



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2053

May 30, 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 (from 2008) www.517prct.org/roster.pdf

Memorial Day

Memorial Day, first observed in 1868, is about remembering those who gave their lives so we might enjoy ours.

From the Christian Science Monitor, By Joshua M. Brown - May 30, 2011

I want to wish two things this Memorial Day for all of my readers and friends.

1. That you get to spend this time with the people you love and don't get to see during the week quite as much as you'd like to.
2. That you keep in mind what Memorial Day is actually about. It is about honoring those who have fallen while defending our country. The holiday's origins date back to May 5th 1868:

On May 5, 1868, Gen. John Logan, national commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, officially proclaimed the holiday, and on May 30 of that year, flowers were first placed on the graves of Union and Confederate soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery.

As you read this we have soldiers abroad doing what their country has asked of them in both Iraq and Afghanistan. These wars have been going on for a decade now and while casualties have been kept low compared to other historical conflicts, it is important to remember that not all of our troops will be coming home.

In the Afghanistan War we have lost 1594 American soldiers since 2001. Last year was the deadliest year of the Afghan War for US troops since it began, we lost 499 men and women in 2010.

The Iraq War, which began in 2003, has cost us a total of 4454 lives thus far and countless injuries. Thankfully, the amount of US troop casualties in Iraq peaked in 2007 and has declined each year since.

So please, while enjoying your barbecues and vacations and swimming pools and quality time with your families, remember those who have sacrificed everything so that we could continue to do so.





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Ardennes American Cemetery and Memorial



American Cemetery Henri-Chappelle

"America was built not just by great heroes or powerful politicians, but by ordinary people with wonderful ideas — by thousands whose names we don't know, but should. They may not run for president or star on reality shows, but without their contributions, the kind of country we know would not exist." - Bob Dotson



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It's Memorial Day, and today we think not only about the men of the 517 and their service, but also about those who we never got the chance to meet because they made the ultimate sacrifice.

When we go to reunions, we go not just to see our friends but also to honor the service of those who never came home. When we hear the stories of them and their service, they are honored.

This Memorial Day, make the commitment to share the story of the 517 to at least one person. Wear a reunion t-shirt to a barbecue; give one to someone who's interested. Post the beginning of a Meet the Troopers piece to Bob Barrett. I was astounded to see how few troopers are represented there; I know Bob had said it's less than 2%, but it can't be more than 20 or 30 veterans. We have to do better than that, and we have to do it now.

Thank you all for what you did when your country needed you. We are still reaping the benefits.

Claire Giblin

Mail Call News

I wish Myrle Traver a very speedy recovery and that I will be praying to that end, God Bless you, and I'll see you and Betty in Atlanta...

Airborne always,
Mel Dahlberg (F)

Hi Bob and 517th family and friends.

Just want to let you know that The Sweet's will be coming to the reunion. I sure hope that Myrle and Betty can make it too! We have been very busy and my daughter had back surgery this morning at age 20. She is much too young for that but was injured in a car accident in 2008. She had fusion at L-5/ L-4. As soon as things settle down a bit I will fill out the paper work etc for the reunion. We look forward to seeing everyone. Looks like my mom won't be coming because of health and pain reasons. I know that she would enjoy it very much. Maybe she will change her mind! See you all soon....Good health to all!

Rick Sweet

My uncle, **John D. Wilkins** was killed in the Battle of the Bulge and was a paratrooper in the 517th – C – division. Any information about his story would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you. Charlayne B. Schultz Westerville, Ohio
charschultz@columbus.rr.com



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

RE: Seal Team 6

“Wish I could have seen the expression on OBL's mug when he saw these guys coming through the door”:

These sure look like 517th guys to me.

Lory Curtis



Although we appreciate our nation's Military every day of the year, May is National Military Appreciation Month. We, as a country, can come together to formally honor, remember, recognize and appreciate all of those who have served and are currently serving. As we near Memorial Day, let us all take a moment to honor and thank those who gave so much to make our country great. Traditional observance includes briskly raising the flag at dawn to the top of the staff, and then solemnly lowering to the half-staff position, in remembrance of those who gave their lives in service to their country. At noon, their memory is raised by the living, who raise the flag to full staff. This symbolizes our resolve to never let their sacrifices be in vain, and to rise up and continue the fight for liberty and justice for all. Remember, they gave up all of their tomorrows so that we could live ours in freedom.

