



# 517<sup>th</sup> Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2042

March 13, 2011

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

Website  
Mail Call  
Mail Call Archives  
Roster

[www.517prct.org](http://www.517prct.org)  
[MailCall@517prct.org](mailto:MailCall@517prct.org)  
[www.517prct.org/archives](http://www.517prct.org/archives)  
[www.517prct.org/roster.pdf](http://www.517prct.org/roster.pdf)

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Communication, Mortar and Gunnery

*Communication, mortar & machine gun*





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### MailCall News

From MailCall #2041:

I am seeking information about my grandfather, **Isaac "Ike" Darrel Shaver**, who served in the 517th, **HQ Company 2nd Battalion**. We've been able to track down a few pictures from your website (which was a wonderful surprise) but I was hoping to be able to acquire any information that you may provide. I know that the chance is remote, but still I must try. I believe he was good friends with Harvey W. Van Geem (sp?) if that helps. My family has a copy of "Paratroopers' Odyssey," and "Battling Buzzards," and we are also in the process of buying every other book we can get our hands on in order to find out more about the movements of his company and who his friends were. I'm sad to say that my beloved grandfather is no longer with us; he was killed in a car accident with his wife (and high school sweetheart - we still have all the letters he wrote her during the war) in 1996. Over the next few weeks, my family and I will put together some information and possibly some pictures for you, so that you can update your site with his information. Thank you for your help, and thank you for putting this website together. It truly is a treasure.

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**Claire Shaver Day**

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Claire,

I posted your request in yesterday's MailCall ( <http://www.517prct.org/mailcall/2041.pdf> ). I received the response below from **Darrell Egner**, who was in HQ Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, with your grandfather. Both **Ike Darrel Shaver** and Darrell Egner are in the crater picture: [http://www.517prct.org/photos/crater\\_rome.htm](http://www.517prct.org/photos/crater_rome.htm)

I'll let you know if I hear any more news.

Bob Barrett

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Claire

I read your request for information regarding the "twins" but you only mentioned Darrel. As I remember they arrived in Toccoa, Ga. in March 1943 the same time as I did. All of us were hand-picked by Major Seitz for the 2nd Battalion. As I remember he interviewed over 3000 of us and picked 700 or so. They as well as myself were assigned to the Mortar Platoon. We trained together and needless to say became friends. I have a picture of the Platoon and it shows Darrell with his hands on **Harvey Van Geen's** shoulders in the row in back of Harvey's row. Perhaps Bob Barrett has this picture on his web site.

I called **Hunter McDonald** today as he and the "twins" were good friends. He tells me that when we were fighting in France (Hill 1098) a shell came in and wounded either Harold or Darrel and he was right next to one of them but he does not remember which one. Anyway he was taken to the



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hospital and that is the last either of us remembers seeing him. I have a small book with a place for Autographs and Darrel signed it and said he was from Grapeland, Tx. I also have a small book listing all of us that were left at Christmas of 1944. Harold was not listed but Darrel was. He was a Corporal then.

I'm sorry I couldn't be more help. The 517 had a Reunion in San Antonio in 1985 and tried to get the boys to come but to my knowledge they never did attend a Reunion. I believe **Ben Clayton** from Texas stayed in touch but he passed away about 10 years ago. I remember he told me that they were both Football High School coaches in Texas.

Feel free to contact me if I can be of any help.

### **Darrell Egner**

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**From:** claire day

**To:** Mom; Dad; Adam Day

**Subject:** Fwd: INFORMATION FOR CLAIRE SHAVER DAY

Wow. That's all I can say...

sent from **claire day**

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Darrell:

My name is **Don Shaver, Darrel's son**. Thanks for your email to my daughter Claire.

You have a great memory about the Shaver twins. The picture you reference is on the website, but we just saw it for the first time last weekend. Concerning **Harvey Van Geem**, I tried to locate him after Darrel's and my mother, Rena (Darrel's high school sweetheart) untimely death in a car accident on May 19, 1996. I was unsuccessful and don't know if he is still living.

Concerning the fighting in France, Harrel was the one who was wounded. He was hit by shrapnel in the lower back, but recovered to play football and earn his degree at East Texas State, before entering the coaching profession, ending his career as the head coach at Dallas Samuel High School.

