



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

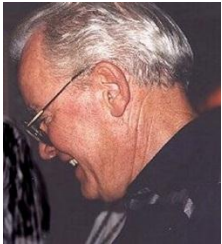
MailCall No. 2092

February 5, 2012

*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

Jim Mortensen – 460th PFAB HQ Co.



James E. Mortensen, died on January 30, 2012 at the Baily Center in St. Augustine. Mr. Mortensen (Jim) was formerly Vice Chairman and CFO of Young & Rubicam. During WWII he served in Italy, France and Belgium with the 517 Parachute Regimental Combat Team, participating in Operation Dragoon and the Battle of the Bulge.

After retiring from Y & R in 1981, he provided consulting services, only recently leaving the Advisory Board of The NPD Group. He volunteered his management expertise to a number of Tampa Bay arts organizations that included the Florida Orchestra and the Museum of Fine Arts in St. Petersburg, where he has been serving as Treasurer of the Marly Music Society. Concerned for families supported by low wages and those denied health insurance, he has strongly supported the Free Clinic in St. Petersburg and played a major role in establishing an endowment fund. A kind and generous man, he established and continued to support scholarship funds at the University of Denver, Black Hills University in Spearfish SD, St. Petersburg College, and in honor of his wife of 56 years who died in 2003, the Genevieve Edsall Mortensen Fund for the Handicapped at the University of Wyoming.

He is survived by his wife, Brenda Verbeck Mortensen, his son and daughter-in-law, Arthur and Liz Mortensen, Brooklyn, NY, brother, Joseph Mortensen of Midland, MI, sisters, Mary Burman of Laramie, WY, Marguerite Bieber of Greeley, Colorado; and a tribe of loving nieces and nephews and their offspring.



A Memorial Service will be held on February 18th 11a.m., St. Thomas Episcopal Church, 1200 Snell Isle Blvd. NE, St. Petersburg, FL. In lieu of flowers donations may be sent to St. Petersburg Free Clinic, 863 3rd Avenue N., St. Petersburg FL 33701



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It is with deep sorrow that I report that Jim slipped away from us on the morning of January 30th. He had entered hospice care on January 25th. Jim gifted me with love and laughter; and the deep friendship between us that grew so quickly and preceded our marriage became its leit motive. I feel so blessed by the years, much too few in number, that we had together. I envision Jim beginning his new journey, and since he's packed his own parachute, he should do well.

I want to thank our 517 family for the many caring wishes we received during Jim's illness.

Brenda Verbeck Mortensen

We are so sad to hear of the death of **Jim** Mortensen of the 460th. We were so glad that they joined us in Kissimmee not too long ago for his first ever reunion. We enjoyed getting to know him and his fabulous bride, **Brenda Verbeck Mortensen**, who jumped right in and soon became an organizer for Kissimmee and the former Auxiliary treasurer.

Jim was a gentle man and a lovely spirit.

Unbelievably, I am almost positive he was in **Dick Seitz's** stick as they jumped on August 15, 1944. Fortunately, he has recorded his story on the website, excerpted here:

Our wristwatches glowed in the dark and we watched the minutes melt away. After a very slow start, the minutes picked up speed and, all of a sudden, somebody said we were five minutes out and the red light flashed on. We checked our equipment as best we could, then checked each other's gear. The door load was nudged a little closer to the outside world and, with a minute or so remaining, we were as ready as we could be. Nothing was visible below, just pitch black night.

But if the pilot and navigator have it right, the drop zone will be 600 feet beneath us in no time at all. Green light! Out goes the doorload at 0435. Out I go. Wham! Twice the normal shock. No lowered flaps for this drop! The moment arrived and my war was now in full bloom. Airplanes gone in seconds.

