



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2014

September 26, 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

Eleanor D. Archer

The Daytona Beach News-Journal had an obituary a couple of weeks ago on **Eleanor D. Archer**, who died 26 August 2010. Eleanor was the wife of **Clark Archer**, the 517th "in-house historian" who dies a couple of years ago, after a prolonged illness. He had boxes of WWII daily reports, which Eleanor gave to me following his death, and I sent them to you Dad. Eleanor did not want any military ceremony for Clark or any condolences to his next of kin.

FYI: The obituary on Eleanor was very prosaic and no mention of any next of kin. I called the newspaper to find who placed the obituary and was told it was a nephew who would call me if he wished any contact. I have received no response from the nephew.

Anyway, you may wish to send a notice to all regarding Eleanor's death. Many 517thers knew her well.

Dan Smith

HG 1st

[Clark Archer was a historian of the first order. He was the Senior Editor of the Paratroopers' Odyssey – the official record of the 517 – and many other papers and remembrances. Clark and Eleanor were great friends of all the 517 troopers. Ben spoke to Clark and Eleanor often. – BB]

ARCHER, ELEANOR D.- Eleanor D Archer, age 81, of Daytona Beach, died August 26, 2010. Mrs. Archer was a resident of Florida for the past 35 years, where she enjoyed the warm Florida sunshine. Eleanor valued and loved her many friends and family members, who will miss her smiles and great wit. Eleanor enjoyed biking, swimming. Mrs Archer is preceded in death by her husband, Clark Archer. Memorials may be given to the charity of one's choice. Condolences for the family may be shared at www.lohmanfuneralhomes.com.


LOHMAN
FUNERAL HOME
DAYTONA

1423 Bellevue Ave., (386) 267-1100



MailCall News

RE: 517 PRCT - MailCall No. 2013 - September 18, 2010

Bob I couldn't open the file even after downloading the newer version of Adobe.

Don Sliker

Don,

Give it a couple of days. I found that AOL can often take a day or two to load new files and updates. Ben often had that problem with AOL.

Bob Barrett

RE: Fighting 517

My father **Thomas Fred Patin** was in the 517, I would like to be on your mail call list. I live in Breaux Bridge, La. He was one of the most decorated veterans in St. Martin Parish. He retired a Lt. Col.

Thanks,
Tony Patin
Ardent Services
Manager, Panel Manufacturing

122 Asset Avenue
Scott, LA 70583
Telephone: (337) 289-5202
Fax: (337) 289-5204
Mobile: (337) 316-2393
Email: tpatin@ardent.us

Please send info on the Kissimmee Reunion.

Thanks Babbie

[Will do. – BB]



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



Subject: Looking for W.H. Caulfield

Claire,

Today, I received the long awaited Individual Deceased Personnel File for my cousin, PVT Richard B. Bednarz. After his death, he was identified by a 2nd LT W. H. Caulfield of the 517th Parachute Infantry.

Does the 517th Organization have sufficient records to know if the former LT Caulfield is still living? If his is, I would appreciate receiving any contact information you have.

Thank you.

Arland D. Schneider

Hi, Arland,

I am sorry to report that I heard from Leo Dean today; Lt. Caulfield died three or four years ago. Leo attended the wake.

He doesn't know if the widow still lives in the area or not; as you can see, the Thunderbolt is not being returned.

I am sorry this isn't better news.

Claire

Hello

My name is Geoffrey Lewis, I am the grandson of Paul D. Lewis who is listed on the 1944 Christmas as 1st LT HQ company 2nd Battalion. Looking to try and connect with whoever I can, and learn what I can about his unit and time spent in the service.

