



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2009

August 14, 2010

*517th Parachute Infantry Regiment
460th Parachute Field Artillery Battalion
596th Parachute Combat Engineer Company*

Website
Mail Call
Mail Call Archives
Roster

www.517prct.org
MailCall@517prct.org
www.517prct.org/archives
www.517prct.org/roster.pdf

66th Anniversary of Operation Dragoon



Army photo of the Dragoon ceremony at the WW II Memorial on 9 August 2010



66th Anniversary of Operation Dragoon (continued)

See article at:

<http://www.army.mil/-news/2010/08/10/43518-veterans-remember-operation-dragoon-v-j-day/>

(link found by from Tom Copsey)

I may be mistaken, but if I zoom in on the photo of the Dragoon ceremony, it looks like there is a guy in the back with a hat on that looks like it could be a 517 logo on the side. No? – BB



Bob,

I understand that General Seitz will be speaking at the 66th Anniversary of Operation Dragoon in Washington, D.C. Is it possible to get a copy of his speech on mail call?

Lory Curtis, son of Bud Curtis Hq, 1st BN



Hey Bob,

Dropping a quick note acknowledging the very active and spirited participation by **Gene Frice** and **Darrell Egnor** (Darrell is the spelling correct? if not I'll buy you another Martini) at the **66th anniversary of Operation Dragoon** the past 3 days at Arlington VA.

The venue included historical sessions Sunday night and Monday, a ceremony at the WWII Memorial in Washington DC on Monday and today's ceremonies at Arlington Cemetery . Darrell and Gene represented the 517th well with many stories, witticisms, and "airbornes".

The venue consisted of many speakers by retired and current Generals (including one 4 star) and French, English, and Canadian delegations all acknowledging and praising the 20 or so veterans who participated in Dragoon. The French were especially well represented and their accolades were a pleasant reminder of those we experienced last August in Southern France.

Will forward pictures in emails to come.

Tom Copsey

Website Guestbook Entry

Submitted by	Comments:
Name: Jim Wildman From: St. Louis, MO E-mail: jim1wildman@yahoo.com	I have just learned that my uncle Jim Wildman was in the 517. I have a strong desire to learn more about Jim and his time in Europe. If anyone has information or questions about Jim and his life after the war please contact me. Thank you for maintaining this site. Jim Wildman <i>Admin reply: Pvt. James W. Wildman was in the Service Company of the 517. http://517prct.org/documents/xmas1944/xmas1944.htm</i>
	Added: August 13, 2010



MailCall News

Sir,

Let me introduce to you, my name is Dominique Potier and I'm a Belguim soldier , I was an airborne . I'm very dedicating by the WW2 veterans . I'm also a member from differents ww2 outfits association .

I have contacted Mr Mel Dahlberg for ask him some info concerning his story . And Mel have given me your mail .

I try to built a data base with all I found concerning airbornes during the war , and the result is online in a website with a free access in English and French (http://usairborne.be/introduction_us.htm) , this is one of my way to keep alive the memory and also to give the opportunity to all to have se these data and that without pay ... I have been some probleme with roster , I had take some data in different books , and some men (who want make money with veterans money) ask me to stop with "our" data . Then for no probleme I try to find some info for continue my duty (see annexe my 517 data) .

I would like in the futur make the 517 roster and if you have some info for me that will be great .

Thanks for all the veterans for my liberty .

God Bless America .

Sgt Dominique Potier

paracsm@hotmail.com

Belguim Army

[I'm not exactly sure what info he is looking for. - BB]

Bob:

I was happy to see you follow the criteria established by your father regarding the dissemination of email material. The Constitution of the 517th Regimental Parachute Combat Team provides in part "to maintain and strengthen the bonds of comradeship which distinguish the men of the Combat Team., to provide for the gathering and dissemination of information concerning these men, and to perpetuate the heritage and tradition of the Airborne Spirit for future generations." The email program is a vehicle your father used to promote these ideals. He expressed to me a number of times that he experienced certain amount of guilt for censorship but always felt personal political views and religious beliefs should play no part in the communication (written or oral) between Association members. Your father was wise beyond his years.

Merle



MailCall News

Dear Bob: just a note from your fans in Miami -- our compliments again on the new format -- looks outstanding and is so easy to read. We're amazed at all the information you stuff in each one.

Pat Seitz and Alan Greer

PS Loved Mrs. Boyle's comments about the Japan reunion.

PSS FYI, Dad is going to Ft. Bragg next Thursday to be the keynote speaker at the **70th Anniversary celebration of the birth of the Airborne in the U.S.** My brother Rick will join him. We hope they will video the speech because while Dad wrote it out a couple of months ago and has refined and polished it since then, as he always does he'll give it without a note, so the best copy of it will be a video.