In tribute to my family, I invite you to share in our story through Bob Dotson's Emmy Award winning “[Fighting Grossmans](#)”, chronicling eight brothers who answered our nation's call to serve, all at the same time. As Dotson says, “America was built not just by great heroes or powerful politicians, but by ordinary people with wonderful ideas — by thousands whose names we don't know, but should. They may not run for president or star on reality shows, but without their contributions, the kind of country we know would not exist.”

Thank you to all who serve, past and present, and to the loved ones who support them.

Debbie Gregory, CEO
MilitaryConnection.com

See: <http://militaryconnection.com/newsletters/mc/the-fighting-grossmans.asp>

"Whoever said 'The pen is mightier than the sword' obviously never encountered automatic weapons." - General Douglas MacArthur



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From John Coffee of the Commemorative Airborne Jump Team

Subject: Fwd: 11th A/B-June Issue 2011-PART 3 of 4

Gentlemen,

Attached is a PDF file of a section of the June 2011 11th AB Division Asst Newspaper which we are featured in! I've been working with the editor over the past few months with this. If anyone else wants the entire newspaper, there are three other files I can send. I am only forwarding the one with our article. Enjoy!

Matt H.

[Pages are attached to the end of this MailCall]

Atlanta Reunion

We have just been informed that Admiral Mullens, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff - The Pentagon has accepted our invitation to be the speaker at the 517th reunion in Atlanta on 17 July. This is great news as it gives us the number one officer in our military.

Dick Seitz

To: <seitz22@embarqmail.com>
Cc: "CJCS Writers Group" <CJCS.WritersGroup@js.pentagon.mil>
Sent: Friday, May 27, 2011 9:47 AM
Subject: FW: ADM Mullen and 17 July

Hello again sir and very nice speaking with you!

This is the email I sent to you back in February. I am so very sorry you did not receive! Please know I have your event on the schedule and we will keep our fingers' crossed the schedule will stick! I have cc'd our writers group who will be in touch on some details.

Thank you!

v/r Kris

General Seitz,

Good afternoon sir. My name is Kris and I am the scheduler for Admiral Mullen. The admiral accepts your kind invitation to keynote the Final Reunion of Your Uncle Charlie WWII Combat Unit Banquet on 17 July in Atlanta, Georgia. He thanks you for thinking of him.

Please know anything could happen to the admiral's schedule at any time and he would have to pull himself from this commitment but I will do my very best to protect that day and time.



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You will be contacted by our speechwriters as we get closer to the date so we can properly prepare the admiral for his remarks.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns. I will be out tomorrow (Wednesday) but back in the office on Thursday.

Very respectfully,

Kris

Here is a quick list of who has registered to attend the Atlanta reunion so far.

Please register soon!

First Name	Last Name	Vet or Auxiliary?	# attending
Dick	Seitz	Vet	1
Mel	Dahlberg	Vet	1
Dan	Perry	Other	2
Patricia	Seitz	Auxiliary Member	2
Lory	Curtis	Auxiliary Member	1
Bob	Vaught	Vet	3
Eileen	Broudy	Other	2
Bruce	Broudy	Auxiliary Member	2
Marvin	Moles	Vet	3
George	Spears	Vet	2
Patrick	Dunlevy	Other	3
Merle	McMorrow	Vet	2
Richard	Hammel	Vet	1
Paul	Abbene	Auxiliary Member	1
Gene	Frice	Vet	3
Jesse	Ross	Other	1
Barbara	Boyle	Auxiliary Member, Other	5
Bert	Ross	Other	2
Dennis	Sura	Auxiliary Member	2
John	Seitz	Other	1
Teresa	Messina	Other	1
Joanne	Barrett	Auxiliary Member	2
James	Mortensen	Vet, Auxiliary Member	2
neil	blanton	Other	2
Myrle	Traver	Vet	2
Kay	Bowman	Other	1
Jeanne	Davis	Auxiliary Member	1
Ray R.	Hess	Vet	8

