These are diaries and letters of a native of Carthage, Jasper County, Missouri, who served in the 551st Parachute Infantry Battalion, U.S. Army, during World War II. Garrigues served in California, Georgia, the Canal Zone, North Carolina, Algeria, Italy, France, Belgium, and Germany.

Donald C. Garrigues entered the U.S. Army on 12 June 1942. After basic training at Camp Roberts, California, he qualified for and underwent parachute jump training at Fort Benning, Georgia. Assigned to the 551st Parachute Infantry Battalion, he served in the Canal Zone, Panama, from January to August 1943. The unit then underwent additional training at Camp Mackall, North Carolina, before shipping to Algeria in May 1944. In June and July 1944 the battalion served in Italy, before participating in the airborne invasion of southern France on 15 August 1944. Garrigues served on the front line until 18 November 1944, when the 551st was relieved and then transferred to a rest and training area in northern France. The subsequent German offensive in the Ardennes area (the “Battle of the Bulge”) forced the unit back into front-line action, and Garrigues was wounded in Belgium on 7 January 1945. Eventually removed to a hospital in England, he saw no further combat. He recovered from his wounds and returned to the United States in September 1945. Garrigues was mustered out of the Army on 23 October 1945.

This collection includes a brief résumé of Garrigues’s service record, his personal diaries for 1942, 1943, and 1945 (the diary for 1944 was lost), and his letters to his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Percy H. Garrigues of Carthage, and to his fiancée, Harriette Maxine Woodard of Webb City, Missouri. The diary for 1945 has several long gaps in the heretofore-daily entries. The letters have been filmed in chronological order.
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