



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2024

November 28, 2010

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

Website

www.517prct.org

Mail Call

MailCall@517prct.org

Mail Call Archives

www.517prct.org/archives

Roster

www.517prct.org/roster.pdf

Medal of Honor Recipient – SSgt. Sal Giunta

Last night I watched an interview with Staff Sergeant Sal Giunta, on the Late Show with David Letterman. Sgt. Giunta is the first living person since the Vietnam War to receive the United States military's highest decoration for valor, the Medal of Honor. Giunta was cited for saving members of his squad on October 25, 2007 during the War in Afghanistan.

When I watched this show, I was very impressed with this man. He is just a normal, humble guy from Iowa, who enlisted in the army, joined the infantry and then airborne, training at Fort Benning. He serves with the 503rd Infantry Regiment of the 173rd Airborne. Note that he attributes his survival to his team and his army training. Click [here](#) to watch a clip of the show. See [here](#) to read the wikipedia article about Sgt. Giunta and a description of the battle.



Addressing the attention he has received due to the medal, he said, "I'm not at peace with that at all. In this job, I am only mediocre. I'm average....And coming and talking about it and people wanting to shake my hand because of it, it hurts me, because it's not what I want. And to be with so many people doing so much stuff and then to be singled out—and put forward. I mean, everyone did something."



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MailCall News

Hello Bob;

I am wishing the 517th Family and the Barratt clan a lovely Thanks Giving! I hope this message finds you all well and happy.

Respectfully,
Teresa [Messina]

Your 517 prct fan from Seattle

The Seitz clan sends wishes for a very blessed, Happy Thanksgiving to you, your whole family and to the men of the 517th and their families. Among the many things we are thankful for is the work that you and your siblings and children do to carry on your Dad's important work of being the glue that holds the Association and the Auxiliary together. Thank you and God bless.

Pat Seitz and Alan Greer

With a little internet research, I found an answer to last week's question from Elaine Berger. She was looking for information about a lapel pin that she found, and was wondering if it was associated with the 517. The motto, "First to Assemble" is the giveaway. It turns out that this badge is for the [162nd Infantry Regiment](#) of the Oregon Army National Guard. They fought in WWI, WWII, and Iraq. -- BB



Bob -- In #2023, referring to which company Don Sliker might be interested in finding, I expect it's E Company. His dad and mine served with E Co.

Mark Landreth

Hello There,

Please add my husband and myself to your mailcall list. My husband's email address is jimmy-benson@comcast.net Our trooper is **James Benson of the 596**. If you need any other info from me please let me know. Thank you very much!

Misty Walker
Feature Presentation
2479 Murfreesboro Road, #363
Nashville TN 37217
www.featurepresentation.net



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Dear Bob,

I have to agree with Bob Reber's comment on the IA U team this year. What we need Bob is a place kicker. In the game with Wisconsin our guy missed a point after kick which would have ended the game at a tie; in the OH State game yesterday he missed an easy field goal which would have ended that game in a tie. At least we would have had a chance to win in overtime. Since those two teams are tied with Michigan State (who we beat badly) for the championship it is fair to say that IA U is underrated this year. The Northwestern game was not important enough to be telecast out here, so I don't know what went wrong there, BUT that is Big Ten football.

I have been slowly going through the book "Truman" by David McCullough to see what those guys were doing in the capitol while we were fighting the war. In WWI which, as a field artillery battery commander, changed Harry's life I find that he toured Paris and had a great time on leave in the Riviera our old stomping ground. The part that really struck home though were the plans for operation Downfall, the invasion of Japan. We were to have 30 days leave and then hit the west coast in September, which I'm sure all the troopers still in the outfit at that time remember. The plan was to invade the island of Kyushu November 1, 1945 and I am sure that would have been preceded with an airborne invasion including the 517th PRCT, with our taking off from the westernmost islands of Alaska. Operation Coronet, the attack on the main island, Honshu, was not to take place until March 1946, subjecting the troops on Kyushu to five months of Japanese fury. I can't say Harry's decision to drop the bombs was a mistake. In addition to saving our necks and those of many other Americans, it spared many Japanese lives, if Okinawa is any gage.

Long ago I drafted an Amendment Number 2 to the bylaws and sent it off to the committee and to you, Bob, but no one seems to have it. If that is the case, I will send it snail mail. Let me know.

Howard Hensleigh

Subject: Thanksgiving, 1944, with the 517th

Bob and Ben,

I met John Carter this August. John was attached, first as an engineer, then as a signalman, to the 517th. He was at the annual Operation Dragoon commemoration held here in DC and told a very funny story about Thanksgiving 1944, that I posted a blog about yesterday.

<http://habap.wordpress.com/2010/11/25/thanksgiving-1944/>

Have a good weekend!

Dave Navarre

[Dave Navarre, along with Monika Stoy, are the organizers of the Operation Dragoon reunions in Washington, DC.]



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Claude E. Rickards, E Company

I talked to his son yesterday and he informed me that his dad, Claude E. Rickards, Co. E 517, had passed away Aug.28, 2010 in Shelton, Wash. No details on cause, but believe he was 88 yrs. of age.