Silence and blindness during descent. No gunfire. Good sign. Whack! On the ground, chute harness off. Where the hell is the doorload? Rows of vines get in the way. Sporadic gunfire. Not close. People sounds. Password worked. More people, but no doorload. Dawn cracks. Up and down the rows. No sign of it. Must get to assembly area. Come back later. Machine pistols. Too close. On to the road. Dozens of troopers now. Very little equipment yet.

The story of the equipment was oft-told at reunions.

Thank you, Jim, for making sure your story was here for us to see. Your final jump has come too soon. Our hearts go out to Brenda and his family.

Claire Giblin

Jim's wartime memoirs on the 517 web site: http://517prct.org/documents/mortensen_j/mortensen_history.htm



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Pictures of Jim Mortensen at the Atlanta reunion, from Lory Curtis:





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MailCall News

Hi, all -

I don't see it on the website (just April 2012) and I might have missed it in Mail Call, but I don't think so.

When are the exact dates for the PS reunion? Joanne mentioned that it might be May this year; I thought it was always April - and my dad is trying to make plans and I need to get him a flight -

Please let me know asap - the flight to Denver that I've been watching for Easter week just went down and I cannot book it because I don't know if Dad can come because I don't know these dates.

I am a counselor employed by a school system and my schedule is far more rigid than most adult schedules. I really appreciate anyone who can help me out asap - **tonight if possible.**

Thank you all -

Claire

From: **Karen Wallace**

Subject: Re: reunion dates for Palm Springs?

May 14 to 18. helen has details. sent to her 3 weeks ago for thunderbolt. nice new hotel. at work now will you please publish date on mailcall and helen will put in tb.

hope everyone is well. karen

Thank you! She has been swamped with the illness of Hal's daughter. Did you meet her at Atlanta? She was there - and is now gravely ill. They had to miss Kissimmee.

On it. Thank you thank you!

hey, hug that handsome dad of yours for me.

Claire



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From: Kenneth F. Bailey [<mailto:kenneth-bailey@cherokee.org>]
Sent: Wednesday, February 01, 2012 4:35 PM
To: MailCall@517prct.org
Subject: re: 517th 1944

My dad was in Co F 517th Prcht Inf, entered the service Camp Robinson Ark. on June 9, 1944. If anyone would have any pictures or information about him service life i would like to hear from you, we lost dad in 1979 and didn't have much history about his service career. I now have some other family members wanting any and all that can be located.

Thank you in advance

Kenneth Bailey
Facility Management Dept.
Cherokee Nation
Phone 918-458-3271
Cell 918-931-2969
Fax 918-458-3256

kenneth-bailey@cherokee.org

Life is 10% what you make it and 90% of how you take it

Hi Kenneth,

His name is **Francis M. Bailey**, correct? I only know that because we got a note back in November 2009 Form Keith Bailey. (your son?).

From: Keith & Laura Bailey

My name is Keith Bailey. My grandfather, Francis M Bailey was a World War II Paratrooper Co F 517th Prct Inf Tec 4. He was originally in Company D, but his discharge papers say Company F. He passed away when I was twelve . I never got to know him very good and thought maybe maybe some of the men that served with him might could help me out with any information regarding his serving in World War II. He also had a nick name of PAMP.

I just wanted to check that we had the correct name for your Dad. And knowing that he was also in D Company might help someone remember him. I don't think that anyone responded back then, (but I wasn't running the MailCall at the time.)

I will post your inquiry in the next Newsletter and I will let you know if we get a response.

Regards,

Bob Barrett

Yes, dad's name is correct **Francis M. Bailey** but Keith is not my son he is my brother's boy.



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Thank you for your reply, I have a picture of **Francis M. Bailey** in uniform it's not a very good one and it's only a partial , I'm sending it to you for a reference. I have been looking for some type of information about dad's service career for some time, with no luck, maybe this picture will jog someone's memory, thanks again.

Kenneth Bailey



Subject: RE: Robert L Morris

Thanks for the story, Bill. I remember your Dad's website from many years ago.

