



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



MailCall No. 2043

March 20, 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

517th PRCT West Coast Gathering

To all 517 Troopers, Auxiliary, Supporters, Friends, and Camp Follower's.

The 517th PRCT West Coast gathering is forming its ranks on April 11, 2011 in Palm Springs. We need you in our Platoon, Tsunami's (no humor intended), Fires, Volcanic Eruptions and Earthquake's (no humor intended) will not excuse you from attending.

I know this will be the second of three meetings for this trying year, however the Frice Team including Karen, Robin and myself will appreciate seeing you at our 20th or so gathering in Palm Springs. Daughter Laurie will not be in attendance as she will be staffing the ER in the Anchorage hospital waiting for the next Tsunami.

Looking for your Reservation.

The Team

PS and by the way. I don't know about the rumor that ATL is (probably) the last reunion. The Team and I will be in Palm Springs for the next 5 (?) years. Same date, same place and same people, even if we are the only ones there. Out of spite I may even again plan "Portland 517th Reunion June 2012." So there!

PFC Gene Frice, F Co.

May God Bless America and please Lord, Bless the world in its time of need.



West Coast Mini-Reunion
April 11-15, 2011
[Register now!](#)



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

John Gummow, D Company

Gentlemen,

I am trying to retrace my father's footsteps during WWII. His name is **John Gummow** from West Bridgewater, Mass. He passed away in 2007 and only talked to me once in his life about his wartime experience. I know he landed in Nice on a victory ship because he was sick the whole trip and would never step foot on a cruise ship.

He was assigned to a group that had recently lost 10 soldiers in a booby-trapped house. He spoke about being in Sospel but I don't know when. His name is listed in the Christmas 1944 roster in **D company**. His signature also appears on [Pvt. Kane's 517th handbook](#).

He was wounded on Jan. 3rd 1945 in Trois Pons, Belgium. He said his group was fired upon as they crossed a bridge into heavily fortified territory. He remembers running past an officer who looked gravely wounded and entered a large open area with no cover and grabbed some buddies to run for the cemetery. They took cover behind gravestones but the Germans were on higher ground and shot relentlessly anytime someone moved. A grenade blew-up close to him and sent him a foot off the ground. He yelled to a buddy behind the next gravestone asking if he still had his legs because he couldn't feel them. He said he was OK, everything looked good. My father's feet had serious shrapnel wounds and he could feel his boots filling with warm liquid. He also had shrapnel wounds on both hands and the back of his neck. The Germans shot at them all day long. Men were screaming for medics. My father was in and out of consciousness and laid in the same spot for 24 hours. The blood had coagulated because it was so cold and probably saved his life. He was put in a barn somewhere for 5 days before being evacuated to a hospital in England for 3 months. He never spoke of anything that happened after this date. He was shipped back to the front after recovering but I have no information to where and when. Please feel free to contact me anytime, numbers below.

Robert Gummow
Brookline, MA

e-mail, rgumm@comcast.net
cell 617-921-0762

Lawrence Constantine, Medical Detachment

Submitted by

Name: **Gerard Poisson**
From: Goffstown, NH
E-mail: gpoisson@comcast.net
Added: March 7, 2011

Comments:

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!

Name: **Lorene Pitta**
From: East Sandwich Ma.
E-mail: lpitta1@comcast.net
Added: March 18, 2011

My Dad Lawrence Constantine died on 02/24/11 and he requested we inform the 517th. His obit is in the Union Leader of Manchester NH. He will be buried at Arlington on May 10 at 3pm. You all meant a great deal to him.

Thank You,
Lorene



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Lawrence Constantine



MANCHESTER -- Lawrence Constantine, 86, died Feb. 24, 2011, at the VA Medical Center 13 days after his beloved wife, Irene (Laliberte) Constantine.

He was born in Brockton, Mass., Feb. 10, 1925, to Edward P. and Iona Susan (Wentzel) Constantine. He attended Boston Latin High School and the Bentley School of Accounting. He enlisted in the U.S. Army, barely a month past his 18th birthday, in 1943. His unit was 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment, Medical Detachment, one of the U.S. Army's first elite combat units composed entirely of "jumpers." He was highly-decorated, earning the Silver Star (the third highest decoration), five bronze stars, three Purple Hearts, and the French "Croix de Guerre avec étoile de vermeil."

