



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2010

August 30, 2010

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

Website
Mail Call
Mail Call Archives
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www.517prct.org
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www.517prct.org/archives
www.517prct.org/roster.pdf

National Airborne Day – August 14, 2010





National Airborne Day – August 14, 2010

Bob:

Our compliments to Helen and Claire on the latest Thunderbolt. On behalf of all of us, we'd like to say to them -- thank you very much for this wonderful labor of love. You are outstanding.

For those who are interested, there are pictures of the National Airborne Day 70th Anniversary celebration at Ft. Bragg, N.C. on August 14, 2010 at which Dad was the keynote speaker. My brother Rick was able to go with Dad and had a front row seat. Rick said it was an impressive turnout and a heart-stirring celebration with pinpoint landings by the paratroopers who presented Dad with the baton. Dad was very honored to be there as the keynote speaker to celebrate the efforts of all his comrades who started the airborne and for all who followed in their footsteps. His speech, which he gave without a note, was in the words of my brother -- a hit into the stratosphere. The pictures can be found at: [Lieutenant General Frank Helmick Welcome! | Facebook](#) . Lt. Gen. Frank Helmick is the Commanding General of the 18th Airborne Corps which includes both the 82nd Airborne Division and the 101st Airborne Division. On Gen.Helmick facepage, there is a tab marked "Photos," click on that and there are 121 photos under National Airborne Day. One does not have to be a member of Facebook to see the photos. Airborne All the Way!

Pat Seitz and Alan Greer



Dick Seitz and LTG Frank Helmick



MailCall News

Subject: FW: Do you know what Currahee means? very inspiring...

This is an amazing story, and shows the strength of a Band of Brothers!

Ray Hess

See: <http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=5000003n&tag=contentMain;contentBody>

Hi Ben,

I wanted to let you know that I have no more copies of Nacho's story, Not Ready To Die.

I do, however, have the book on Amazon Kindle and Smashwords -- Ebooks.

I love receiving and reading all your emails.

Nila Gott (Vasquez)

Bob:

I received a call from a woman today whose father died in the last week. His name is Edward A. Stromski. She was trying to find a location where she could send a donation; he wanted no funds spent on flowers. The only address she could find was Bill Lewis in Florida which is 15-20 years old. She finally called the Static Line and got my number. I put her in touch with treasurer Leo Dean.

She told me her father never told her much about what he had done during his time in service but he was extremely proud of the 517th. I gave her the web site and told her she might find something about her father and might even get in touch with someone who knew him personally during his service time.

Merle

Hello,

My uncle Jim Wildman served in the 517 and I am just now finding information as to his service during the war. If anyone can give me help in learning about my uncle please contact me.

Thank you for any help you may provide,

Jim Wildman 636.527.3239

Jim1wildman@yahoo.com



La Musée de la Liberation in Le Muy

We have all read with sadness of the devastating floods in Provence this year. Damage to the little museum in Le Muy, La Musée de la Liberation, was extensive. Volunteers worked around the clock for weeks; professionals also had to step in to help save artifacts large and small. Imagine the damage that 8 or 9 FEET of water causes.

While a relative few of the 517 family has been able to visit Le Muy in the 16 years or so the museum has been open, the "kids from the museum" have been visitors at the 517 reunions here in the United States. They believe in preserving the history of the August 15 invasion and have been crucial in helping maintain the history of this great action in general and the 517's contribution in particular.

Many of you have met Mickael Soldi (aka Jean Michel) and Eric Renoux during reunions. Solid friends to the families of the 517, they are hosts to the vets and families in southern France. Seven members of the 517, unbelievably, were inducted into the Legion of Honor last summer, further elevating the profile of the 517. This recognition would not have come without the local support of the officials and the "kids at the museum."

I am pretty sure I have seen Lt. General Seitz's war-era uniform on display there; many of the 517 have donated artifacts to the museum. Some things have been cleaned; some can be reproduced relatively easily: photos that existed elsewhere are the best example. Some things are lost forever.

The British Pathfinders' Association, and its members, have already made sizable donations to the museum. The 517 Association President, Merle McMorrow, has given his approval to begin a donation drive on this side of the Atlantic. According to Howard Hensleigh, donations to restore the museum in the wake of the flood damage is "right in line with our corporate objectives: keeping the memory of the 517th PRCT alive in the very area where we made history."

Please forward donations in any amount to 517 PRCT Association, c/o Leo Dean, 14 Stonehenge Lane, Albany NY 12203. Mark your donation clearly for "the museum in Le Muy," or "preserving the legacy in southern France." No amount is too small. Donations will be forwarded on a rolling basis, so don't think that a week or a month or three from now it's "too late."

We will keep Mail Call updated on progress and information. Chris Compton (son of a British Pathfinder) was to escort his small group of surviving Pathfinders to Provence last week, and he will advise about the damage and the progress.