Concerning Darrel, he returned from Germany as a Staff Sergeant in late December 1945. He made it back to Grapeland on December 31, 1945, went to the Cotton Bowl the next day in Dallas, where he proposed to Rena, and they were married 7 days later in Grapeland. He went to Kilgore Junior College in August 1946 and played football there for two years, was named to numerous Junior All-American teams and was named the "Most Outstanding Player" in the nation by one of the teams. He received over 50 scholarship offers, choosing Vanderbilt where he played football for two years and baseball his senior year. He was named to several All-American teams in football his senior year. He returned to his hometown of Grapeland to begin his career in education and coaching. He was an assistant for one year and was named the head coach the next year. Head coaching stops in Vanderbilt, Kilgore and Beaumont, Texas made up his 23 years as a coach. He became the Athletic Director for the Beaumont Independent School District in January 1973 where he served until his retirement in May 1986.



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He and Harrel stayed close through their lives. Harrel died on Father's Day 1994 from cancer. He was married to Bobbie, but never had any children. Darrel enjoyed golf and fishing and being involved with his grandchildren in his retirement. He had a two handicap and had played 36, 45, 45, and 18 holes the four days before his death. Most of all, Darrel was a good, Christian man. He was respected by all that knew him and he felt it a tremendous honor when someone from his past called him "Coach". He was my best friend and I am the blessed one whom had the privilege to call him "Dad".

Darrel and Rena were also survived by my sister, Jana.

Thank you for taking the time to respond to my daughter's email and a belated thank you to you and all of the men of the 517<sup>th</sup> for the sacrifice you made to help keep America free.

### Don Shaver

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Subject: Shaver Story

Bob did you get the picture from Chris Lindner? I tried to send this to you yesterday but they came back and said your address was unknown. I know it's good so I am going to try and send this again.

As I don't know crap about computers I didn't know how to unload the subject picture. Any way a few years ago I brought my war album to her house and as her Dad was in several pictures she had prints made of some of them. She then sent them to our Web site under my name and hers. They would have gone to your Dad. I have seen them on the Web several times but I don't remember seeing this one. It's Toddy time so I will look tomorrow.

Any way she downloaded the picture to you and me for the Web site and also to Darrel's granddaughter.

Thanks for all your work,

Darrell

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Hi Claire and Bob

Claire my name is **Chris Lindner** and my Dad was in the 517th, 2nd Battalion. I talked to **Darrell Egner** and he said you were looking for information on your grandfather. I am sending you a picture of the Comm., mortar and gunnery. **BOB YOU MIGHT WANT TO PUT THIS ON MAIL CALL.** [*See photo on Page 1.*]

I believe your Grandfather is the 6th from the left in the second row. I do not know if your Uncle is in this picture or not. If so Darrell Egner and I thought he might be in the 3rd row 7th man from the left.



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Please let me know if this picture comes through to you. My Dad is in this picture 4th row 3rd man in (with no hat on, his name was **Nate Rubenstein**). I have a bunch of info but of course Bob Barrett knows a lot more than I do.

I hope this helps you. Again please let me know is this picture comes through your computer.

Thanks,

Chris Lindner  
[ctennis@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ctennis@sbcglobal.net)  
210-822-8591

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Bob,

In response to **Cotton Nelson's** request about the Bronze Star Medal.

The Department of the Army recognized that many men did not receive this important award, the Bronze Star Medal. After the war the Department of Army sent messages to all units stating that soldiers who received the "Combat Infantry Badge" in World War II, could receive the Bronze Star Medal. Apparently, this message was sent out in late 1945, but there did not seem to be much interest from the veterans. They were now discharged from the Army and starting new lives.

In 1982 the Army reissued their Bronze Star message concerning World War II soldiers. That is when I found out my Dad was entitled to receive his long awaited Bronze Star Medal. I got a copy of the Army's message, and completed the necessary forms on behalf of my father. Within six months my Dad received via the U.S. Mail his Bronze Star Medal. I think if you contact the Army Personnel Center in St Louis, Mo, they can help you with getting the much deserved Bonze Star Medal

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

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**From:** Jess Rossi [mailto:[jesse.rossi@gmail.com](mailto:jesse.rossi@gmail.com)]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 11, 2011 9:46 AM  
**To:** [mailcall@517prct.org](mailto:mailcall@517prct.org)  
**Subject:** Please add me to Mail Call

### *Guestbook Entry*

Submitted by	Comments:
Name: <b>Gerard Poisson</b> From: Goffstown, NH E-mail: <a href="mailto:gpoisson@comcast.net">gpoisson@comcast.net</a>	My Step-Father Lawrence Constantine passed away on February 24, 2011. He was in the 517th in the medical detachment. If anyone knew him back then could share a story or two, his family would appreciate it. Thanks!
Added: March 7, 2011	



## 517<sup>th</sup> Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Dannie Lee Perry  
Rockville, IN  
[dannieperry@att.net](mailto:dannieperry@att.net)  
son of Floyd Russell Perry, HQ Co, 2nd Bn, 517 PIR

... I would be interested in helping with MailCall or any other administrative duties. I just recently found your website.

