



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



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2075

October 23, 2011

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

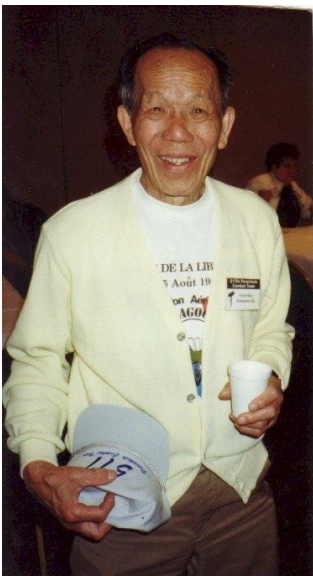
Website  
Mail Call  
Mail Call Archives  
Roster (from 2008)

[www.517prct.org](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)

## Gene Mars

Dear Bob,

here is some lovely pics we have in our reunion albums from Gene Mars, we met him several times since 1994 when he came to inaugurate the Museum in Le Muy. please forward the pictures to Michou, and use thoses pics if you want to make a page remembering Gene. I will look for others.



(about the 2 men on the pic of the last mailcall, i think i took

this picture, i am sure this is in Palmspring Biannual reunion 1997. unfortunately i forgot the names but will look in our archives and will find it.)

warmest regards.  
**J. Mickael & Eric**

"15 Aout 1944" Airborne Museum association  
Letter Box 79  
Le Muy France  
[anvil-dragon@hotmail.com](mailto:anvil-dragon@hotmail.com)



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## MailCall News

Dear Bob,

First off. You haven't heard from me in a long time but I am still erect and "taking nourishment" as the saying goes. Now to the yellow suit photo. That is the trooper who used to attend our Palm Springs minis in a ZOOT SUIT. Others might know his name. I believe he made and sold those suits. Also, I believe he sang our National Anthem at our reunions there. Later on, I sang it.



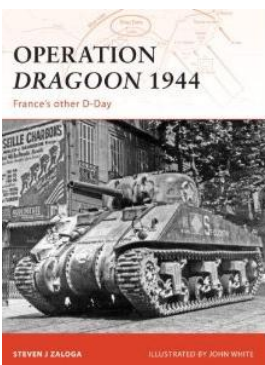
For everyone's info, I am 94, in good health and my wife gave me a gift of a one hour flight lesson on my B'day. I flew the Cessna 150 most of the time in the air. What a thrill. I tried to join the Army Air Corps in 1941, but could not pass the eye exam. So I decided that if I couldn't fly one I certainly could jump out of one. I remarried a lovely lady 26 months ago. She is a concert violinist and has been for 70 yrs. She is now blind but still performs by memorizing the classical music she has enjoyed all of her life. I will try to send a photo of our marriage, and we will give serious thought to attending the SLC reunion.

A/B all the way! And God Bless.

**Bob Dalrymple**

Formerly, Robert W. Dalrymple , Capt., CE , Commanding the 596th PCEC, of the 517th Parachute Infantry Regimental Combat Team. Now Colonel US Army Ret.

PS: Bob, Ben and I became very good friends in recent years before his death.



Bob - I also recently picked up "*Operation Dragoon 1944, France's Other D-Day.*" Primarily, it's an overview of the operation; a good "30,000 foot view," if you will. It does have references to the 517th. But, there isn't much that adds to the story of the Battling Buzzards that we can't get better from the troopers themselves. Still, if someone wants to know what the operation was designed to achieve, which units participated (on both sides) or where the units were positioned, it's a great reference piece. I've quoted several parts from it in the E/2/517 chronology I've been writing.

Be well, **mark landreth**



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*RE: Stephen McNamara, looking for information on my grandfather **Norman Samuel Frey**.*

There is a book that contains almost all Silver Star recipients from WW2. The book contains the names of the recipients, the Army Serial Numbers, and the General Orders Numbers. Several actual citations are listed within each General Order.

Both the book of Silver Star recipients and the General Orders themselves are in the National Archives in College Park, Maryland.

This book is also in other libraries, including the military library in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. The General Orders are only in Bethesda.

Yours truly,

**Mike Woldenberg**

P.S. Does anyone recognize the name **Lt. Charles M. Willis**? He is known to have jumped with Operation Dragoon, but it is not known whether he was in the 517th or the 460th. He may have been injured on the jump.

He later was reassigned to the 12<sup>th</sup> Armored Division and was Killed in Action in Speyer, Germany on March 23d, 1945. He earned the Silver Star which I traced using the method cited above.

