



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

Special Edition MailCall No. 2072

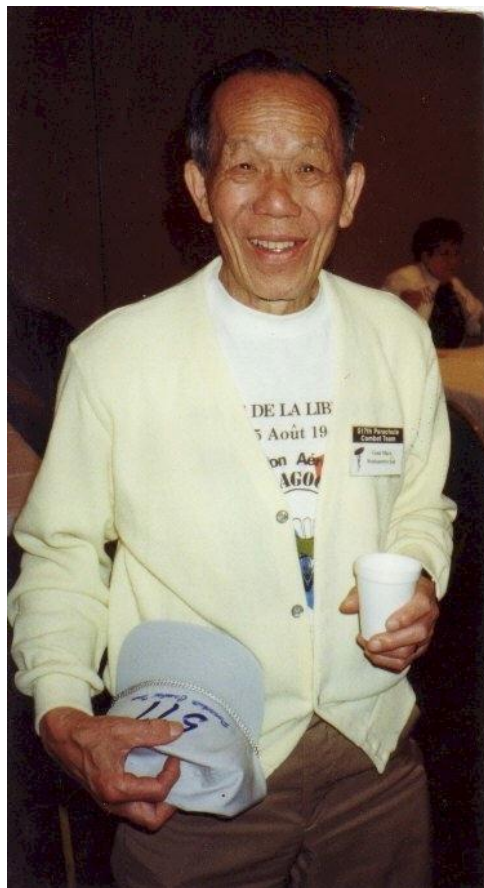
October 4, 2011

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

Website
Mail Call
Mail Call Archives
Roster (from 2008)

www.517prct.org
MailCall@517prct.org
www.517prct.org/archives
www.517prct.org/roster.pdf

In Memoriam – Eugene Mars – HQ Co., 2nd Bn.



Dear Bob:

I am writing to inform you that my dad, Eugene Mars ("Chop Chop") has passed away. As most of you know, when my mother, Jane, died in 2002 he became a bit of a hermit and stopped going to 517th reunions and pretty much stopped traveling altogether. He missed several family weddings and didn't return phone calls. He had avoided all contact with extended family and old friends.

Of course he had no need for doctors and hospitals so it's a good thing that he was a healthy old buzzard. (Not bad for someone who smoked since he was ten years old). So it was no surprise that when he did not respond to my sister's phone calls last Sunday that we found him dead on the floor in his home. The cops had to kick in the front door since he had removed the spare key that we had hidden in the front of his house. The coroner said that it looked quick and painless and he was only there for a short period of time. I'm pretty sure that's how he would have wanted it. He wouldn't have wanted to go to some hospital or have a bunch of people feeding him pills and injecting him. In the last couple of days, I was glad to meet some of his neighbors and they said they all loved him and looked out for him. They said that he made a lot of new friends bowling and on his daily walks.

Through it all, I know that he had a special, big place in his heart for the



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517th and loved every one of you guys. When my mother was alive he looked forward to every reunion and event and meeting old friends. After he stopped going to reunions, I printed out the Mail Call newsletters and mailed them to him since he didn't have a computer ("What am I gonna do with a computer?"). When my sister and I started going over his effects, we found nearly ten years of newsletters stacked up on the kitchen counter and boxes of photos and memorabilia. But his most prized possession was the American flag that he carried in the parade in Washington DC in 1995 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II. He always said that he wanted that flag to go to his son's son. My son, Allen, is now 20 and will be proud to receive it.

So in the end he was just one ordinary man with an ordinary life, an immigrant in this nation of immigrants, from humble beginnings who was asked to do a nasty, dirty job in service to his country. He was proud of what he did and was forever changed by his experiences with you band of brothers. Thanks to my dad and all of you for your service. We're forever grateful and will never forget what you did for us.

Best regards,

Dan Mars

The following is the obituary that we submitted to our local newspaper:

Eugene Mars, 89, of San Jose, passed away October 2, 2011 of natural causes. He was born in China on September 21, 1922. He emigrated to the U.S. as a teenager and lived with relatives in Akron, Ohio. He was married to the late Jane Yee in 1948.

He served in World War II as a medic in the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team and saw action in Italy, southern France, and Germany. He was awarded the Purple Heart and was honorably discharged in 1945.

In 1962 Mr. Mars and his family moved to San Jose from Akron. In San Jose he and his wife owned and operated small businesses: the Jose Creamery, the Happy Coin Launderette, and Gene's Bicycle Barn.

After retirement, he was active in 517th reunions and veteran events. He enjoyed creative landscaping, collecting coins on daily walks, and belonging to several bowling leagues at Oakridge Lanes.

He is survived by daughter, Michou (Gordon), and son, Danny (Jane), five grandchildren, and three great grandchildren.

A viewing will be held on Friday, October 7, 2011 between the hours of 5:00 pm and 9:00 pm. A memorial and burial will be held on Saturday, October 8, 2011 at 12:00 noon. Both events will be at the Oak Hill Funeral Home and Memorial Park, 300 Curtner Ave. in San Jose.



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Gene and Jane Mars (with grandchildren?)



Harry Saunders and Gene in Europe, 1997

from MailCall 1530, April 2008:

I thought that I would pass on a picture that I have found from the 1990 DC Reunion photo book that may capture who Gene Mars is (see attached).

I only know Gene Mars by the stories that my mom and dad told me about his kindness, generosity, and love for the 517. I hope to someday meet and thank him in person.

- Steve Markle -