Thank you, thank you to the 517 Family for considering a donation to the Musée de la Liberation!

Claire Giblin



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



Hi, Bob -

Chris Compton provided permission to forward this for you to place in Mail Call, provided I edited a typo or two, so here it is:

Chris and Alan met with "the boys," Eric and Mickael, of the Museum: please see below -

I had inquired about Walter, a Pathfinder I first met in 2004. Happy to see he was there last year and this year, too.

Claire

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: "Chris Compton w" <
Sent: Sunday, August 22, 2010 9:19:04 AM
Subject: RE: update?

Hi Claire,

I am still trying to catch up with myself - and I'll put together a proper update as soon as I can.

Alan and I sat down with the boys - they are both pretty exhausted. The flooding was truly traumatic.

They are continuing to work hard on the restoration and we hope to get a further update on progress in a month or so.

We had a serious chat about what they see as the future and have encouraged them to think about it so we can help them put a business plan over the coming months.

It was another great visit - quieter than last year, of course - not spoilt too much by heavy rain on the afternoon of 14th. Thereafter sunshine and adoration, which does our veterans a lot of good. Walter was there in all his glory - and fully intends being there next year. Altogether there were about 10 British veterans in a party numbering about 50.

Our remaining veterans received their Legion of Honour - after a tremendous effort by Sue Folkard and various people in Le Muy - and they were all very moved.

Joe Cicchinelli was the only American veteran, but you were not forgotten.

Attached is a photo of the flowers which were laid at the American Cemetery in Draguignan -(see next page) by Joe Cicchinelli on behalf of the American veterans, by several Mayors on behalf of the French people and by Col. Handford, Sue Folkard and myself on behalf of the British contingent.

It was once again a moving ceremony, before the joyful parade which the veterans enjoy so much.

I'll be in touch as soon as I can, meanwhile if there is any help I can give, please let me know.

All the best,

Chris



MailCall News

To all of you, members of the 517th especially, and all relatives, thank you. My brother and I were thinking about Dragoon all weekend. As sons of a 517th trooper, we had tears in our eyes this weekend. With all our love to anyone associated with the 517th- like the Barrett's, the Giblin's, Trooper Walsh, the Frice's, the Kane's, the Boyle and Frazier families, and all the others we met in Washington D.C. Back in 2007 ---the Jansson family thanks and loves you.

Pete Jansson and family.



Website Guestbook Entry

Submitted by	Comments:
<p>Name: Del Hawley From: Oxford, Mississippi E-mail: dhawley@bus.olemiss.edu</p>	<p>My dad, Alvin (Al) Hawley was in C Company of the 517th. He was a machine gunner, and was with the unit until he was wounded on Christmas eve in the Battle of the Bulge, and then after two month of recovery was attached to the unit again for a short time until he was discharged with disability. He is strong and well and living where he grew up in Flushing Michigan with my mother, June. They were married while he was in training. I learned of this website from him. He had not talked much about his time in WWII, but I knew enough to know that it was an exceptional experience for a 19-20 year old man that did much to shape his later life, and mine at least indirectly. I am very proud of him and of humbled by the level of his service and sacrifice. He does not have email, but if you would like to contact him I would be happy to help you do that.</p>
	<p>Added: August 17, 2010</p>

D-Day Piper Bill Millin

WORLD | August 20, 2010

[Bill Millin, Scottish D-Day Piper, Dies at 88](#) <---- read the full story here

By JOHN F. BURNS

Mr. Millin, who was asked to play the bagpipes as British troops landed in Normandy, was immortalized in the movie "The Longest Day."



Pegasus Archive

Bill Millin playing the bagpipes in an photograph from World War II taken shortly after D-Day.



MailCall News

Bob, forwarding a letter I delivered to the French Embassy yesterday for Minister Rivasseau who provided a very moving tribute to the Vets of Operation Dragoon last week at Arlington Cemetery. This gentleman spoke from the heart and he was very emotional when I thanked him for the French People's gratitude we experienced last year in Southern France. I also included in his package copies of the letter Merle sent to the mayor of Draguignan expressing the 517th's sympathy for the their losses due to the recent flooding as well as the mayor's response.

One picture includes Darrel and Gene prior to the wreath laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknowns.

Another picture shows some of the French who traveled for the ceremonies - the lady was an ambulance driver during the war I believe. Monica, please correct me if I'm wrong.

Will send a few other pics under separate mails. I'm not smart enough to compress these files.

Tom Copsy





517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

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460th Parachute Field Artillery Battalion
596th Parachute Combat Engineer Company

18 August 2010

L'Ambassade de France aux Etats-Unis
Washington D.C
Ministre Conseiller
François Rivasseau

Dear Monsieur Rivasseau,

On behalf of the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team Association, I would like to personally thank you for your heartwarming tribute to the veterans of Operation Dragoon at Arlington Cemetery on August 10. Your presence as well as the attendance by many of your country people in support of our veterans was most inspiring.

