



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



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

**MailCall No. 2073**

**October 9, 2011**

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

Website [www.517prct.org](http://www.517prct.org)  
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Mail Call Archives [www.517prct.org/archives](http://www.517prct.org/archives)  
Roster (from 2008) [www.517prct.org/roster.pdf](http://www.517prct.org/roster.pdf)

### *In Memoriam – Eugene Mars – HQ Co., 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn.*

What a shock to learn that my good friend Chop Chop passed away. My prayers go out to the Mars family. He was one of a kind, always ready to help and always had a positive outlook on life until Jane passed away. Never in my life did I see such a close relationship as he and Jane had. A special thanks to his Son and Daughter who looked after him and kept some of us informed as to his well-being. He and I were both in HQ 2nd from Toccoa to the end of the war. He was the Medic that patched me up when I got a Purple Heart in France.

Many of us tried our best to contact him including General Seitz to no avail. He was one of the General's favorite troopers. About 10 years ago I drove to San Jose thinking he would see me because I was in town. I left a message but he never called back.

Chop Chop was a success in the 517 and also in his personal life after the War. He will be missed by all the troopers that had the opportunity to know him. May he rest in peace.



Eugene and Jane Mars

Sparks, NV  
1991 Reunion

**Darrell Egner**

Thank you so much for sharing Gene's tribute. I found it to be moving and powerful! My heart goes out to Gene's family.

Warmest Regards,  
**Teresa Messina**



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I met the famous "Chop Chop" only once, I think it was my first reunion near Fort Benning in 1999. In a short conversation, while waiting for a bus, it became obvious to me why everyone loved him so. Our group has lost a very special brother. The affection that all felt for ChopChop is part of that bond that still holds us together. We were, and still are, a wonderful "Band of Brothers".

We will miss him.

**Allan Johnson**

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Dear Bob: this sad news is a blow. Thank you for doing such a beautiful memorial to capture such a marvelous human being. Although I never met "Chop Chop", I and others felt a connection with him because of my Dad's and others special affection and highest respect for him. All the great stories about him and the efforts I recall Dad making to get him to come to the reunions after his wife's death are flooding back to say nothing of his smile. Please convey to his son and daughter that even those who never had the privilege of meeting him in person are very saddened by this news. They are very much in our thoughts and prayers as is Chop Chop. We know he is "at home" in heaven with his wonderful wife. He ran a most courageous race, touched so many people with his special gifts and left this world a free, much better place for his having been here. He has given us all a most worthy example to follow. We thank the Good Lord for him.

Sincerely,

**Pat Seitz and Alan Greer**

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Bob,

Thank you so much for sending out this special mail call. I am saddened to hear of the passing of Eugene Mars, and my sincere sympathies and respect go out to his family. Thank you Dan Mars for taking the time to write such a great eulogy about your father. I feel like I know him now, but saddened that I never got a chance to meet this great man.

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

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### From 517<sup>th</sup> Guestbook:

Submitted by	Comments:
Name: <b>Trenton Yenokida</b> From: Washington E-mail: <a href="mailto:tyenokida@gmail.com">tyenokida@gmail.com</a>	My grandfather's name is Eugene "Chop Chop" Mars. I wanted to inform you that he passed away at his home on October 2nd. I know that you were a very important part of his life, though he was not able to participate with you for the last several years. He would tell stories about his time in the Army and I know that he considered you his family as well.
	Added: October 5, 2011



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Reunion Photos:



*Lagan Hehela, Gene Mars,  
Barney Hehela*



Jane & Gene Mars, Bill Davis & Al Paciotti.



### 517 MEDICAL DETACHMANT

Front Row (L-R): Sobel, Mars, Dr. Sullivan, Dr. Plassman. Top Row (L-R): Hillsdale, Fraser, Williams, Smith, Chism.



"Chop Chop" our host at the Presidio.

1991 Sparks, NV (top left) and 1983 San Mateo (top right and bottom row)

It's always easy to spot Gene in the pictures, as he always has that great big smile. – BB



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Bob, A tribute to Chop Chop. He contributed to the 517th by patching up the wounded.

I am reading Steve Ambrose "Nothing Like it in the World" the story of the steel girders of the trans-Atlantic rail way that bound the nation together from sea to shining sea after it was torn apart by the Civil War. The contribution of the immigrants from China, like Chop Chop, was enormous. They got us over the Rockies to the Great Salt Lake.

He was a great guy and from this mail call we know he has some great and loving descendants.

All the way,

**HH (Howard Hensleigh)**

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Hi Bob

Thank you for all of your efforts on our behalf. I am Gene's daughter. If you could also send a copy of messages to me I would appreciate it greatly

I spoke to mr Mcmurrow and also Gen Seitz. Just have to reach Gen. Grange. So many numbers have changed!

Take care

**Michou M Yenokida**

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Hi Michou,

I have attached a draft of the next MailCall that I will be sending out this weekend. The draft, which is not complete, includes all the notes that I have received so far, and it also includes a few pictures of Gene from past 517<sup>th</sup> reunions. I sent this to Dan earlier today.

If you need the email addresses for any of the people who sent in the notes, let me know and I will get that to you as well.

