead Device, World War II Victory Medal, Army of Occupation Medal w/Germany Clasp, Presidential Unit Citation w/2 Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters, Belgian Fourragere, and Combat Infantryman Badge.

Today, we are rectifying a 67-year oversight, and bestowing decorations that were earned, but never awarded -- the Bronze Star Medal and the Combat Infantryman Badge. GEN George C. Marshall stated "The fact that ground troops, infantry in particular, lead such miserable lives, makes the award of the Combat Infantryman Badge so important." The Infantry blue badge with the image of a 1795 Springfield musket is the most prized award among infantryman. The Bronze Star Medal is awarded for valorous or meritorious achievement against an armed enemy of the United States.

U.S. Army War College Archives - News Article - 16 April 2012