To whom it may concern,

I am looking e-mail address or any address for **Sgt. Gerald R. Stark.**

If you have any information let me know.....

My name is Masako Young, Mrs. William H Young.

My daughter find father's photo in <http://517prct.org/photos/stark.htm> with Mr. Stark and we are very much interesting to finding him.

Thank you very much!!

Masako Young

masakoy@live.com

Hello,

I did not received mailcalls any more.

My email is rcc.stassen@kpnmail.nl

Best regards

Ronald Stassen



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



Dear Mr Barrett:

A neighbor of mine in St Vallier de Thiey, Alps Maritime, France has participated each year in the anniversary of the second D-Day near Marseille. My neighbor, M Maurice DeStefano, in August 2009 drove a WWII vintage Jeep and wore the uniform of your regiment. However, his uniform does not have the badge of your regiment and he would very much like to have one if at all possible. Maurice is a very enthusiastic supporter of the American troops and is still so grateful for the superb job you all did in 1945.

My home is in Philadelphia and if it is possible for you to send me a regimental badge to my address there I will then forward the badge to him. My Philadelphia address is 241 South Sixth Street, Ap't 2111, Philadelphia, PA 19106.

Having a regimental badge would mean a great deal to M De Stefano, who will be participating in the D-Day Anniversary again this year.

Thank you so much,

Margaret Bearn

Margaret,

As far as I know, the 517th Association does not have any supply of the Regimental Badges. Of course, some troopers have old originals or copies. But most get their own from military sellers. The easiest place to find them is on eBay. Just search for "517th", and I'm sure you'll find some for sale. The colors and quantity vary from time to time.

Here is one other site that I found that has the patches (reproductions). The price seems a little high, but the look is close to the originals.

<http://vets.cliftoncreek.net:443/johnson/links/US%20Army%20Airborne%20Patches.htm>

Regards,

Bob Barrett

MailCall@517prct.org



More MailCall News

Bob/Claire et al.

Can someone send me a 517PRCT letterhead like the one Merle provided to the mayor at Drauginan? I would like to provide a 517th thank you to the French Embassy representative and British Embassy Attache who provided very moving tributes to the Vets at the Dragoon ceremonies in Arlington on Tuesday. I sat with The British Colonel at lunch and had a very moving discussion with Dr. Rivasseau of the French Embassy telling him how overwhelmed we were by the French people's gratitude during our visit last August. His tribute and one by a visiting French mayor were very heartfelt.

Attached article from the Post relating to Tuesday's ceremonies

Tom Copsey

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/08/10/AR2010081006014.html?hpid=voicesopinion>

Hello, Bob -

Thank you for continuing to do such a great job on Mail Call. Hundreds of us thank you thank you thank you, especially on this anniversary weekend!

We are now observing the 66th anniversary of the August 15, 1944 invasion into southern France - the second largest of the war, second only to June 6.

Spend a few minutes today learning something new about your favorite vet or about the 517. Ben used to ask me why I was so interested in the 517. As I told him, it was because they are cool. To quote my father, "Oh, yeah - we were hot s**t."

As though to emphasize, the Thunderbolt arrived in my mailbox today!

Happy anniversary and thank you to my favorite vets.

Claire Giblin

Bob,

don't know if this [See letter about Darrell "Shifty" Powers on next page] has been on Mail Call but Walt wanted me to send it to you. Your new format is so much easier to read. Thanks so much for all you do to keep the troopers in touch. I know it means a lot to Walt when I read the mail to him.

Sincerely,

Peanie Smith----wife of **Walter W. Smith** Hq. 1st Bn.



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



'Shifty' By Chuck Yeager

We 're hearing a lot today about big splashy memorial services. I want a nationwide memorial service for Darrell "Shifty" Powers.

Shifty volunteered for the airborne in WWII and served with Easy Company of the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, part of the 101st Airborne Infantry. If you've seen Band of Brothers on HBO or the History Channel , you know Shifty. His character appears in all 10 episodes, and Shifty himself is interviewed in several of them.

I met Shifty in the Philadelphia airport several years ago. I didn't know who he was at the time. I just saw an elderly gentleman having trouble reading his ticket. I offered to help, assured him that he was at the right gate, and noticed the "Screaming Eagle," the symbol of the 101st Airborne, on his hat.

Making conversation, I asked him if he 'd been in the 101st Airborne or if his son was serving. He said quietly that he had been in the 101st. I thanked him for his service, then asked him when he served, and how many jumps he made.

Quietly and humbly, he said "Well, I guess I signed up in 1941 or so, and was in until sometime in 1945 " at which point my heart skipped.

At that point, again, very humbly, he said "I made the 5 training jumps at Toccoa, and then jumped into Normandy do you know where Normandy is?" At this point my heart stopped.