Bob Hart, Co.D 517

Wikipedia

I recently noticed that an entry was added to the Wikipedia page for the 517 PIR. Under "[Notable Soldiers of the 517th](#)", the following entry was added. (PFC William T. Gutbrod was with C Co.)

- William Gutbrod, head football coach at Cleveland St. Joseph High School of Cleveland, OH from 1950 to 1990 and also Gilmour Academy of Gates Mills, OH from 1991 to 1997. He is the 3rd all-time winningest coach in Ohio High School Football with 310 wins. Entered the Ohio High School Hall of Fame in 1986.

Military Truisms

"Aim towards the Enemy." *[Instruction printed on US rocket launcher]*

When the pin is pulled, Mr. Grenade is no longer our friend. *[From a US Field Manual]*

Cluster bombing from B-52s is very, very accurate. The bombs always hit the ground.

Whoever said the pen is mightier than the sword obviously never encountered automatic weapons.

Don't ever be the first, don't ever be the last, and don't ever volunteer to do anything.

If your attack is going too well, you are walking into an ambush.

If you find yourself in a fair fight, you didn't plan your mission properly.

Don't draw fire; it irritates the people around you.

No combat-ready unit has ever passed inspection.

Any ship can be a minesweeper once.

If the enemy is in range, so are you.

Tracers work both ways.

Friendly fire isn't.

Five second fuses only last three seconds.

Never share a foxhole with anyone braver than you are.

The problem with taking the easy way out is that the enemy has already mined it.

Incoming fire has the right of way.

The quartermaster has only two sizes: too large and too small.

If you can see the enemy, he can see you.

And never tell your Platoon Sergeant you have nothing to do.



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The American Soldier

Your alarm goes off, you hit the snooze and sleep for another 10 minutes.
He stays up for days on end.

You take a warm shower to help you wake up.
He goes days or weeks without running water.

You complain of a "headache", and call in sick.
He gets shot at as others are hit, and keeps moving forward.

You put on your anti-war/don't support the troops shirt, and go meet up with your friends.
He still fights for your right to wear that shirt.

You make sure you're cell phone is in your pocket.
He clutches the cross hanging on his chain next to his dog tags.

You talk trash about your "buddies" that aren't with you.
He knows he may not see some of his buddies again.



You walk down the beach, staring at all the pretty girls.
He walks the streets, searching for insurgents and terrorists.

You complain about how hot it is.
He wears his heavy gear, not daring to take off his helmet to wipe his brow.

You go out to lunch, and complain because the restaurant got your order wrong.
He doesn't get to eat today.

Your maid makes your bed and washes your clothes.
He wears the same things for weeks, but makes sure his weapons are clean.

You go to the mall and get your hair redone.
He doesn't have time to brush his teeth today.

You're angry because your class ran 5 minutes over.
He's told he will be held over an extra 2 months.

You call your girlfriend and set a date for tonight.
He waits for the mail to see if there is a letter from home.

You hug and kiss your girlfriend, like you do every day.
He holds his letter close and smells his love's perfume.

You roll your eyes as a baby cries.
He gets a letter with pictures of his new child, and wonders if they'll ever meet

You criticize your government, and say that war never solves anything.
He sees the innocent tortured and killed by their own people and remembers why he is fighting.



You hear the jokes about the war, and make fun of men like him.
He hears the gunfire, bombs and screams of the wounded.

You see only what the media wants you to see.
He sees the broken bodies lying around him.



You are asked to go to the store by your parents. You don't.
He does exactly what he is told.

You stay at home and watch TV.
He takes whatever time he is given to call, write home, sleep, and eat.

You crawl into your soft bed, with down pillows, and get comfortable.
He crawls under a tank for shade and a 5 minute nap, only to be woken by gunfire.



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Kissimmee Mini-Reunion info

517th Annual Florida Mini-Reunion

January 15-17, 2011

Hosted by: Brenda Verbeck Mortensen and Helen Beddow

Location: Ramada Hotel and Inn Gateway

7470 Highway, 192 West

Kissimmee, Florida 34747

Tele: 1(800) 327-9170

web site: www.ramadagateway.com

For more information, please call
Brenda Verbeck Mortensen at (813) 335-8002 or
Helen Beddow at (912) 665-2766

Step 1: Hotel Information

Special hotel rates apply January 14 – 17

\$65.00 + Tax per night

For those that will be arriving on Friday, January 14, these rates will apply.

For room reservations: Call 800-327-9170

Daily between the hours of 9 am – 5pm EST

Identify yourself as attending the 517 Parachute 2011 Reunion

Step 2: Reunion Registration

Registration fees are \$45.00 per person which includes your banquet meal. For those that will be coming just for the banquet, your meal will be \$38.00 including tax and gratuity. Please send your [Registration form](#) and money to:

*Brenda Verbeck Mortensen
13046 Race Track Road #220
Tampa, FL 33626
(813) 335-8002*

Click here for the [Registration form](#)



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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



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