Thanks

Geoff Lewis

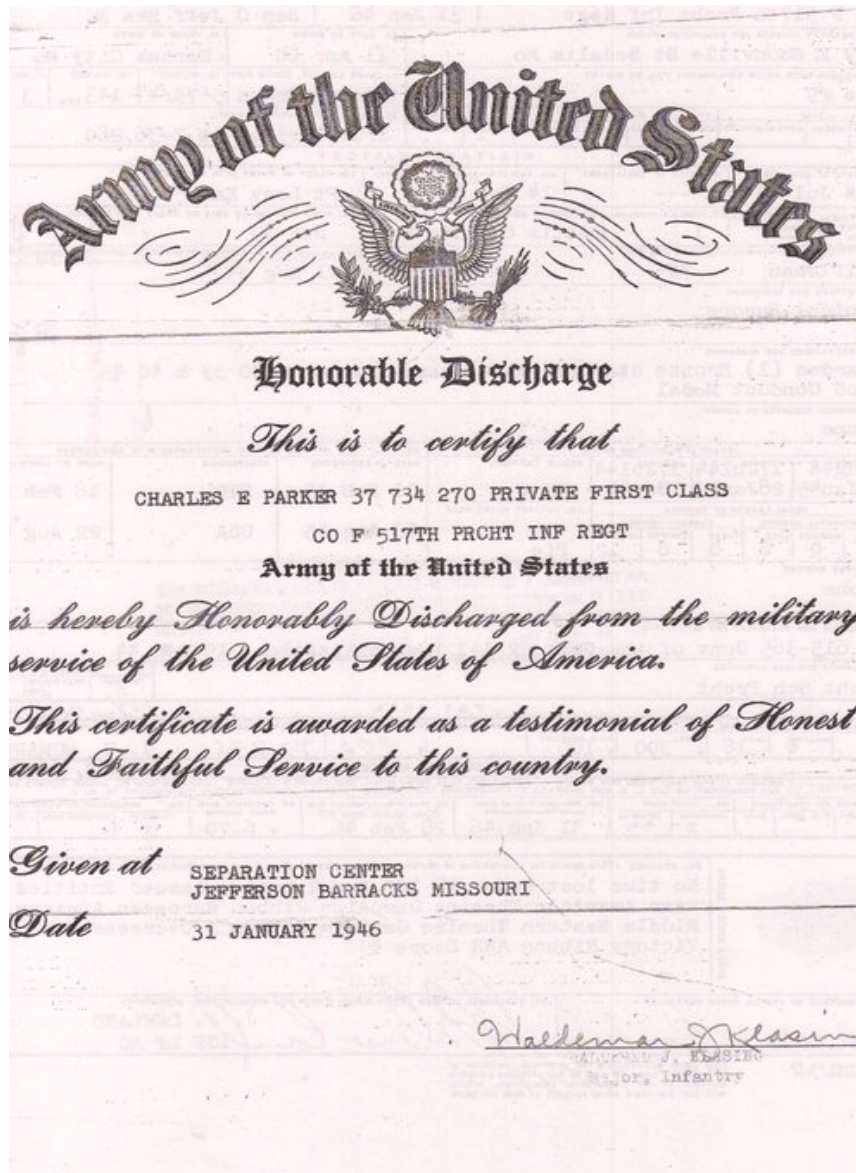


Charles Eugene Parker, Company F

To: webmaster @ 517prct.org
Subject: Charles Eugene Parker

Hello,
I came across the site when trying to research the unit my grandfather was part of. Based on the attachments he joined the military in 1944 and was part of the 517. I do not see his name in the roll call but have many other documents I'd like to send

Thank you
Mike Kelley
mkelleyjr34 @ gmail.com





517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



Mike,

If you have other info that might be of interest to the 517 troopers or for the website history, yes, please send it. I will include this info on the next MailCall newsletter, and I will copy you.

Bob Barrett



Website Guestbook Entry

Submitted by	Comments:
Name: GEORGE JANSSON From: Plymouth, MA E-mail: droopymoe@verizon.net	Have not been on-line much since we moved to Mom, Dad, and Paul's house. Dad (Bertil Jansson) was in B Company . Hope to see mail call again. We were all sorry to hear of Mr. Barrett's passing. The 2007n reunion was an event I will always remember
	Added: September 18, 2010
Submitted by	Comments:
Name: Geoff Lewis From: Bedford, MA E-mail: glewis60@gmail.com	Hi my name is Geoff Lewis, I am the grandson of Paul D. Lewis of hq company of 2nd battalion . I was going through some old boxes and found some memorabilia and photo's of my grandfather from this time period, so I decided to go on a hunt to find out what I could. This website has been a great find, and I hope to soon add what pictures I have found. For those of you who may have known her, My grandmother Elsa Lewis is now 91, and is doing well. I have recently enlisted in the USMC, and learning about my grandfathers wartime stories has been great. thanks a lot and godspeed.
	Added: September 21, 2010

Kissimmee Reunion – January 2011

**517th Annual Florida Mini-Reunion
January 14-18, 2011**

Banquet on the 17th (Monday)

Hosted by: Brenda Verbeck Mortensen and Helen Beddow

**Location: Ramada Gateway Hotel
7470 Highway 192 West
Kissimmee, Florida 34747
Tele: 1(800) 272-6232
web site: WWW.ramadagateway.com**

More info soon!



Name That Trooper

Our mystery trooper was a private from G company according to the 517th PIR 1944 Christmas roster. He was a natural born warrior who excelled in combat like few others. He was fearless to a fault and seemed to be looked after by a guardian angel. As good a soldier as he was, he did have one glaring character defect. He was totally unpredictable when he was in the booze. He took on a Jekyll and Hyde persona and it was best to steer clear of him when he had had a few. Consequently his fellow soldiers and officers had to keep a tight line on him when he had too much idle time on his hands.

His first major scrape happened when the 517th was in the vicinity of Frascati Italy. Frascati was a hotbed for pro Mussolini thugs who were fascists and were known locally as "black shirts". They were easy to spot because of the black shirts they wore as a symbol and they were well known as a cut throat bunch of killers if given an opportunity. Our mystery trooper was in a bar in Frascati and was apparently the only American in the bar and very drunk. Several patrons were making noises about the "dirty Americans" and things were getting a bit tense to say the least. Our private was in no mood to take a lot of abuse from the likes of these characters. You would think that even a bold paratrooper would have had enough sense to get the heck out of there. Witnesses said that two black shirts approached our trooper and one had a knife with intent to use it. Unbeknownst to the black shirts our trooper had a Beretta 25 caliber pistol in his belt beneath his shirt. Our private shot both of them and definitely killed one of them. The Italian government wanted the trooper tried for murder and the Army did process papers for a court martial for the killing a civilian. Most people thought that he had done Italy a great favor by blasting the black shirts but the incident caused a lot of scrutiny to be aimed at the U S Army. Our trooper was hauled in front of his commander to answer these serious charges and the killing of a civilian would likely bring time in Leavenworth for the trooper. If there is a moral to this story it would likely be, 'never take a knife to a gunfight'. Col Mel Zais stood our lad at attention in front of his desk at the C/O's tent and proceeded to put the fear of God into the frightened trooper. Zais was responsible for getting him out of Italy by putting him on the first available aircraft on Aug 15th for the jump into S. France. He was told by Zais that the court martial papers would follow the Regiment everywhere. He explained that the only way that the charges could be dismissed would be for our trooper to perform some amazing super human act of bravery during combat that would earn anyone else the Medal Of Honor. He was told there would be no medals awarded and no promotions for him in the future.