My Dad, Ben Barrett, was also wounded near Trois Pons, in Stavelot, on Jan 5, 1945. I traveled with him to the area in 2009, so I have been to both Trois Pons and Manhay.

Thanks for the story. I will print it in the next MailCall newsletter.
Bob Barrett

Bob,
Seems the world is getting smaller with the internet, sometime in a good way. What Company was your Dad in? Those guys went through hell with the German Artillery in that area. Thought about visiting that area but at 69 travelling has become a pain in the ass.

Thanks
Bill

Ben Barrett was in H Company. I misspoke, in that he was actually wounded in Bergeval, not Stavelot. Both are near Trois Pons. His bio is at: http://517prct.org/bios/ben_barrett/barrett_b.htm

Here is a summary of some of the troop movements in the Ardennes: http://517prct.org/documents/chronicle/chronicle_13.jpg

And here is the current MailCall, in which I included our recent conversation: <http://517prct.org/mailcall/2091.pdf>

Regards,
Bob Barrett



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Bob

I noticed a message from a **Mark Landreth**, something about a 33mm film clip with the 517th in it. If you go to my Dads web page on the second Page (photos) <http://billmorris.freeservers.com/photo.html> there is a 35mm film frame showing my Dad. I've always wondered if there was any film footage of this somewhere. Even though the odds are slim I would also be willing to cover this cost if you could give me info where these films may be Archived.

Bill Morris

OK. Great. There's no telling what is on that.

The listing says that it was filmed in Logbierme. I do know that many (most?) of the troopers passed through that area just south of Stavelot and Trois Ponts. There is also a small monument in Logbeirme which lists the 5 men who were killed there. I think those 5 were all from the 1st Battalion, Company C.

Let me know if you have any luck with that. Oh, and you may want to coordinate with Mark Landreth, who was also interested in the film: landmark54@hotmail.com

By the way, we may have corresponded about this way in the past, but on some of you Dad's photos, there are pictures of him with Gene Brissey also of E Company. Although I haven't seen Gene at the reunions in a few years, he is still out there and on the MailCall list. He wrote a great autobiography of his war years: http://517prct.org/documents/brissey/brissey_history.htm (Unfortunately, it does not mention your Dad by name.)

Regards,
Bob Barrett

Thanks

I wrote Mark, maybe we can come up with something :-)
I talked and corresponded with **Gene Brissey** 10 yrs ago. He was the "E" CO, 1st Platoon, 3rd Squad/Leader and my Dad was assistant S/L. I'm not sure if they were close, there was a 7 yr age difference between them. Took him awhile to remember my Dad? He told me a few stories about their combat together, mostly towns in the French Alps.

Bill

Submitted by	Comments:
Name: Ken Hunt From: Oconomowoc, WI E-mail: kenhunt30@gmail.com	My dad was 2nd LT George Hunt from Montague, MI. During Christmas 1944, he was attached to Headquarters Company 1st Battalion - 517th. George passed away in 1992. He was 74. Would love to hear from anyone who served with my father. kenhunt30@gmail.com <hr/> Added: January 31, 2012



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From: Ronnie and Kim Harris [mailto:harrisville2@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, February 03, 2012 4:09 AM
To: Ben Barrett 517th
Subject: **1st Lt. Robert M. Morgan, 517th Regt. Hq. & "G"**

Mr. Barrett,

My name is Kim Harris and I am the oldest child of **1st Lt. Robert M. (Bob) Morgan**. I'm interested in contacting anyone who might have known my dad and/or served with him. I'd appreciate any information you might send me.

At the urging of my brother, Richard, back in the 70s, Daddy Bob wrote a memoir of his involvement in an "episode", as he called it, at Manhay, Belgium, Dec. 25 and 26, 1944. It is written on a legal size pad and 64 pages long. It includes a hand-drawn map of Manhay and an extremely detailed account of the events leading up to that night and following.