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Mel,

I just realized that I have been sending emails to an old email address for you. If this address is correct, would you like me to add it back onto the mailing list?

Bob Barrett

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By all means, please reinstate me to the mailcall list... I was wondering why I wasn't getting any. Now am looking forward to the 517 news and more...

Many thanks....

**Mel Dahlberg F Company**

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Thanks for linking me on to call #2060 covering the Ft. Benning reunion. I was really surprised to see pictures of me and others and stories posted in the Columbus newspaper. Again, many kudos for getting hooked up with mailcall.

Airborne.. all the way!!

Mel Dahlberg



Mel Dahlberg was among the World War II paratroopers with the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team visiting Fort Benning Friday morning.



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Bob;

I find it interesting that the Mail Call mentions Bill Young. He was the S-3 and S-2 officer for Hdq 1 and I was the S/Sgt with him throughout his time with the 517. As I told **Col Bill Boyle** a couple or years ago I served with the best soldier and the worst the latter meaning Bill Young. Col. Boyle expressed regret that he had tolerated Young as long as he did. Young was not of the caliber of the west pointers in our battalion, being a 90 day wonder, and having had a checkered pass as a police officer and professional fighter from San Jose, Cal. He was constantly disciplined for his bad treatment of the men, whether it was threatening them, throwing their rifles in the mud or demanding they let him use their cars on weekends.

Once in Italy he ordered us to throw an Italian kid of his bike and take it so he could have a bike to ride, which he never did. I refused to participate and he said he would promote **Cpl. Klise** to my position and I could go back to the Mortar Platoon. It never happened. He liked to ride in a jeep standing up like we were told Patton did. Young referred to himself as the Silver Fox.

On the jump in S. France, he ordered **Danny Fisher** to climb an electric pole and break a line with a pick-axe. Danny who was a Sgt was killed by the electricity. Shortly after that event Young who was shot through his helmet, possibly from the back, we've never been sure. The shot put a lot of metal flecks from his helmet into his forehead, and with all the bleeding he thought he was dying, and cried for forgiveness for Danny's death. He never came back to the outfit after that time, but became an M.P. I don't think he wanted to return to the front line, and I'm sure in his wisdom Col. Boyle didn't think it would be a good idea. Young tried to convince men from our outfit who visited Nice that they should support him for a Silver Medal, and assured them if they did he would get them a Bronze Medal.

Young later returned to San Jose, opened a training facility for fighters and ran for County Sherriff. His claim was that he was now a Col. having been in the Occupational Forces. A few of us who knew him better convinced influential people in San Jose to not back him and he lost the race. He tried to get paratroopers from the area to march in a parade with him. He told me that he would make a fortune as Sherriff as there were 940 bars in the area and he planned on having a uniformed officer, posted outside the bars unless they made contributions. There were officers like **Wild Bill Boyle** and then there were officers like "Silver Fox Bill Young". History should know the difference.

**Hoyt Kelley, S/Sgt Hdq 1.**

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Bob,

I would like to echo what Claire has said about the hills of Col de Braus France. She is most correct about artillery fragments all over the ground. When Tim and I took our Dad there in 2004, we picked up pieces of shrapnel that were still all over the ground. In fact I still carry a small piece of shrapnel in my change purse, I bought in Piera Cava, France to remind me of my Dad and the 517th.

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



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### Note to **Terry Birder Casey:**

Those of us in the 3rd Bn. will always remember your brother **Capt. Jim Birder** as executive officer and then commander of I Company. He became CO at a dramatic moment for the battalion near Col de Braus, France just after the death of **Capt. McGeveer** and the "battle fatigue" of **Capt. Fastia**, former I Co. CO. **Lt. Col. Paxton** had **Lud Gibbons** (of H Co.) in mind for Fastia's successor, but at the insistence of the officers of the company he changed his mind and selected Jim. Lud had the good grace and integrity of becoming I Company's executive officer. One of the great tragedies is that Jim's death occurred at Bergstein on virtually the last day we were in combat.

Thank you for your devotion to your big brother, Jim Birder. It is sisters like you that made our fighting the War worthwhile.

Best regards in your new environment,

**Howard Hensleigh**

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*A little more about the infamous McQuade, as reported by Howard back in 2002:*

Subj: Re: MAIL CALL NO 119 517TH PRCT  
Date: 1/22/2002 5:32:25 PM Eastern Standard Time  
From: Howard Hensleigh

Note to Al Sperry -- Your story reminds me of two things: Make up jumps at Mackall and Lille.