At Col de Braus the 517th encountered some of the bloodiest fighting of the war, the enemy had inflicted 147 casualties with 21 dead and 123 wounded plus 3 captured. Something desperately needed to be done to stop this carnage against the 517th. During the G company attacks, the enemy fought from behind the thick walls of a concrete pill box. From the book 'Battling Buzzards', Dick Robb told of witnessing an incredible drama during this battle. "In view of many of us, a GI had climbed on top of this pill box that everyone was shooting at." Someone shouted 'Cease fire, he's one of us! Apparently oblivious to all, this character dropped a white phosphorous grenade down the vent pipe. As the krauts inside came stumbling out, he jumped down and took them all prisoner." Col Zais had witnessed the whole drama from his position and sent word that "whomever that soldier was, Col Zais wanted to see him." As fate would have it the trooper came



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



marching up to see the Colonel with 8 German prisoners at gunpoint. Who was this trooper you might ask?, it was none other than our mystery trooper taking care of some of the old debt that he owed the good Colonel. Everyone watched as he proceeded to trot up to Col Zais and gave him the biggest and most exaggerated parade ground salute that you could imagine. He also flashed that famous ear to ear grin that he did so well. The Colonel asked "was that you up on that pill box"? To which our proud trooper replied "yessir Colonel and I got all the prisoners too." Zais said to him "you did one hell of a job and you were very lucky your own men didn't shoot you, and I guess we can forget about those court martial papers."

Zais was not the only officer who tried to keep our trooper in line, as our own favorite 517th historian and former officer Howard Hensleigh had to deal with him on more than one occasion. Probably sometime in January of 45 the guys had a brief respite coming and as precaution Hensleigh asked that the others keep an eye on him and at the first sign of a problem to have him brought in. They did just that, they brought our mystery lad to Captain Hensleigh just as he started to tear up a local bar. Hensleigh had an underground jail in this village that was known as the 'dungeon' and he had our trooper placed there for safe keeping until he sobered up. No charges were preferred by Hensleigh. At St Cezaire, it is reported that our mystery trooper teamed up with Sgt Frank Dallas and the pair were accredited with killing enough Germans in their defense line to allow I company to achieve their objective with few if any casualties. A fellow soldier commented on his uncanny ability with the M1 rifle and that in combat he could shoot Germans like he shot rabbits.....and he loved to hunt. As the war began to wind down the high point troopers were being sent to other outfits since the 517th was being disbanded. Our lad was indeed a high point man and he was taken by truck to the train station with other 517th soldiers with high points, for transport to their next duty station. Those who were there with Capt Hensleigh said that when our lad got off the truck he was crying like a baby because he didn't want to leave his buddies. Howard said that there was a trail of tears that led from the troop truck area all the way to the train. There were no purple hearts awarded for broken hearts but if there had been our trooper would have been a prime candidate. He came as a private and he left as a private.

I suppose I must admit that I had empathy for this young fellow who had a drinking problem because as a recovered alcoholic myself with 17 years of sobriety, I know what it is like to wake in the morning and wonder if I was in trouble for my actions the day before. No one ever wanted to be an alcoholic but some of us seem to be predestined to this fate for unknown reasons. After leaving the Army and going home, our trooper was never seen or heard from again. Maybe, just maybe, there were some 517th troopers that survived the carnage of that bloody war and did go home that otherwise might not have made the trip because of the heroic actions of this private who had the heart and unnerving combat skills to make a difference. He was very proud to be a soldier and he was not about to let harm come to his buddies if he could help it. Sgt Major Robb of the 517th went on record in the book 'Battling Buzzards' publication when he said in reference to our lads anonymity after leaving the military, "some disappeared quickly due to the ravages of hard living." Regardless of where he ended up in life I would want him to know that I understand. When our nation needed help against opposing formidable world powers that wanted to destroy us, she reached out her hand for help. This young man was just one of many many thousands that stepped forward and answered that call.

Can you name our mystery trooper ???

– NEPHEW OF A BATTLING 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.
- 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.
- Donations for any programs involving the 517th should be sent to our treasurer:
Leo Dean
14 Stonehenge Lane
Albany, NY 12203

Save the date!

Annual 517th Reunion (probably the last one)

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

with visits to Camp Toccoa and Fort Benning