After many years of feeling a need to "do something" with this memoir, it was misplaced for the last 14 years. After finding it a few days ago, I want to make whatever contact I can with anyone who might be interested. I realize that most of these men are gone now, my dad included.

Thank you for any help you might give me. If you'd like to contact me by phone or mail, that information is as follows:

Kim Harris
PO Box 757
Lovington, NM 88260
575-396-5658

Kim,

Yes, I would be greatly interested in your Dad's account of Manhay. This is exactly the type of first-hand account that we are trying to preserve on the 517th website.

I have a great personal interest, as well, since my own dad, Ben Barrett, also fought in the attack on Manhay as part of H Company. Ben passed away in 2010, but before he did I traveled to revisit Manhay with him in 2009.

Any way that you could make a copy and email or mail it to me, I will be sure to post it.

Thanks for offering this.

Bob Barrett
MailCall@517prct.org



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From **Lory Curtis**:

A visual illustration of some of the major world events from 1914 through 2011. Interesting, yet terrible history. Whoever produced this has done his homework.

Caution: Some images might be disturbing for children or for others of a sensitive nature.

http://www.youtube.com/watch_popup?v=Xxh-sS8Qoco

From: boodles1953 [<mailto:boodles1953@aol.com>]

Sent: Thursday, February 02, 2012 11:13 AM

To: webmaster@517prct.org

Subject: WWII Army Paratrooper

To Whom It May Concern,

I'm looking for info to learn the name of my birth father. I do not have to meet him, unless that's HIS desire, but I would like to learn his name, see pictures of him, learn the family health history, and know if I have any half siblings.

Short and sweet (like me), this is what I know...

He was born in 1924 or in November or December of 1923, as he was 29 at the time of my birth on November 4, 1953. He had 2 brothers and a sister, and he was of Scotch and Irish descent. His parents were both living in 1953. He was born in NY, but raised in SC. He was a WWII army paratrooper, and later was a bookkeeper at a Miami Beach Hotel in 1953. I believe he attended Central Baptist Church in downtown Miami. He was separated, but still legally married at the time of my birth, so my birth mother refused to name him on my birth certificate.

Please share this with ANY WWII paratroopers, and feel free to check me out at Facebook, or on classmates.com. I am a 33 year retired school teacher, married to the former Vice Chairman of the Polk County School Board.

Thank you for any help you can give me. I heard today from Mr. Willem, and found your e-mail address doing a web search with Mr. Willem's e-mail address!!

((-:

Most Sincerely,

Betsy Peacock

[Betsy,](#)

[Do you have a name for your father?](#)

[Bob Barrett](#)



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RE: New Plates

Hi Bob,

I've been meaning to send you this picture of a local intersection for a long time. I thought it may make you Grinn. If it doesn't I don't think I could bare it.

Besides that I have also included a picture of my new motorcycle plate. Sweet wasn't available so I got the next best thing. It may make people ask and I will get to tell them about the 517th and the men that I am proud of. I will never forget what my license plate number is.

S.O.B.

Rick Sweet



Ha!

When we had our first child, so many years ago, I threatened to name her Grinnen. Grinnen Barrett, get it? Not surprisingly, Paula didn't think the potential downside was worth the chuckle. So now I'm just suggesting to my daughters that when they have children, they should quietly give one of them the middle name of Danger. Wouldn't that be cool – "Danger is my middle name."

Thanks for the pics. I'll be sure to get them in next week's MailCall.

Bob Barrett

Well with the last name "SWEET" I was teased and called sour and sweat and it ticked me off at times. I can see your wife's concern.. I knew you could appreciate the street signs. I think of the Barrett's every time I see it so I finally got out on my bike and took the picture. Someone here has a sense of humor. I think it was my neighbor, who developed the neighborhood. Some of the streets are named after his grandkids first names. It is near 60 here today. Can you believe it? I'm going riding again....later.

Rick



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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 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