Members of his family include two sons, Lawrence Anthony Constantine of Raynham, Mass., and Gerard Poisson of Goffstown; two daughters, Lorene Pitta, of East Sandwich, Mass., and Michel Cogan of Halifax, Mass.; 12 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; two nieces and one nephew.

IN HIS LIFE: His European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal had four stars and two invasion arrowheads. At the end of the European Campaign, he volunteered to lead the assault on the Japanese Islands.

Larry was a 32nd degree Mason of the Grand East Lodge of Lexington, Mass., and past commander of Chapter 395 Minutemen Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH). He also served as finance officer, and senior vice commander of the Dept. of Northern New England MOPH. He was a past commander of VFW 9347.

Larry owned and operated three restaurants over the years, with the most recent, Ye Olde Bricke Hearth Steak House in Newport. His first was Laureen's in Boothbay Harbor, Maine. He was an integral part of developing and operating The Valley's Steak House chain. Larry's passion for the Doberman breed led him to start White Birch Kennels, allowing him to show and raise multiple prize-winning dogs. He also founded Constantine's Auctions and dabbled in real estate. Larry's interests included politics, aviation, and he was a licensed pilot and a voracious reader.

He was predeceased by his only sibling, Robert Constantine. Larry held the hearts of those who knew him well! He was a kind, upstanding, genuine person. His conversation was captivating, full of knowledge and experience in a plethora of subjects. He had an incredible way of sharing logic and reason. He had a deep sense of connection with those who sacrificed and continue to sacrifice in war time: He visited Arlington to pay his respects to the fallen and the Naval Hospital in Bethesda to pay his respects to the recently wounded. He was a Patriot's Patriot, and he will be sorely missed.

SERVICES: He will be honored in a service of remembrance at the VA Medical Center Chapel, Manchester, Wednesday, April 20, at 2 p.m. A graveside committal service is May 10 at 3 p.m. in Arlington National Cemetery Chapel, Arlington, Va.

Letters of condolences may be sent to Lorene Pitta, P.O. Box 214, East Sandwich, Mass. 02537. Memorial contributions may be made to Fisher House Foundation Inc., 111 Rockville Pike, Suite 420, Rockville, Md. 20850.

Published in Union Leader on March 13, 2011



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

MailCall News

Hello,

My name is John Coffee. I belong to a group known as the WW2 Airborne Historical company. I have sent some photos of one of our events in the past. What we do, is to portray members of F Co., 2nd Bn., 517th PRCT at historical displays, parades, commemorations, etc. We do this to further educate the public as to the legacy of the 517th and of the battles in which it fought. So many folks have never heard of the 517th or of Operation Dragoon. We've made it our mission to change that. To my knowledge, we were the only dedicated unit in the country to portray the 517th, that is until recently. A new group has formed in Washington state that portrays B Co. of the 1st bn. I have been helping them to get up and running and they are well on their way.

Now, to the point of my correspondence. It is quite the selfish request, but we work so hard to represent the 517th as correctly and respectfully as possible, that I would like to see the guys get some recognition. I have noticed a group of living historians that portray Easy/506th. They advertise themselves as the "official" living history unit of the "Band of Brothers", since they are the only ones to have been recognized by the vets to represent them. I would like to know if the Association would be interested in a similar partnership? We would require nothing but the association's blessing. We operate with our own funds either out-of-pocket, or when monies are received for participation in a certain event.

Anyone who is interested in seeing more of what we do is welcome to view our website at www.battlingbuzzards.org. I understand that I'm asking a lot. We would certainly be proud and honored to receive such recognition, but would be o.k if we don't. We will still continue to honor the men of the 517th and their sacrifices. It is what we have pledged ourselves to do and nothing will change that. I have met veterans Gene Frice, Darrell Egner and Walter Goforth. Ray Hess has been to a couple of our events, but I have yet to meet him. We have "talked" on Facebook and by phone. I have also corresponded with Walter Perkowski. These are all fine men that we look up to. Thank you for your time and consideration, I look forward to any response or input.