Bob Barrett

PS: I do have to say that my Dad, who passed away last year, often spoke of Gene Mars and really wanted to see him again at reunions. All the troopers seem to know Gene (and Jane) and remember him fondly, not to mention that they have great respect for what he did in the war.

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Thank you very much Bob...I had many conversations w/ your Dad....he was a wonderful person and tried like the dickens to get my Dad to get to a reunion. But Dad just could not do the social things w.out her....I am aware of this very special bond that all the men had w/ each other. It is such a wonderful bond.

Take care....Michou



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### Other MailCall News

Dear Bob: please let Lory know what a thrill we felt for him and his brother when we saw the the film's trailer.

**Pat Seitz and Alan Greer**

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Bob, The story about the trooper's electrocution shortly after the SF drop is true and the guy who gave the order was Capt. Bill Young. The trooper protested cutting the power line and was given a direct order to cut it. A sad story, but all the truth is eventually told.

My highest airborne regards to all those wonderful Barrett's,

**Howard Hensleigh**

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From: World War II Journal 1943 – 1945 by Hoyt Frank Kelley, Page 30  
[http://www.517prct.org/bios/hoyt\\_kelley/hoyt\\_kelley\\_journal.pdf](http://www.517prct.org/bios/hoyt_kelley/hoyt_kelley_journal.pdf)

The Italians and French always had a market for clothing, food, candy, silk stockings and especially cigarettes and toward the end of the war the French would buy Jeeps for \$1,000 (in Francs) if you would drive them out to a place in the country. An officer in our outfit got caught selling a Jeep just before we left France. I don't know what they did to him, but he returned about a year later, with great stories of being a hero, and serving in the occupational army in Germany. This was a Captain Bill Young, who I had to tolerate working with for the war up until he was shot in our jump in Southern France. He was much disliked by the soldiers, and had ordered one of our best men to climb an electric pole and cut the wires. He was **Danny Fisher** and was killed by the electricity. Anyway shortly after that, Young got shot through his helmet (from the rear we believed). Later he was a Military Police in Nice, France, but never returned to the troops. He did put himself in for a silver star and nominated five of us who were with him for bronze stars. I refused to attend the ceremony, so I don't know how many awards were made.

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I went to the nearby Topsfield fair yesterday. Food, exhibits, rides and carnival games. Every time I go to a carnival, I remember the story of Hal Jeffcoat and his F Company buddies at Camp MacKall in 1944. This is from Randolph Coleman's bio:

[http://517prct.org/bios/randolph\\_coleman/randolph\\_coleman.htm](http://517prct.org/bios/randolph_coleman/randolph_coleman.htm)

Bob Barrett

It was the week-end and the guys had a pass so they ventured into Rockingham which was very close by. There was a carnival in town that weekend with all sorts of fun stuff going on like the Ferris Wheel, and bumper cars etc. There was a stand where you throw a baseball at the stack of milk bottles and if you knock them all down you win a prize. It was a challenge that a cocky group of paratroopers just couldn't pass up. They asked "how many bottles to win that new radio there on display". The carnival guy told him how many



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and the guys got their heads together and formed a battle plan. The delegated thrower was "F" company's own **Hal Jeffcoat**, who had left his minor league pro baseball team to join the war effort. After the war Jeffcoat would return to play several years in the majors for the Chicago Cubs. He was a pitcher. He had a cannon for an arm and the velocity behind his pitches all but singed the paint off those jugs as the ball exploded into them. The pitching skills and ball speed amazed the carnival people. After knocking down the required number of jugs, the booth operator handed the troopers a box with "radio" printed on it. As they were walking away the box was opened and found to be empty. There was an angry confrontation between the troopers and the carnary guy. Heated words were exchanged and the carnival guy panicked and shouted for them to get away or the M.P.'s would be called. The group reluctantly left the carnival and returned to their company area in a huff minus the radio.

**Lt Murray** was pulling Executive duty that night and asked why they were back so quick. **Trooper Coleman** told the Lt. the whole story and Murray asked, " what did you do about it"? The trooper said we don't know what we can do about it, if anything. At this point in the conversation Murray said to Trooper Coleman, "I am not going to tell you anything, but when I come back with something I don't want you to ask any questions, just take it and handle it very carefully and use your imagination." The Lt. excused himself and left for a few minutes and returned with a couple of small blocks of something and sat it carefully on the counter in the office. Our Trooper picked it up and left the office without saying a word. He began putting two and two together and remembered that this officer was their demolitions expert and he had just been given an unknown substance that needed to be "handled very carefully". "Holy Cow", he was holding a hand full of explosives. He went to his barracks and gingerly put the item in his footlocker. The "F" company guys reorganized after mulling the situation over and headed back to the carnival grounds later that night. It was pay-back time for the 517th. Somehow during night that carnival tent was blown sky high, and a brief fire resulted. Luckily no one was hurt. Investigators determined that the mystery blast was caused by a "Compound-C" charge. FBI agents showed up the following week and were nosing around Mackall and asking questions. Of course our guys in "F" company knew nothing about the incident. 66 years have passed since and the "statute of limitations" has been invoked. The moral of the story is "don't tease the bull or you may get the horn."

### *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 new Association Treasurer: Identify the purpose of any donation (Annual Dues, etc.) and make all checks payable to:

**517 PRCT Association, Inc.**  
c/o Joanne Barrett  
70 Pleasant Street  
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