My father **Floyd R. Perry** died at the Indianapolis IN Roudebush VA Hospital following back surgery for combat service connected wounds received in Belgium while assigned to HQ Co, 2nd Bn, 517 PIR. He contracted a staph infection and died July 1, 1961, 10 days after surgery when I was 3 years old and my brother was born one month later.

On 1 April 2010 we found a copy of his AGO 53-55 Enlisted Service Record indicating his service with the 517<sup>th</sup>. We had no idea of his extensive combat service record! I can't afford to make the Jan 14-18 reunion, but will try to make the July one.

**Dannie Perry**, Sgt. (ret.) Hvy SP FA Turret Mechanic

### F. R. Perry Rites Set Wednesday

Funeral services for Floyd R. Perry, 40 years old, 519 Cable Street, will be held at 10 a.m. Wednesday in Conkle West Michigan Street Funeral Home, with burial in Floral Park Cemetery.

Mr. Perry, a member of the 82d Airborne Division in World War II, died Saturday in the West 10th Street Veterans Administration.

Death was attributed to a spinal injury he suffered during a wartime parachute jump.

He was a lifelong resident of Indianapolis and had been employed as a parts supply man at Link-Belt Company 12 years.

Mr. Perry was a member of West Side Christian Church and Lavelle Gossett Post, Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Survivors include the widow, Mrs. Patricia L. Perry; a daughter, Miss Marilyn K. Perry; two sons, David R. Perry and Danny L. Perry; a stepdaughter, Miss Sarah L. Cunningham; a stepson, Thomas L. Cunningham; the mother, Mrs. Mattie F. Perry; a sister, Mrs. Edith J. Rogers, and two brothers, Ervin R. Perry and Harlan G. Perry, all of Indianapolis.



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### SSgt. 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.

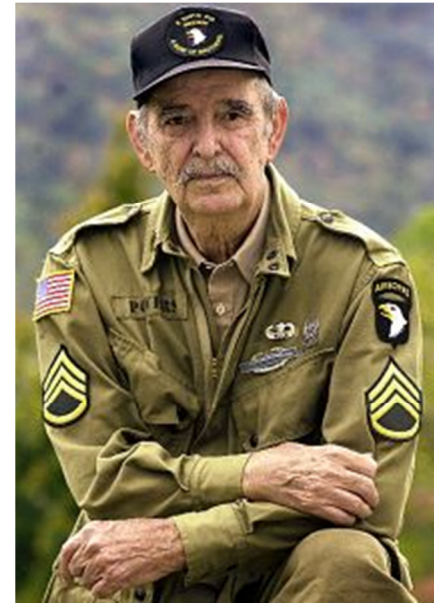
I told him "yes, I know exactly where Normandy is, and I know what D-Day was." At that point he said "I also made a second jump into Holland, into Arnhem." I was standing with a genuine war hero ... and then I realized that it was June, just after the anniversary of D-Day.

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.





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Shifty died 17 June 2009 fighting cancer.

There was no parade.

No big event.

No 24x7 news coverage.

Let's give Shifty his Memorial Service our way.

Please forward this email to everyone you know. Especially to the veterans.

Rest in peace, Shifty.

--- Mark Pfiefer, July 2009

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Darrell,

Yes John and Darrell, I knew "Shifty," I met with him on a yearly visit to our tactical response organization TREXPO, in DC. His son was a member of our Law Enforcement Tactical Medical Organization (Doctors that accompany Swat Teams on their dangerous mission's). They both were fine men. I am proud to have met them. See, there are true heroes and nice guys (and gals) in this world. Where the hell are the rest of 'em?

**Gene Frice**

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## **New Web site pays tribute to families of fallen**

By The Associated Press  
March 9, 2011

WASHINGTON — A nonprofit group that provides help to military survivors is asking for videos, messages and photos from the public showing support to these families. The Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors is displaying them on a new Web site. The site is called Give a Thousand Thanks. The collected items will also be posted on the walls at a weekend seminar for the families over Memorial Day weekend in Washington.

More than 5,900 troops have died in support of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

<http://www.GiveAThousandThanks.org>





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### *Name That Trooper*

Answer to MailCall #2041, our mystery trooper's name: **2nd Lt John Forrest**



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L - John Forrest    R - Phil Distanislao



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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](mailto: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:

Brenda Verbeck Mortensen  
13046 Race Track Road #220  
Tampa, FL 33626

**Annual 517th Reunion (Probably the Last)**  
July 13-18, 2011, Atlanta, GA  
with visits to  
Camp Toccoa and Fort Benning