At Mackall just before we pulled out for Patrick Henry, there were a number of troops who hadn't gotten all the jumps in and wanted to make up for lost time. These were what we called glamour jumps with no equipment and no problem to follow. We jumped one morning and many of us were on the ground, including the riggers who had packed the chutes. One man jumped and his chute did not open. His descent accelerated and we all started yelling "Pull your reserve!!" especially the riggers. He did pull it and his chute opened when he was just a few feet from the ground. I thought he would be injured, but he was not. I figured out later what happened. His chute popped open and the strain on the risers caused them to stretch down. They were stretching back up when he hit the ground giving him a little extra lift and a softer landing. I don't mean to say it was soft, but it wasn't quite as hard as it would have been. I took the guy back up and jumped him again so he wouldn't have that jump to look back on when we jumped next, which happened to be in combat. I'd like to know that man's name too.

Lille may be remembered to you as the place you befriended a telephone girl. If you remember, that tent camp we were in outside Lille was where we prepared for a top secret mission. There was barbed wire around the place and armed guards instructed to shoot anyone trying to get in or out. They trusted me to go to Brussels for a truck load of beer at a brewery run by the Brits with all the work done by Belgians. I had the right papers and got the load of beer back to camp without



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sampling it on the way. The Allies rolled past our intended drop zone and the prize scientists we were to be captured for return to the States. I was never sure whether they were jet engine experts or the ones who invented the buzz bombs that devastated London and Antwerp. At any rate, this freed up the outfit to take turns to visit Lille.

Here again they trusted me to be in charge of the MPs in town. Officially, Capt. Bill Young was in charge, but we never saw him from the time we got there until we pulled out. The MPs were not really MPs, but just 517thers with MP armbands. Our guys wouldn't pay any attention to an MP who didn't wear jump boots. So there we were. The trucks rolled into town at noon and left at midnight. Our job was to see that the boys did not tear the place apart. I had a jail and keys to it so it could serve as a temporary lock-up. It was underground and resembled a mediaeval dungeon. Everyone was really pretty good. The bars, dance halls, and other establishments of entertainment flourished. I watched the trucks unload so I would know who was in town.

There was a guy named **McQuade** from I Company who was one of our best men in combat. In some of the Southern France attacks he helped cut a hole in enemy lines to allow I Company to get on with its mission without severe casualties. He shot Germans like he shot rabbits back home, and he loved to hunt. There were stories that a judge in Chicago let him out of jail if he would join the paratroops. **Paxton** never approved a medal because of his out of combat extracurricular activities. When he had a few drinks he didn't know who was the enemy. He shot an Italian in Italy and was saved by **Mel Zais** just before the jump into S. France, as is covered in *Battling Buzzards*. Zais put the fear of God into him by telling him that if he got into any more trouble Zais would skin him alive and drum him out of the outfit. This was a real threat to McQuade, because he loved the outfit. It was honorable, patriotic work and he loved being with his I Company buddies who were somewhat in awe of him.

When I saw him get off the truck, I alerted my MPs to keep an eye on McQuade and to bring him to me before he got into serious trouble. At around 1500 hours two of my guys brought me a very drunk McQuade. He had just started to tear a bar apart. I took him down to the dungeon and locked him up. He was mortified and unashamedly crying. I left him there until about twenty-three thirty when I let him out and took him back to the trucks. I told him that I would not prefer charges against him and made a friend for life. The next time I noticed McQuade was when the high point men marched down to the train in Joigny. The route to the train was wet with McQuade's tears. He was crying his eyes out because he didn't want to leave the outfit. With the War over, the I Company C.O. moved this combat hero on to some unsuspecting 82nd Airborne CO and as far as I know, none of us ever learned the rest of the McQuade story.

That wasn't the end of the Lille story. The War in Europe ended while we were there. Everything in the town stopped to celebrate the victory. The Marseille was belted out from the town square so that it could be heard all over town; it played nonstop for three days and three nights. The street car operators stopped their street cars right where they were in the middle of the street, got off and joined the celebration. Farm families walked into town sometimes pushing wheel barrows full of farm produce to be shared with city relatives. Everyone loved us and for once it appeared that some of the French actually appreciated what we had done in liberating the place.



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### *Name that Trooper*

Paratroopers were not all brawn and bravado. Being intelligent also played a large role in being chosen as a candidate for jump school. Can you name the 517th trooper from the 3rd Battalion who became a qualified member of the 'Mensa Society'?

Membership into Mensa International is open to persons who have attained a score within the upper two percent of the general population on an approved battery of intelligence tests that has been properly administered and supervised.

-- 'Nephew of a Buzzard'

### *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  
Cohasset, MA 02025



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