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Recent website additions:

[517th Order of Battle by Clark Archer \(18.4 Mb\)](#)

[Fred Marron, B Battery, 460th PFAB](#)

[Charles William Young, C Company](#)

[2nd Battalion - Communications, Mortar and Machine Gunnery](#)

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:

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



11TH AIRBORNE RE-ENACTORS

HONOR US AND THE AIRBORNE SPIRIT



L to R Standing: Jim Sutton, Craig Singhaus, & Jed Swansey. L to R Kneeling: Curt Otto, Matt Holmgren, & Neal Hobson. We served as Color Guard at the 2007 11th A/B Division Reunion in Gettysburg, PA.



Matt Akers, 11th A/B



Ben Branson, 11th A/B



L to R Standing: Matt Holmgren, Craig Singhaus, & Rob Wolfe. L to R Kneeling: Ben Branson & Matt Akers. C.P., BAKER Co., 511th PIR.



L to R Standing: John Coffee, Neal Hobson & Curt Otto. L to R Kneeling: Ben Branson & Matt Akers. We portrayed the 503rd PIR during their jump on Corregidor for the 2008 Reading, PA, Airshow.

"B" COMPANY, 511TH PIR REENACTING GROUP

BY MATT HOLMGREN

When one thinks of World War II Airborne, the 82nd and 101st Divisions come to mind. When one thinks of World War II airborne operations, the Normandy Drop is

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 26)



(AIR ASSAULT/BIN LADEN — CONTINUED FROM PAGE 24)



SALUTE to “Cairo”, the K-9 unit dog who went on the mission with the SEALs. **GOOD JOB, CAIRO!** 🐾

As your Editor, I’m always proud of the 11th Airborne and all you great guys who served during the 17 years that our Division was active (1943-58; 1963-65). Many of you served well beyond this time-frame in other units. The stories and connections to the larger scope of Airborne history—and American history—have never ceased to amaze me.

Yet it strikes me as utterly fascinating that in the space of just the last few months, time has revealed the 11th Airborne’s connections relevant to both ends of an incredible ELEVEN decades; 1901-2011. In the 1910’s, WWI was fought, and 90 years later a U.S. ambulance driver who served in France named Frank Buckles became the last surviving U.S. WWI veteran. Born in 1901, Frank was later one of the 2,147 P.O.W.s of Los Baños who were liberated by the 11th Airborne on 23 Feb 1945. Frank died 27 Feb 2011—an American hero and last of the WWI generation of heroes.

In the 2010’s, an exciting milestone in America’s ongoing War on Terror occurred with the precision killing of the long-sought Osama Bin Laden, the leader of a group of terrorists that planned the 9/11 attacks. Bin Laden was nailed by a helicopter-transported air assault team—Navy Seal Team Six—flown in by Army’s 160th Spec. Ops. Aviation Regt. These units used perfectly-honed, long-established Air Assault techniques first founded and proven by the 11th Air Assault Division (Test) in the 1963-65 era. Bin Laden died on 2 May 2011—an American enemy and a miserable gutless yellow swine.

This hate-filled enemy of the United States was a murderer of thousands of citizens of this and other nations. He was also a mass-murderer of untold thousands of Muslim citizens in many countries—people that he pretended to be fighting for. Justice sought him out and justice was done—in about the only practical way it could have happened. Turns out he was exactly as we had him pegged: a pitiful coward who hid behind women and children his entire professional terrorist life, and even so in death. Bin Laden commanded many evil men to do his bidding, but women and children and mentally disturbed people were both victims and puppets of Bin Laden—his weapons and shields. When he was through hiding behind them, Bin Laden convinced these poor wretches to strap bombs to themselves and blow themselves up while killing others—all with promises of eternal rewards. What tragic insanity. The hole in his head used to be just a metaphor—American justice made it a reality.