It was especially moving to witness your presentation of the Légion D'honneur medal to four Dragoon Veterans. Last year, on the 65th anniversary of Dragoon, a similar presentation was made by the Mayor of the town of Le Muy, on behalf of President Sarkozy, to seven members of the 517th. Our visit to Southern France was the trip of a lifetime. The people in Le Muy, Sospel, Draguignan, St Cezaire, and Cannes bestowed a tribute for our Troopers rivaling the love and admiration we have for them in the States.

If you recall I was able to chat with you after last week's ceremony and recant how special it was last year to experience the French hospitality bestowed upon the American and British paratroopers who participated in the liberation of Southern France in 1944. I was also deeply touched by your acknowledging gesture to me at the end of the ceremony luncheon.

Monsieur Rivasseau, veuillez accepte nos remerciements de le part du 517th Regiment de Combat des Parachutistes, pour le support que vous et les Francais nous ont apportés. Que Dieu vous garde et protégé vos compatriots!

V/R

Thomas Copsey
Secretary, 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team Auxiliary

www.517prct.org



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



Two more pictures - Minister Rivasseau presenting the Legion of Honor at Arlington. Gene Frice at the very left of one picture and LTG David Grange (101st, 82nd, and 517th airborne) to the right of the Minister. LTGEN Grange started as a private in the 517th and Darrell mentioned at last year's Dragoon how they started together as privates and look how they ended up!

<http://www.506infantry.org/his2id/hiskoreaarticle11.html>

Tom Copsy





517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



Two more pictures - Gene and Darrell making their entrance into the amphitheater for the Dragon ceremonies at Arlington. In one pic LTGEN Grange precedes Darrell, his buddy.

R/TC





More MailCall News

Hi,

This is Don Saunders' [596th] eldest son Mike. Don is in the ICU at Guthrie Clinic - Robert Packer Hospital in Sayre, PA. He fell last Monday the 9th and ruptured his Gall Bladder with the sepsis as a result. We almost lost him before he was air-evacuated from Elmira to Sayre. (hell of a way to get your first chopper ride and he won't remember a thing about it) The surgeons and nurses at the Guthrie Clinic did marvelous things fixing him up and he is improving every day. They had to do a traditional large gut cut to get all of the mess out that the rupture left so he is pretty sore and will be for some time. Today, he is scheduled to come off the ventilator which is also very good news

Please keep him in your prayers. He will be in the hospital for at least another week. Thanks for letting everybody know.

Mike Saunders

Bob

Just read Mail Call No. 2009. I think you reached your peak as they (MC) can't get any better. Easy to read and filled with great news and information.

Lory Curtis, General Seitz gave the Key Note speech at Fort Bragg this past week. It was the 70th Anniversary of the Airborne. I share your thoughts about hoping someone made a Video so the rest of us can see it. He always makes the best speeches and I always enjoy them.

Tom Copsy first of all you spelled my name correctly. Thanks for your comments about Gene Frice and I. Both of us like to talk, perhaps too much. I still owe you a Martini so come to the Florida Mini in January and I will buy you two as they don't cost \$11 each in Florida.

Bob you sure have good eyes as that was me with the 517 cap and the pin on the side. It's odd that the 517 in big letters did not show up. To right and in front of me is Monica Stoy that put on a super Operation Dragoon in Washington last week. She is a retired Army Capt. and has a chest full of medals plus she made 106 Parachute jumps. More about Operation Dragoon in a later mail as Darrell Jr. and I are flying his Sea Plane up to Hunter McDonalds Island in Canada in a few days.

Thanks to Peanie Smith for forwarding the mail from General Yeager regarding Shifty. I didn't know him but he sounded like he was quite the man.

Last but not least I wish to comment about Merle Mc Morrows mail that should not have been pointed at you. I take full blame for my political views and as I told you it will not happen again. He has a way with words in his many letters to Mail Call and the Thunder Bolt but he should have addressed this one to me. Guess he doesn't vote the way I do.

Darrell Egner



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



Bob,

Not sure why my picture along with my brother Tim and Walt Smith was in the last mail call, but it was good to see Walt's picture again, and to see a comment from his wife Mrs. Peanie Smith. To the Smith family I hope Walt is in good health and spirits. He and my Dad served together in Headquarters First Battalion. It was such an honor to meet him and Peanie in Salt Lake this past year. I hope our group is now thinking of our reunion in Atlanta, Georgia, and have penciled in next years dates, July 13- 18, 2011. It should be a great reunion!

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

Hi Bob,

There are more videos online for people to view. Please put this in the latest newsletter and if possible please post this as a permanent link on the website.

<http://www.vimeo.com/the517th>

Best Regards,

Wade Gilbert



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

