



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2035

January 23, 2011

*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

The Greatest Generation

I wanted to let our 517th family know that I was asked by another Principal in my school district if I could come and talk to his students about World War II. I was very honored to be asked to do this and I agreed to speak to the students. The poor students had to listen to me for 2 hours, a long time for kids to sit, but they were very interested and didn't want to take a break from what I was talking about. I started by telling them how our country was attacked at Pearl Harbor, and how the 517th PIR was formed and the men who made it such a great Regiment. I explained to them it was not easy to become a paratrooper. I told them how General Seitz (then a Major) interviewed over 3,100 men and only allowed 700 men into his battalion; they were amazed. The kids learned the 517th was the only Parachute Regimental Combat Team in the European war, and that they spent more days in combat than any other unit in the entire war; 94 consecutive days on the front lines in France without relief. These students were very impressed with what the 517th did for our country to keep all of us safe and free from oppression. I closed my remarks by reading the final paragraph in the book I wrote about my Dad, *Letters Home, a Paratrooper's Story*.

"This was truly the "Greatest Generation," the best America could offer. When the war was over these men resumed a normal life never asking for any special treatment. For sixty long years Bud never would talk about his war experiences. Now his stories are recorded for his posterity, and the world. After eighty years he could finally start to talk about his war experiences. Each of us must never forget what World War II veterans gave to this country and the world. We must never let such a world calamity happen again. Bud's and other veterans' service must never be forgotten. The world has a responsibility to remember what these men did to keep the world free."

Lory Curtis, son of **Bud Curtis**, HQ, 1st Bn



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Guestbook Entries

Submitted by	Comments:
Name: jane armstrong From: Troy, NC E-mail: geminijsa@hotmail.com	My father, David Harrison Armstrong was in the 517th during WWII. I have just been through boxes of the paratroopers activities in August 1944, etc. My father died in 1964 at the very early age of 52. He was a Lt. Colonel at end of war. <hr/> Added: January 16, 2011

Jane,

Thanks for the info. If there are any photos or records that might be of interest to the other veterans, I would love to get copies to post on the web site.

There are a number of notes about Capt. Armstrong already on the web site:

Captain David H. Armstrong, Company Commander of Company "D", was an outstanding officer. He graduated from West Point in 1932 and resigned his Commission in 1938. When WW II broke out he enlisted in the army and graduated from Officer Candidate School (OCS) and then joined the 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment at Camp Toccoa, GA at which time he was given Command of Co. D, 2nd Bn. by the Regimental Commander, Colonel Louis A. Walsh Jr.. Assigning a junior Lt. to Command a Company was highly unusual and indicated the great respect that Colonel Walsh had for Dave Armstrong. Dave was fully deserving and proved it time after time both in training and in combat. – Tom Cross

http://www.517prct.org/documents/bluebook_magazine/Dec1947/Dec47.pdf

http://www.517prct.org/photos/dick_seitz/seitz.htm



Dave Armstrong, Dick Seitz, Tom Cross. (l-r)

Dave Armstrong, ultimately ended up being a battalion commander. Dad says that he has an interesting story -- he was a West Point graduate, got kicked out of the Army, came back on his own as an enlisted man, and was promoted to Second Lt. and the rest is history.

<http://www.517prct.org/recollections.htm>

http://www.517prct.org/documents/mulligan_guard.htm

Bob Barrett



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Name That Trooper

This scenario begins at Camp Toccoa GA in the beginning days of the 517th PIR as the unit was being formed up. Our mystery trooper was an officer with the rank of major. He was a Brooklyn kid growing up in one of the less affluent neighborhoods there. For recreation the youngsters from this borough played 'stickball' in the streets of the big city. In high school he excelled in track and field events. Upon graduation he applied for entry to West Point and through relentless pursuit by this youngster he was finally accepted as a future cadet. He did well at the 'Point' and graduated in 1939. As an Army officer he volunteered for the Paratroopers at the onset of WWII and found himself in the 506th PIR. At the age of 26 he was hand-picked by the future C.O. of the upstart unit that was to be known as the 517th PIR. That Commanding Officer was none other than Lt Col. Louis A. Walsh Jr and he was chosen by Walsh because of his fighting spirit.