A precision Air Assault strike got Osama in the end. Our enemies should take notice that from the Doughboys of WWI to the Angels of Leyte & Luzon to the 11th Air Assault Division to Navy Seal Team Six—America will defend herself against all enemies foreign and domestic, and will run them all to ground, so help us God.

General Kinnard would be proud. — **EDITOR**



(11TH AIRBORNE RE-ENACTORS — CONTINUED FROM PAGE 25)

the most famous. Many airborne reenacting groups portray these two divisions and focus on the northern ETO. Sadly many seem to forget about the other airborne troopers. We love portraying the 11th Airborne Division and 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team (PRCT) because many do not know these units’ histories.

Our core members (our “cadre”) reenacted together in a HQ Company, 502nd PIR, 101st Airborne group. In June 2005, we portrayed the 11th Airborne for the first time at the Reading World War II Weekend. In 2008, we

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so much during their campaign that we wanted to continue honoring them. Every year at Reading we get the same comments from people. Many say that they never knew Airborne fought in the PTO.

We focus on the Los Baños Raid for our display. While we educate about the division’s other battles, we use Los Baños to tell the story of the 11th Airborne. We also never forget to mention the 503rd’s jumps in New Guinea and on Corregidor. The public always gives us a great reaction. One of the most interesting encounters was when a relative of Los Baños

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Re-enactors Neal Hobson, Matt Holmgren, Craig Singhaus, Ben Branson, Rob Wolfe, & Matt Akers (kneeling): C.P., “Baker” Co., 511th P.I.R., 11th Airborne Division.

moved away from the 101st Airborne. So many other groups existed that portrayed the different regiments of the division. We felt we weren’t sticking out and doing justice to the veterans. At this time we had a growing interest in the First Airborne Task Force and Operation Dragoon. Our current group began to take shape.

We picked the 517th PRCT because they were so different from other units of the war. Their history was amazing and what blew us away was that nearly no one knew about them or the other units of the Task Force. We had found our home.

We stayed with the 11th Airborne at the Reading air show for the same reasons as picking the 517th. They too were widely unknown almost as much as the Army’s involvement in the Pacific. When the general public thinks of the Pacific War, the Marine Corps is what they picture. We wanted to make sure the Angels weren’t forgotten. Their unit history is just as mesmerizing as the 517th. The men of the 11th Airborne endured

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internees walked up to our display and started talking about the camp. We actually found his relatives’ names in the list of internees in General Flanagan’s The Los Baños Raid: The 11th Airborne Jumps at Dawn. Little things like that and interacting with the veterans make this worth it.

In September 2007 six of our members served as Color Guard for the 11th Airborne Division’s national reunion in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. It was a great honor to provide such a service and meet the veterans of the division.

I also have a personal reason for portraying Baker Company of the 511th PIR: my late great-

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Neal Hobson & Matt Akers with “captured” Japanese Arisaka rifles.

(11TH AIRBORNE RE-ENACTORS — CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE)

uncle. PFC John Motil served with Baker Company from 1945- 1946 in Japan. He passed away in 2001 and this is a nice connection to have with him.

Currently we have a dozen members throughout Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. We participate in living history events and parades in the Mid-Atlantic region, mostly in Pennsylvania and Maryland. Our goal is to educate the public about the 11th Airborne and 517th PRCT. We all have a love of history and much respect for the all the military personnel who served during World War II and other wars and for those who still do, and are proud to do our part in honoring them and keeping their memories alive.



To see where we will be setting up our display, please visit our website at:

www.battlingbuzzards.org.

— MATT HOLMGREN



Matt Holmgren enjoying some R & R and a LIFE Magazine. Matt is the author of this article, which was solicited by the Editor of the 11th A/B's "Voice of the Angels" after he stumbled across their website.



(ABOVE) Craig Singhaus & Neal Hobson, 11th Airborne Re-enactment. This is our mock C-47 Jump Door we use to show kids at events the actions of "hooking up" and "jumping".



L to R: John Coffee, Chris Aycock, Matt Akers, Ben Branson, & Matt Holmgren. This is one of our 517th P.I.R. re-enactments; as most of you will know, the 517th was the Regiment around which was built the Airborne phase of the invasion of Southern France, 15 Aug 1944.