

# A 'terrible day' for a Biron family

During World War II, the Western Union Telegraph man was the most unpopular person around. On that day in June 1944 every household in the village of Biron was upset by his presence in the village. When he stopped at the home of Joe and Gladys Kahoun there may have been relief in some homes but this was to be a terrible day for the Kahoun family.

**"THE SECRETARY OF WAR DESIRES ME TO EXPRESS HIS DEEP REGRET THAT YOUR SON PRIVATE ROBERT J KAHOUN WAS KILLED IN ACTION ON NINETEEN JUNE IN FRANCE LETTER TO FOLLOW = ULIO THE ADJUTANT GENERAL."**

Col. Howard R. Johnson, 501st Parachute Infantry Commander, wrote the letter that followed. "It is with deep regret that I confirm the tragic news of the loss of your son during the first stage of the invasion of France. I realize that any words that I can say are small and impotent during this period of grief, however I do hope that you may find some small degree of solace in the fact that Bob died a hero's death for a cause in which we all believed." That is the first paragraph of that letter.

There are no words to completely describe the impact of this news on that family and community. The Kahoun family knew that Bob, as a paratrooper with the 101st Airborne Division, would be among the first to drop in the invasion of France. Bob's brother, Jack, received the news, at Fort Bragg North Carolina, from his sister's letter indicating that their brother had died on the very same day that Jack was inducted into the Field Artillery, June 19, 1944. Jack could have received a furlough to go home for a visit to comfort his parents but that was



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**Pfc. Robert Kahoun, a paratrooper of the 101st airborne division.**

unthinkable because it would mean having to say "goodbye" under more difficult circumstances than leaving the first time.

Bob's dad was completely devastated by his son's death. Bob's mother stood up quite well but his dad's grief took its toll on his mother as well. There were great memories

of their son. He had been so active in sports in high school. He was an avid fisherman, skier, football player, etc. Bob was a little shy so he was a bit uneasy on the dance floor. When Bob was home on furlough he talked about a future in parachute jumping into forest fire protection and even parachuting with skis into mountain rescue missions.

There is little doubt that the world has lost greatly in the death of this one soldier. His nieces and nephews will never know the uncle they should have known. His great enthusiasm for the good things in life will never be realized. His name will appear on the records and perhaps a monument dedicated to remembering those who gave so much. The village of Biron did name a street in his honor. That is some testimony to the fact that this brave and wonderful person was once part of life here.

— *Written by Jack Kahoun*