



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2096

March 3, 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

Happy Birthday, Babbie Boyle – March 3



HAPPY BIRTHDAY BABBIE BOYLE !

from **Paul and Nancy Abbene**

MailCall News

Last night I did the TV spot for the movie Saints and Soldiers Airborne Creed, that will be aired here in Salt Lake City on KSL TV, Saturday, March 31st between noon and 2 pm. The producer asked me if there were any men still living in the Salt Lake area. They want to interview some for the movie and perhaps the TV spot. Do you have any kind of roster showing where our troopers live so I can contact them?

Lory Curtis

MailCall # 2096

Send news to MailCall@517prct.org

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Lory,

Quick answer: Here is a roster from 2008. <http://517prct.org/roster.pdf>
Helen Beddow will probably have a newer roster from the Thunderbolt mailings.

Anyway to get a copy of the spot after it airs?

Bob B.

As usual, **Tom Reber** hit the nail on the head. We had so much artillery on Manhay that the 81 mortars were not needed. Paxton always followed the artillery very closely so as to catch the enemy before they recovered from the barrage. The artillery that killed Stott and many of his platoon, the first of I Co. in the column of companies attack, came in late and short.

With G Co. guarding Ridgeway's CP what we needed was riflemen and the job was so big that no one was in reserve. The whole 3rd Bn. including **Bob Reber**, **Sgt. Brown** and the 81 mm platoon (acting as a rifle platoon) ran as fast as we could into Manhay tossed grenades into the basements and rounded up a lot of SS prisoners who weren't killed in the fighting.

My hat is off to **Silas Brown**, **Bob Reber** and the rest of those base plate carriers who changed their role in that attack to help make it a success. When it was over, the 81 mortar platoon reverted to its usual role of zeroing in with the 81s to help turn back the German counter attacks.

Howard Hensleigh

Bob:

So sorry for the SLOW response to your email. My mother went in the hospital in late January and passed away on Feb 12; so, haven't done much with the 517 as I've also been dealing with estate issues.

I have been following mailcall and saw this offer to assist. My daughter is working on scanning the remaining companies into PDF format. I am hoping to have ALL done by the reunion in July and will determine soon if I need to ship this out to other folks. Once on PDF, I can send them to anyone who wants to help.

I have also been trying to find out if I can attach the PDF copy to EACH name entry in the spreadsheet; that way, a person could click on the image and be able to review the morning report from which the information was transcribed. This would help with those names that are hard to read or to locate errors made in transcription.

I am still VERY enthusiastic about this project as I believe this will help us get a good handle on who was in the unit, when they were there, and some historical facts of their service. I think this project could be a very big draw to the website.

Keep up the good work and I'll keep **Harris Johnson's** information for future follow-up.

Mike Wells



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I was several months late getting my dues in for 2011, however I have not received any Thunderbolt as yet, I believed that was the reason for sending the dues in??? Thomas McAvoy Regt Hdq Co. a 517 member from March 1943 to jump into France August 15 1944, the very grateful V.A. told me in no uncertain terms that I had never jumped from an airplane and my (broken back in 5 places) on the drop into France never happened ???GRRRR

Tom McAvoy

Mr. McAvoy: I am **Frank Ramos**, brother of **Ismael Ramos, Company H** with the 517th PCRT. I read your attached article in Mail Call. I was appalled by the treatment accorded you by the Veteran's Administration in assisting you get the services you were applying for with them.

As I have held some senior executive positions in Washington, D.C. my latest stint before retiring with the Secretary of Defense. I have brought your situation to the attention of a Mr. Kevin Secor at the Veteran's Administration to see if there is any remedy available for your circumstances. He asked for a telephone number to call you to get information on your situation. Please call or email him the information to begin the inquiry to see if they can redress your concern.

Please keep us informed what happens and feel free to call upon me if you need some help to deal with the VA. My email is ramosfm@aol.com

Frank Ramos

Point of Contact for Veteran's Administration:
Mr. Kevin Secor,
Veterans Service Organizations Liaison
Office of the Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Telephone: 202-461-4836

Bob:

My computer crashed last week and this is a test run to see if you receive it.

Merle Mc Morrow

Attachment: World War II in Photos: <http://www.theatlantic.com/infocus/pages/ww2/>

I got it, Merle!

Bob B.



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GENERAL GEORGE S PATTON, POLITICALLY INCORRECT, CRUSTY, BRUTAL, UNAPOLOGETIC, BEST ASS KICKER OF WW-II

This man struck terror in the hearts of the Nazi regime. They knew he wouldn't stop until their dooms day.

When WW-II began, my mom saw two of her brothers leave the farm for military duty. Both were sent to the European campaign. One was a member of Patton's army as they pushed the Germans back into their home land.

The other was a paratroop and went straight thru from Italy, France, Holland, Belgium [battle of the bulge] and finally reached berlin. Only one brother returned home after the fighting was over.

Al Cavnar Jr. who served under Patton now lies beneath one of those little white crosses that we saw in the video. He died at the age of 19.

Was Patton's leadership viewed as brutal? Maybe.....but so is war.

Jerry Wofford

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uYjnWXFTQkM&feature=related>

I may be dumb/stupid/crazy/brave/...take your pick....to jump out of an airplane, but darned if I'd ride this!!! Got dizzy just watching!

phil mcspadden

<http://www.angelfire.com/ak2/intelligencerreport/coaster.html>



This reminds me of some of the wingsuit videos on YouTube e. Here's a shorter video, but it shows how fast they go in a flyby.

Bob B.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=76PJRhGr2_c&feature=related



Anonymous; "If at first you don't succeed, skydiving is definitely not for you."



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Admiral Mullen's letter – July 2010 Reunion

Helen, Claire, and Bob,

Just going through old emails and saw this one from **Admiral Mullen** from our last year's reunion. Before I deleted it I wanted to get it out to others in our organization so we have it in the 517th archives.

Lory Curtis

From: Christie Barton [<mailto:clbarton@me.com>]
Sent: Sunday, July 17, 2011 01:30 PM
To: Barton, Christie L MAJ JCS DOM CJCS
Subject: Letter from ADM Mullen

Good afternoon LTG Seitz and Dr. Curtis,

Admiral Mullen sends his sincere regrets for not being able to be with you in person for the 517th PRCT reunion. He has been on an international travel mission this week and needed to extend his trip to Afghanistan for the ISAF Change of Command from GEN Petraeus to GEN Allen which will take place tomorrow.

Attached is personal letter Admiral Mullen would like to have read at your banquet this weekend. We kindly request that this letter not be distributed until we receive the official signed hard copy from Admiral Mullen upon his return, which we will mail to you.

Best wishes for a wonderful and memorable reunion and please don't hesitate to let me know if there are any questions.

Respectfully,
Christie

CHRISTIE L. BARTON, Major, USAF, BSC
CJCS Writers Group
The Pentagon, Room 1E986



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TO THE VETERANS, FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF THE 517TH PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

It is with deep regret my wife Deborah and I are unable to join you in person this evening in Atlanta. On behalf of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I wish to extend my greetings and best wishes to everyone gathered for this very special reunion.

It is difficult to pinpoint what made a unit like the 517th so uncommonly successful in battle and so distinctive in character. Some point to your intensive and isolated training in the hinterlands of northeastern Georgia. Others like Joe Miller said that from the bottom looking up, "It was leadership."

Some believe it was the 517th's spirit of family and that you couldn't bear to let your brothers down. Tom Cross simply offered, "You had the feeling that the 517th would always be home for you."

Whatever it was that made the 517th a first-class fighting force with esprit and élan second to none, perhaps only those who fought under its banner can truly understand why the bonds between its own have endured so long after the guns fell silent.

I remember that strength in my own Uncle Charlie, known to many of you as First Sergeant Chuck Boyer in Headquarters 3rd Battalion. His sense of duty, accountability and loyalty that has characterized so many from your generation has stayed with me and guided many of the decisions I have made during my own time in uniform.

On behalf of the 2.2 million men and women serving in the Armed Forces today, thank you for your extraordinary example of service and leadership and for your unflinching determination and grit. You and your families are truly an inspiration to us all. Good evening and God Bless!

Sincerely,

M. G. MULLEN
Admiral, U.S. Navy



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Robert Morris' Dog Tags

As Ben,

Just an update on my "Found Dog Tags" story. Below is a link to the Oakland Press News Paper.

They ran the story on their front page and it was also broadcast on a local TV news Channel. The Editor of the Oakland Press thinks the story should go National but I'm not sure this will happen. Anyways, it's great the men of the 517th , who put their lives on the line for America have not been forgotten

Best Regards
Bill Morris

<http://theoaklandpress.com/articles/2012/02/28/news/doc4f4bddd01ed06860939548.txt>

After nearly 70 years, dog tags of honored paratrooper returned to family **WITH VIDEO**



Published: Tuesday, February 28, 2012

By JERRY WOLFFE
gerald.wolffe@oakpress.com; Twitter: [@jerrywolffe](https://twitter.com/jerrywolffe)

Near the end of World War II, during the Battle of the Bulge, Army Paratrooper and Pathfinder **Corp. Robert L. Morris** lost his dog tags amidst the hell of battle.

Some 67 years later, the dog tags have finally found their way back to his son.

They were found in 1988 by **Jean-Louis Seel**, a Belgian man who has dedicated his life to finding the remains of American soldiers killed in the Battle of the Bulge in Belgium. But Seel didn't know how to contact the family.



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Seel has located the remains of 13 of 36 American soldiers listed as missing in action, and made sure they found a place of honor in cemeteries on their home soil.

“In the process of searching for the remains of U.S. soldiers, Seel found some dog tags using a metal detector in a fox hole near Manhay, Belgium,” **William Morris** said.

William is the son of Robert Morris, a Pontiac native who worked at Willow Run building aircraft before WWII.

Robert Morris served in the 517th Parachute Infantry Combat Team, 2nd Battalion, Company “E”, 3rd Platoon, 1st Squad from April 1943 to January 1945.

After finding the dog tags, Seel began an Internet search and found the memorial website, “Tribute to Robert L. Morris,” that the younger Morris, now 69 and retired, created in 1998 to honor his father.



In January 2012, Seel wrote William a letter saying, “I think I have your dad’s dog tags.”

Seel sent William the serial numbers on the tags in late January and they were his father’s, William said.



Go to the online article to see the video:

<http://theoaklandpress.com/articles/2012/02/28/news/doc4f4bddd01ed06860939548.txt>

Seel promptly sent the tags to Morris at his Rochester Hills home; he received them in early February.

“I held them in my hand and I got the chills,” Morris said of the moment he held the dog tags after they were missing for 67 years.

“The tags were fused together from being hit by an ordinance,” he added. “I kept thinking, where have these been all of these years? I just kept imagining all the battles my father had been in.”



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Robert entered the war in April 1943, when William was three months old. He survived combat and returned home. He died at age 57 in 1975.

His first battle was in Italy. He made his initial combat jump behind enemy lines in France on Aug. 15, 1944 at 3:30 a.m., his son said.

After 93 days of combat, the 517th fought a battle in November 1944, capturing the town of Sospel (France) near the French Alps.

In December of 1944, the 517th was ordered into one of the worst battles in the European theater, “The Battle of the Bulge” in Belgium.

On Jan. 3, 1945, in extremely heavy fighting, the 517th incurred heavy losses. Morris was among the wounded, suffering a concussion and shrapnel injuries.

He was evacuated to an aid station and then an English hospital. The 517th went on to capture Trois-Ponts and Mont Fosse. Robert, an assistant squad leader, was awarded the Bronze Star in July 1945.

He also received the Purple Heart, the Combat Infantryman Badge and five medals for serving in major campaigns. Besides the Battle of the Budge, Robert was involved in the Rome Arno, Southern France, Rhineland and Ardennes campaigns.

“My dad didn’t talk about the war after he returned home,” William said. “The only time he mentioned the war to me was about the day he was wounded.

“He said a captain was standing next to him and a bomb went off, killing the captain and wounding him and another paratrooper.

“Men like my father and the other American soldiers saved our democracy.

“I plan to make a special case and put the dog tags and all of my dad’s medals inside so they won’t be lost again.”

Contact Jerry Wolffe at 248-745-4612 or jerry.wolffe@oakpress.com or follow him on Twitter @JerryWolffe1 or on Facebook.

FYI

To visit the tribute website of paratrooper Robert L. Morris of Pontiac, visit <http://billmorris.freeservers.com/>

To visit the Facebook page, go to <https://www.facebook.com/99digger>

To see a video about the 517th Parachute Infantry Combat Team that Morris belonged to, visit <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=guJE71blP10> “The 517th PRCT (Parachute Regiment Combat Team) — A Cut Above. The site can be found by clicking on one of the four medals on the bottom right of the Website homepage of Morris.



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Reunion Info

West Coast Mini-Reunion

Palm Springs, CA

May 14-18, 2012

[Information and registration instructions](#)

Annual National Reunion

Kansas City, MO

July 12-16, 2012

[Program](#)

[Registration Form](#)

[Hotel Registration Form](#)



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