I told him "yes, I know exactly where Normandy is, and I know what D-Day was." At that point he said "I also made a second jump into Holland , into Arnhem ." I was standing with a genuine war hero and then I realized that it was June, just after the anniversary of D-Day..

I asked Shifty if he was on his way back from France , and he said "Yes. And it 's real sad because, these days, so few of the guys are left, and those that are, lots of them can 't make the trip." My heart was in my throat and I didn 't know what to say.

I helped Shifty get onto the plane and then realized he was back in Coach while I was in First Class. I sent the flight attendant back to get him and said that I wanted to switch seats. When Shifty came forward, I got up out of the seat and told him I wanted him to have it, that I 'd take his in coach.

He said "No, son, you enjoy that seat. Just knowing that there are still some who remember what we did and who still care is enough to make an old man very happy.." His eyes were filling up as he said it.. And mine are brimming up now as I write this.

Shifty died on June 17, 2009 after fighting cancer.

There was no parade. No big event in Staples Center. No wall to wall back to back 24x7 news coverage. No weeping fans on television. And that 's not right.

Let 's give Shifty his own Memorial Service, online, in our own quiet way.

Rest in peace, Shifty.

Chuck Yeager, MajGen. [ret.]



Walter Smith with Lory and Tim Curtis
Salt Lake City Reunion, July 2009



Meet the Troopers

Being the nephew of a 517th trooper, I've long been curious as to what the paratroopers were all about. As a youngster visiting grandparents during summer months, I looked forward to getting into grandma's old cedar chest where she kept all that stuff that her two son's sent home back during the war years. Both sons served in Europe during WWII, the younger one served with George Patton's Armored group the 89th, while the other was a paratrooper with the Five-Seventeen. They wrote her regularly during the war and she kept every letter, memento and photo from their various locations. I was attracted to the letters from them and all the photo's they sent home showing the tanks, and planes, parachutes and big guns over there. Though the war had been over for several years I would sit for hours reading and re-reading those old letters and looking at photos from the "Big War".

PFC George Cavnar of Regimental HQ Co. served from Toccoa to the Bulge and on to Berlin for occupational duty. I was fascinated with one particular photo that he sent home. It was a photo of him driving a jeep with about a dozen troopers hanging on for dear life. It was taken as the jeep made it's way up the steep marble front steps that led to a huge multi-storied granite government building in Naples, Italy, I believe. It appeared from the photo as if everyone had his own personal bottle of whatever it was that had made them so daring. When I saw the photo I decided then and there that the Army was for me, I could hardly wait.

Uncle George said he came through the war with no major boo-boos. However while escorting a couple of WAC's and buddies in a jeep thru Berlin, a front wheel dropped off into the street car track groove causing the jeep to flip on it's side. Every one got out except him as his arm was pinned between the jeep and the pavement. He got a broken arm but no purple heart. He told of finally starting for home from Berlin later in 45 with the arm in a cast.

Once in the states he boarded a troop train bound for Texas and he and his duffel bag were headed for home. Several days later when the train arrived at his depot in Texas, Uncle George was involved in conversation with friends [crap game] and in saying their farewells, he some how lost track of time. As he started to step off the train he became aware that the train was already pulling away from the station. As he was replaying the jump sequence in his mind..... he was hooked up [with duffel].....standing in the door.....jump ! I'm sure he probably yelled "Geronimo" as he and his bundle cleared the door. He most likely was awaiting the opening shock when reality set in. Piece of cake for an old Airborne trooper I would think. By the time he was through bouncing along the rocks alongside the tracks he came up lame with two broken bones in the lower leg. He was unceremoniously loaded into an ambulance with the arm still in a cast and transported to the Army Hospital at Ft Sam Houston in San Antonio. The Battle of the Bulge was not nearly as hard on the body as was this train ride. I'm not sure how long he was detained in the hospital there but he definitely took a detour en route home. Our wounded warrior arrived home with a leg and an arm in a cast but at least he was home.

"Nephew Of A Buzzard"



Administrivia:

- If you miss any MailCalls, they are all available online at <http://www.517prct.org/mailcall/>
- At any time, if you want to be added or removed from the MailCall list, just let me know.
- Donations for any programs involving the 517th should be sent to our treasurer Leo Dean at 14 Stonehenge Lane, Albany NY 12203.
- Send any news, stories, or feedback to: MailCall@517prct.org
- If you send me email that you do not want included in MailCall, just label it as FYEO.
- I now understand how Ben could get confused about what he already posted and what he didn't. If I miss something, please just send it again.

Save the date!

Annual 517th Reunion (probably the last one)

**July 13-18, 2011
Atlanta, GA**

with visits to Camp Toccoa and Fort Benning