Our mystery officer was not above duking it out with anyone who crossed him. He was a rather large fellow, well over 6 feet tall and said to be one tough customer when angered. One of his first duties as an officer in the 517th was that of dealing with troopers who showed up AWOL for duty under his command. One pair of AWOL troopers to first feel his wrath were troopers Talarico and Larson. He stood them at attention and chewed them out royally and then he chewed on them some more. With their new C.O. standing nose to nose with them, he had a glare that would stop a clock, he asked, "Do either of you think you can kick my ass?" Talarico with trembling voice spoke up, "no sir, I know I can't, but Larson thinks he can." Larson's hair stood on end, "Shut up Talarico, do you want to get me killed?"

One story about this officer came from trooper Distanislao while they were doing qualifying jumps at North Carolina. Troopers were given the green light to jump when the C-47 was only about 300 ft in the air which was very dangerous. Paratroopers usually get the green light at 800 to 1000 ft. Our mystery officer was on the ground watching when it happened and he immediately boarded his Jeep and raced toward the airfield to meet the C-47 as it taxied to a stop. According to the story, our officer grabbed the pilot as he stepped off the plane and beat the holy hell out of him for endangering the lives of his men.

Our mystery trooper later proved himself in combat to be a fearless leader and was known for always being out front with his men when enemy bullets were flying. He was known as the "wild one". To a man his troopers said that they would follow this man to the gates of hell because he was that kind of leader. He was seriously wounded in combat near Bergeval in the Ardennes and spent many months in Army hospitals and rehab units in an effort to regain the use of his arms. He slowly mended and was returned to active duty. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his action in combat. Several years later, he led Airborne troops in combat during the Korean Conflict. He retired from the Army as a full colonel.

He was truly an American hero. He was the father of 10 children.

Can you name this mystery trooper?

'Nephew of a Buzzard'



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MailCall

Hi Bob,

I liked this one and found that it would probably only offend terrorists. You don't have to add it to mail call but I thought I would share.

Rick Sweet

READ TO THE END! IT IS WORTH IT!~!

SIGN IN A BUSINESS WINDOW, HERE IN ST. LOUIS, MO. !!!!

**WE WOULD RATHER DO BUSINESS WITH 1000 AL QAIDA TERRORISTS
THAN WITH ONE SINGLE AMERICAN SOLDIER!**

This sign was prominently displayed in the window of a business in St. Louis, MO. and you are probably outraged at the thought of such an inflammatory sign.

However, we are a society which holds Freedom of Speech as perhaps one of our greatest liberties.

And after all, it is only a sign, right?

You may ask: "What kind of business would dare post such a sign?"

Answer: A Funeral Home
(Who said morticians had no sense of humor?)

You gotta love it!!!
God Bless The United States , and keep our Troops Safe and Well.

Our love and best wishes to all of the 517th and their families. Enjoy the Florida reunion!! See you in Atlanta!!!

Peter Jansson

Well, this past weekend was the Kissimmee reunion, and I am so glad to have received phone calls from the group letting me know what a great time everyone was having. I sure was jealous not being there and being stuck up in Salt Lake City with 30 degree weather. But oh well, life goes on. Mike Wells, Helen Beddows, Claire Giblin and I are working very hard to put on a great **National Reunion in Atlanta starting July 13 thru the 18th**. Please mark this on your calendar and be sure to attend. It will be a great time I am sure. Look for information forth coming in MailCall and in the Thunderbolt about the reunion.

Lory Curtis, son of **Bud Curtis**, HQ, 1st Bn



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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

Jim1wildman@yahoo.com

636.527.3239

[Pvt. James W. Wildman was in the Service Company.]

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

Annual 517th Reunion (Probably the Last)

July 13-18, 2011, Atlanta, GA

with visits to

Camp Toccoa and Fort Benning



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