Sincerely, John Coffee





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In Memorium – Joe Spencer, HQ Co, 460th PFAB

Yesterday I received a phone call from Bill Christian in California.

He wanted to put a notice in a MailCall that Joe Spencer recently died. His wife notified Bill. She live near him in California.

Joe was in Hq Co of the 460th.

Our ranks are getting thinner.

Airborne!

Leo Dean

MailCall News

Hello, Bob!

Could you please add me to the mail call list? I would appreciate it. My father, Otto M. Andersen, served in the 517th.

Thank you very much!

Pam (Andersen) Minton
mintonp@msn.com

Bob,

Much has been said about the Regimental and Battalion Commanders of the 517th, but I have never known or heard anyone talk about who the Regimental and Battalion Command Sergeant Majors were? Does anyone out that have their names and know anything about these great men?

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

Bob:

I'm starting to clean house to insure that it will not become the duty of someone else. I was ready to throw Thunderbolts dating back to 1990 when it dawned on me that someone from an earlier generation may want them. My phone number is 701-232-1738.

Merle W. Mc Morrow



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Charles William "Bill" Young, C Company



Hello

To whom it may concern,

My name is Joseph Hogan, my Grandfather was **Charles William "Bill" Young of C Company**. He was a Toccoa man assigned to the company HQ section. He was jump injured in Operation Dragoon and rejoined the 517th in October of '44. He was present with the elements of C Co. who fought in the "Freyneux affair" during the Bulge. Upon their escape from German held territory, he and several other troopers became separated from the company and were listed as MIA for a period. As it turns out, they were linked up with some tankers and pulled patrols for them until they could rejoin the 517th. He

was evacuated for frozen feet and/or jaundice in early January and never returned.

I have recently come into possession of the scrapbook my grandmother kept during those years. I am slowly beginning to catalog the items in it and thought I would share the photos it contains. I am sorry but I know very little about most of them. I hope that by sharing them with you I may bring some happiness to veterans of the 517th or their loved ones. I also hope that someone out there may be able to help me put names to the faces and shed some light onto the nature of some of the photos.

There are a lot of photos so I will send them to you in several e-mails. I will provide what information I do have and look forward to seeing the response they generate. Also, I realize that some of these photos may be of little or no value to the website and I will not be hurt if you chose not post some of them.

Thank you,

Joseph P. Hogan

Joe,

I posted the photos at: http://517prct.org/photos/c_w_young/c_w_young.htm

At the bottom, I included some additional info on your grandfather that we received (from your sister?) in 2008. Is it OK to include that?

Let me know if you want any changes or corrections.

Bob Barrett



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Thank you so much Bob. I hope those photos bring smiles to some faces. You do not need to change a thing. I only have one question. Is there any way I could have my contact information attached to those photos so that anyone with information might reach me? Maybe there is something built into the website or newsletter where people can post comments. If so, please direct me to that so that I can keep up.

The additional information is also fine. I'm not sure who sent it to you but it was something I wrote. I guess you could say I've been the family military historian. One of my sisters or cousins may have sent it on to you, or I might have. I can't remember. I have dialed some of the dates and information in a bit better since writing that but it does not really matter. Judging from other people's submissions I gather that I'm not the only one who has found it hard to record specific dates and locations. I guess the men of the 517th had better things to do than keep detailed records.

Again, I am so grateful for your efforts. May God bless you in this work.

Peace and good,

Joe Hogan

hunterfit@gmail.com (for public use)



See more photos at: http://517prct.org/photos/c_w_young/c_w_young.htm



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Recent website additions

[Charles William Young, C Company](#)
[2nd Battalion - Communications, Mortar and Machine Gunnery](#)
[Pvt. Lloyd R. Johansen](#)
[T/Sgt. Milton J. Hanson at Fort Bragg](#)
[James W. Benson, 596th PCEC](#)
[Lt. Thomas Fred Patin Gets Silver Star](#) (Reg HQ)
[Pvt. Jesse Ellington, A Company](#)
1943 May 10 - [Letter to parents of new recruits from Lt. McKinley](#)

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:

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



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM