



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



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

**MailCall No. 2110**

**June 10, 2012**

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

Website

[www.517prct.org](http://www.517prct.org)

Mail Call

[MailCall@517prct.org](mailto:MailCall@517prct.org)

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)

### *Palm Springs Reunion*

I'm writing to give you a brief report on our recent West Coast Mini Reunion of the 517th PRCT Assn. This event took place at the Riviera Hotel in Palm Springs from 14 to 18 May. We had an excellent turnout, about 35 in all including nine Troopers, 4 from the 596th Combat Parachute Engineer Company, and 5 from other units of the 517th. The remainder were our friends and relatives. To me it was a very special reunion for several reasons. First off, it was so superbly organized and carried out by **Karen Wallace and Robin**, daughters of **Gene Frice**. In addition, My wife, **Marya**, got to meet my venerable comrades of the 596th Engrs, those from other units of the Combat Team, and all those in attendance she has heard me talk about. Finally, it will probably be my last hurrah. I will turn 95 on 10 June, and starting with the national reunion at Orlando in 1981, I have been fortunate in being able to attend most of them since then. Now back to P Spgs. Our base was the Riviera Hotel. A gorgeous layout. Large and beautiful pool plus extra pools in some of the areas. We were in No5 and had our own pool. Many of you will remember that we held our National Reunion there in 1997. Karen and Robin thought of everything: snacks, appetizers, meals, games, raffles, we even had the Champagne Lady of Lawrence Welk fame at our Banquet Night. I would include more events if I could remember them. Anyway, this is a start. I hope we get some feedback, especially from the 596ers we haven't heard from for some time. Incidentally, Marya's son and daughter-in-law, who live just south of us at Tubac, AZ, drove us over and back, it is about 430 mi each way. And they stayed at our Hotel and had a great time with our group. All for now. Maybe you will hear from others who were there.

A/B all the way!

**Bob Dalrymple**

PS: Along the way I was asked the proper name for our group, and as you know, we are the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team Association ( 517th PRCT Assn). Hold the Fort!



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### MailCall News

Bob: this Mail Call arrived quite nicely. Thanks for all your effort. Thank you also for the the wonderful pictures of **George Spears**. He will be missed. His Bride of 62 years and the rest of his family are in our thoughts and prayers. He was an example to us all. May he rest in peace at the Good Lord's right hand. He certainly was a faithful servant who ran a superb race.

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#### Pat Seitz and Alan Greer

Hello Bob,  
Please extend our condolences to **Julia Spears**. We always had a wonderful time talking to them at the reunions. Speaking of reunions, we will be unable to attend this year due to Myrle's health.

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#### Betty Traver

Hi Bob;  
I hope this finds you and your family well. I, unfortunately, was not able to open MailCall 2109. Also, I would appreciate you sending me the Mail Call to [Tess1960@aol.com](mailto:Tess1960@aol.com). I do enjoy catching up on the goings on with everybody. They all mean a lot to me and with greatest respect. I am not able to go to the reunion this year, due to my volunteer commitment for a camp supported by the Paul Newman foundation. I am looking forward to be fulfilled and learn from the little people. Please give my warmest regards to Joanne.

Sincerely,  
**Teresa [Messina]**

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All three of you have reported issues trying to open pdf files from gmail accounts. There are lots of discussions of similar problems on the internet, but few easy solutions.

One solution that has worked for some is listed below. I don't know why this would work, since the pdfs are not encrypted, but it seems to work for many people.

Try toggling the setting here:

IE > Tools > Internet Options > Advanced > then under "Security" remove the check-mark in front of "Do not save encrypted pages to disk" > OK

Restart IE.

If "Do not save encrypted pages to disk" is not checked, try checking it

If someone tries that, please let us all know if it does any good.

Bob B.



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Dear Bob,

Please Transmitt to Juliette and all the Spears Family our deapest condolences. Georges will always host a special place in our hearts, and always be remembered here in France with all his brothers in arms of the great "F" company.

Mickael & Eric.

**J. Mickael Soldi & Eric Renoux,**  
"15 Aout 1944" Airborne Task Force Museum Association.  
Southern France.  
[anvil-dragon@hotmail.com](mailto:anvil-dragon@hotmail.com)

<http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.389260954442694.77546.251521034883354&type=1#!/media/set/?set=a.389260954442694.77546.251521034883354&type=1>



Mickael and Eric with F Company, Bismarck, ND, 2001



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Sorry to bother you again, but do you perhaps have the email address for **Eric Renoux** or his friend from the Le Muy Museum. I would like to get in touch with them regarding photos that they may have that could be used in my book.

Thank you  
**Jean-Loup**

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Hey Bob-

I am not sure if you remember me at all, we met in Atlanta at last year's Reunion...my dad and i were first timers last year as we were looking to get familiar with my Grandpa's military history and learn more about the 517th.

i have noticed you are still having trouble with the mailcall messages getting sent. id like to offer any help that i can.

I am a Systems Engineer that has quite a bit of extensive experience with Systems Management, including managing email systems for the last ~10years. i am sure i can assist or offer up some recommendations on how to resolve it if you would like some help...just need some information:

- where are you sending the messages from
- thru what mail system
- To how many recipients
- how do you construct the message you are sending
- what error messages, if any, do you receive back when things fail

i notice that the 517prct.org website is hosted at powweb, is that where you flow the mailcall emails thru?

I also see that the mail call messages are sourced from a comcast IP Address, is that what you have at home?

Thanks,  
- **Mark Hanson**

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Greetings Bob and fellow 517th P I R Mail-Call members.

It saddens me to read of **George Spears** passing. I recall meeting George at the Salt Lake City re-union and particularly how he made me feel welcomed even though I was not one of them. I was there because my Uncle **George Cavnar** was a 'Battlin Buzzard' and though he was no longer able to attend the re-unions due to being legally blind, I was his link to the 517th. I made sure that he got a copy of every Mail-Call sent out by **Ben Barrett** and now capably handled by his son Bob. Uncle George looked forward so much to those Mail-Calls and the fact that I was able to be a small part in that process made me feel very good indeed. **George Spears** took time to explain to a novice like me, some of the things that went on back then that only they would know about. These guys were my heroes and here was this man sitting at a table with me who was one of them. He was willing to help me try to understand the history of this elite combat unit and how they felt toward each other after stepping into hell and living to tell of it. I never said thank you to George Spears. I can only hope that he saw the gratitude in my eyes. To all the 517th soldiers that have made their final jump, 'Rest In Peace Brave Soldier, For Your Cause Was Just.'

Sincerely, **Jerry Wofford** 'Nephew Of A Buzzard'



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Bob,

It is with true sadness that I read on mailcall of the passing of **Donald "George" Spears**. What a great man, and what an honor it was for me to meet and know him at our reunions. He will truly be missed. When I heard the news I immediately went to the pictures I took at the Atlanta Reunion. Looking over those pictures sure brought back some great memories and made me realize we are a family of friends and relatives of these great paratroopers. I hope George, and I am sure he did have a wonderful time at the reunions. I sure have. Attached are some pictures of George at the Atlanta Reunion. He was at every event. The band concert, trip to Fort Benning and Toccoa. All my best and deepest sympathies to his family.

Sincerely,  
**Lory V. Curtis**





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Hi Bob

Thanks a lot, this will help, even if it is mostly symbolic.

The 517th mail call will be the first to know when the book is available. There are lots of things I have discovered over the years, but had to keep quiet in order to have something new to write about in the book.

Best regards  
**Jean-Loup**

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From **Rick Sweet:**

Fw: Marine stuns crowd

Watch this crowd. In the beginning when he started to sing, they were not even aware he was singing the national anthem.

[http://www.youtube.com/v/l0fQd858cRc&hl=en\\_US&feature=player\\_embedded&version=3](http://www.youtube.com/v/l0fQd858cRc&hl=en_US&feature=player_embedded&version=3)

O thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand  
Between their loved home and the war's desolation.  
Blest with vict'ry and peace, may the Heav'n rescued land  
Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation!  
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,  
And this be our motto: "In God is our trust."  
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

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Ben, I just rec'd an email from **Travis Ellington** stating his granddad was training with my Dad just before he had his heart attack. Something else I found out from my half-sister was he lied about his age and he really was 35 when he had the attack, so I checked his school records and he was born May 24, 1907. Grow up in Cincinnati, Ohio. I'm sending some pictures, I'm not sure you have them, but maybe you could post them on the site.

Thanks,  
**Jesse Ellington**

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Hello Jesse,

I have those photos on the website at: [http://www.517prct.org/photos/jesse\\_ellington/jesse\\_ellington.htm](http://www.517prct.org/photos/jesse_ellington/jesse_ellington.htm)

Thanks for the photos.  
Bob Barrett



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Dear Webmaster,

My father, **Robert V. "Bob" Dahlstrom** was a radio operator in the Regimental Headquarters. I have attached some pictures for your website.

1. Picture of their jump into southern France. I donated the original to the National WWII Museum, but retained a pdf copy.
2. **Ed Armstrong**, Dad, **Ralph Casten**, **Harry Rutten**, **Bill Selimid**, **Harry Lovering** in Nice France 1944. [below] Also, dad with others in Camp Mackall.
3. Dad in a posed photo



Also, you have some photos of **Elmer J. Anderson** sent in by **John Carrigan**. Elmer J. Anderson was a friend and platoon mate of EJ Anderson's and was with him when he got killed. I would like John Carrigan's contact info/email because he notes there is some correspondence from friends and I wanted to find out if any was from my dad. Or, please have him call or email me.

Thanks,  
**Tim Dahlstrom**



See all photos at: [http://517prct.org/photos/bob\\_dahlstrom/bob\\_dahlstrom.htm](http://517prct.org/photos/bob_dahlstrom/bob_dahlstrom.htm)

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Mr. Barrett,  
Please feel free to give Mr. Dahlstrom my e-mail address. I will do all I can to supply him with the information I have.

**John Carrigan**



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## Submitted by

Name: **Gregory**  
From: Mandelieu - France  
E-mail: [gregnegro@hotmail.com](mailto:gregnegro@hotmail.com)

## Comments:

Hello Everybody, i am currently looking for some info regarding SGT Homer C Beaver kia 11/04/1944 in Sospel - France, i am looking for some pictures where i can see Homer.  
many thanks  
regards  
Gregory

Added: June 8, 2012



Gregory,




I have not found any photos of Homer Beaver, but I did find this info at:  
<http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=68665603>

Bob Barrett

**Homer C. Beaver**

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Flowers
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<p>Birth: Jul. 10, 1923 Franklin County Ohio, USA</p> <p>Death: Nov. 4, 1944, France</p> <p>U.S. Army World War II KIA</p> <p>SOLDIER KILLED SIX MONTHS AFTER BROTHER Just six months after the death of his brother, Sgt. Homer Beaver, 21, son of Mr. and Mrs. Earl Beaver, 1335 Summit St, was reported killed in action Nov. 4 in France, according to a War Department message received by his parents Thursday.</p> <p>His brother, Sgt. Carl Beaver, tail gunner on a Liberator bomber, was killed in action over Austria May 10.</p> <p>The young paratrooper entered service in March, 1943, while employed by the Columbus Stove Co, and went overseas last May. He attended Mifflin High School.</p> <p>Surviving with his parents are two sisters, Mrs. Violet Parsons, Miami, Fla., and Mrs. Edna Este, at home, and two brothers, Earl, Jr. at home and S/1c Edwin Beaver, stationed in Jersey City with the Coast Guard.</p> <p>Columbus Dispatch - November, 1944</p> <p>Family links: Parents: Earl Beaver (1894 - 1944) Cora M. Tedrow Beaver (1898 - 1984)</p> <p>Burial: <a href="#">Pioneer Cemetery</a> Westerville Franklin County Ohio, USA Plot: P2-L004-G01</p> <p>Created by: <a href="#">Mn8X</a> Record added: Apr 20, 2011 Find A Grave Memorial# 68665603</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">Added by: <a href="#">Mn8X</a></p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Added by: <a href="#">Mn8X</a></p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Cemetery Photo Added by: <a href="#">Dave</a></p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <a href="#">Add a photo for this person</a> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <a href="#">Request A Photo</a> </div> </div> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">Photos may be scaled. Click on image for full size.</p>
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Hello Bob,

thank you for the link, i already have this info, there are no where where i can find a picture of this soldier? even in a group of soldier? can you contact someone whos will be able to provide such photo? for the info, i am working on project of the memorial of draguignan in southern france.

many thanks

**Gregory NEGRO**

*[Can anyone help with any pictures of Homer C. Beaver? – BB]*

My Uncle was **Corwin C. Clark of H Company**. I plan to write up his story as best as I can through v-mail letters and other accounts. I read Ben's story and the German shell that injured him in Bergeval killed my uncle Corwin. In his story, he includes the report showing that Corwin was KIA in that attack. I was wondering if you knew more about that day and the attack. My father who died a few years ago had always heard about the shelling, but never knew any more than that and it always seemed to be a mystery. If you know anything that could help me with this chapter, I'd greatly appreciate the help. This site and Ben's story have already helped me tremendously.

I was also wondering if you know if **Howard Hensleigh** is still alive. He is mentioned in one of my uncle's v-mails back home to Iowa in response to a question about him from my grandmother. There's a chance he may have some information as well if he is still with us.

Thanks for your time. Ben's story and the info I gained from it was amazing. I can't believe I found it.

Thanks and best wishes,

**David Clark**



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David,

I copied Howard Hensleigh, who is very much alive and well.

I probably do not know much more about Jan 5 1945 than you already know. Most of the info is in Ben's bio at: [http://517prct.org/bios/ben\\_barrett/barrett\\_b.htm](http://517prct.org/bios/ben_barrett/barrett_b.htm) I can't add too much more, except that the shelling was apparently from a German anti-tank "88". Ben said that when they started getting shelled, they all looked for cover, but there wasn't much there at the time, so he and some others ducked down into a shallow driveway, but that wasn't deep enough to serve as good cover. When I visited Bergeval with Ben in 1999, we looked for the exact spot where Ben was wounded, and we found a likely location, although Ben wasn't 100% sure, since he didn't see the depression that he tried to cover in.

There are some stories about the liberation of Bergeval, but they do not mention the H Company casualties on Jan 5.

Here is one story from Maria Gaspar, who lived in Bergeval (and still does).

From **Maria Gaspar** - President of C.A.D.U.S.A Trois-Ponts (US AIRBORNE RECEPTION COMMITTEE)  
In September 1944, we have known an incredible joy and we cried for joy when the American soldiers liberated us from the enemy. We should have wished to touch those heroes, the first soldiers arriving were a patrol jeep. They seemed to come from an other world, a world of freedom and we lost our freedom for a long time. I have to say that the Germans just left us during the night before and the English language was so soft to us after the screams of the SS. The German soldiers told us as they left : "We went away but we shall come back for Christmas". My mother was very impressed and in spite of the general euphoria, she stayed anxious. All of us, young people, we were so happy until December 17th when the American troops retreated. On the day after, Peiper and his armoured division arrived in Trois-Ponts and the bridges began to blow up, so they could not cross the river Salm and follow to Liège. On December 20th, the 505th was on the left bank of the river Salm and we could hear the noises of the battle. We still hope to escape but the 505th retreated during the Christmas Eve. On the Christmas Day, we decided to go to the church, big surprise, the village was crowded with German soldiers. We went back to home and we spent a hard and painful day. We stayed in a cellar with a solid and strong vault, afraid and worried. On January 1st, a German officer told us that we must leave the village, he gave us 2 hours, he said : "Go to Rochelival". We left, it was so sad to see all the inhabitants leaving home while the shells blew all around. It was miraculous nobody was wounded. I have a funny souvenir (funny by now). As we arrived on the hills, we heard a burst of machine gun, everybody jumped into a ditch. Later, all clear, we could see on the road the baby carriage - with the baby alive - that my neighbour forgot on the middle of the road.

As we arrived in Rochelival, a German captain asked us, "Where are you going? You cannot stay here. It is more dangerous than Bergeval. Go to Farnières". We walked hours and hours through the woods. On this day, just a little snow, the snow came during the night and the days after. At least, we arrived in Farnières. A Salésiens School, (Don Bosco) There were 798 refugees. The battle for this place lasted 3 nights and 2 days. The American soldiers arrived on January 7th, they were dirty and tired (like all of us) men from 504th and 551st. They all were thinking that they were in Germany, so they were not very happy to learn that they were still in Ardenne. On January 9th, I wanted to go back to Bergeval with a neighbour. Bergeval was freed by 517th on January 4th, those American soldiers just stayed a few hours in Bergeval for a little rest and they followed the battle on the hills around the village. It was in those woods that **Bill Boyle** and **Charles LaChaussee** were seriously wounded and many others, the 517th had considerable losses.



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I cannot describe the state of shock I was as I saw my village -- houses burned, killed animals, German material, guns, grenades, mausers, wandering cows looking for food. Desolation, grief and sorrow. It was on my way from Farnières to Bergeval that I could see all the young American soldiers killed along the way. I was really shocked and 57 years later I am still traumatized and I feel guilty because they died for me and my country. They always will be in my heart. When we went back to Farnières, the Americans had begun the evacuation of the civilians. On January 10th, we were evacuated to Charneux near Herve, a long and cold trip of 5 hours. People of Charneux were very kind to us to feed and warm us. We stayed until February 12th. When we came back in Bergeval, we could live in our devastated houses, the life was hard but we were in good health and free. Unhappily because of the great sacrifice of those valourous young American men who died and suffered for our Liberty. I shall never forget.

**Maria Gaspar**

Date: 3/11/2002 10:51:32 AM Eastern Standard Time  
From: **Howard Hensleigh**

Ben--I think you and I are talking the same time frame. Tom and the other 2nd Bn. men were hit several days earlier. If **Tom Cross** had been wounded again in the one I remember, I would have made a mental note of it and put in my cryptic notes. At this time the three Bns. were fairly close together rather than being split up and attached separately to every outfit on the front. In my notes I speak of **Jackson** and that meant H Co. because where Jackson went H Co. went. Here is a quote:

"Next day we went in around Bergeval; got there with H Co. around 0130. Got up at 0400 to get Jackson to stop a counter attack. Went up with I Co. later and got it stopped. We were in the 1st Bn. CP. when there was a direct hit on it. Broken glass, plaster etc. hit all over, but my helmet stopped all that and it bounced off me."

That was several days after the 1 Jan farm house hit that **Tom Cross** and **Dick Seitz** remember so well. From what I can deduce it was the 4th or 5th. Possibly some 1st Bn men can fill us in. I know it was an incident to remember, because of the casualties and the fact that the group in the house survived without more than a scratch or two. And, I know you remember the 4th as a pivotal day in your life.

I'm not trying to keep this one alive, but I'm sure we have clarified a number of things. I hope we aren't boring anyone. It wasn't boring at the time.

All the way, **Howard Hensleigh**

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Hi Howard,

Not sure if the house that you mentioned is the one that I was involved with. I remember leaving Trois Ponts on Jan 4, 1944 going up a hill to Bergeval and was put up in a church (church may have been in St. Jacques) Sometime shortly after we were awakened because the Germans were shelling the area. (January 5 ) Ground was frozen, couldn't dig in and therefore many of us sought shelter in a sunken driveway. Perfect protection except for a direct hit. Don't know what happened but have heard later that a shell hit a building behind us. Seventeen of us were wounded and two were KIA. I think all were from H company .

Regards, **Ben Barrett**

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David,

One more item I found about H Company in Bergeval. I'm not sure if this is the same platoon or not, but the location and time match. Instead of an anti-tank "88", this mentions small-arms fire as well as a mortar position.

Bob B.  
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Ben:

This is a letter I came across when I was going through some of my parent's things. I thought you may be interested in it. Also, if anyone knew Richard, I would certainly like to hear from them by way of you.

**Bob Lynam**  
{Richard's brother)

"I have the honor to inform you that, by direction of the President, the Silver Star has been posthumously awarded to your son, **Private Richard L. Lynam**. The citation is as follows:

SILVER STAR

For gallantry in action. On 5 January, 1945 at 0400 hours, the second platoon, Company 'H', 517th Parachute Infantry, was ordered to reinforce Company 'C', east of Bergeval, Belgium. The platoon moved into position and was ordered to send a squad out as a combat and reconnaissance patrol. Private Lynam, acting squad leader, volunteered to take his squad on the patrol. The patrol advanced approximately 500 yards toward the position occupied by Company 'C' when it was subjected to heavy small arms fire from enemy soldiers protecting a mortar position. With utter disregard for his own safety, Private Lynam moved forward and calmly led and directed his squad in an attack on the enemy positions. Private Lynam, moving forward, killed five of the enemy before he was mortally wounded. Private Lynam's gallant and courageous leadership won the admiration of his comrades and was an inspiration to all who served with him.

(Authority: GO No. 15, 13 ABN Div, 19 May 45, Pvt, 517 Parachute Infantry)

My deepest sympathy is extended to you in your bereavement."

Edward F. Mitchell  
Major General  
The Adjutant General

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Bob,

Thanks a million! This shed's a lot of light on that day and the circumstances. I was sorry to read Ben passed a few years ago. I would have loved to have met him and listen to his stories. Reading his words is unbelievable. I never expected to find any details about the one particular attack out of thousands that took my uncle. This will be great to share with my family as we all loved my dad but



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never knew his one and only brother.

Thanks so much for your time. I'll get in touch with Mr. Hensliegh.

Thanks again and if you ever come across any details on Co H, please pass along.

David Clark

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Dear Bob, I can't add anything more, except that someone may have the dates mixed up a few days, and possibly all this took place on the same day. Which one?????

HH (**Howard Hensleigh**)

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### *Military Humor*

Military quote: "I earned my sergeant's stripes the hard way. I started out as a lieutenant."



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### *Memorial Day 2012*

This is an email sent to Alan from one of his law partners. Alan has shared it with me and Dad who were moved by it. Alan thought we should share it with you should you think it should be shared in Mail Call.

**Pat Sietz and Alan Greer**

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To: Alan G. Greer  
Subject: FW: Memorial Day

Alan, this is an email from my cousin who is a navy doctor currently serving in Afghanistan. I thought you might be interested.

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Hello all,

First off I want to say I am well and all is good here. Second, this is not a happy update, but these have been an emotional couple weeks, especially the last few days. Writing down some of my thoughts and sharing is a way of coping for me, but please don't expect a happy upbeat email.

Fighting season seems to be in full swing here, now. When I arrived here over four months ago we had days at a time where most of our patients were transferred from outlying FOBS (forward operating bases) or other parts of Afghanistan and we'd go days at a time without seeing serious casualties. Though that pace has gradually picked up, it seems to have peaked over the past couple weeks. In January and February, seeing injured service members with multiple amputations was an occasional occurrence, happening a few times a month. Now it seems to be daily, often multiple times per day. Young soldiers who have literally had their legs and, sometimes, arms blown up. Generally they do well. They come to us in physiologic shock and we keep them alive and send them to the operating room where their wounds are washed and dressed. They make it back home, and though their lives are changed forever, and their hopes and dreams may be altered, they return to those whom they love and generally find new meaning to life. However that is not always the case.

Here at the NATO Role 3 Multinational Medical Unit, we like to tout our 98% survival rate. Ninety Eight percent of the injured service members who are iwho arrive at our doors with a pulse leave us with a pulse. Unfortunately that leaves 2% who do not. As the number of injured soldiers and sailors we see increases so do the number who die in our care. This is especially difficult when a twenty-something young man comes in talking to us. He knows that his legs have been blown off. He demands morphine. "Give me some Fucking morphine. Just put me out" . . . and we do, as soon as we can. We comfort him. We ease his pain. We do everything we can! We intubate him and take away his work of breathing. We fight the infections that may be taking root in his blood. We take measures to prevent continued bleeding. We do everything we can! We do everything right and it looks like his is doing well. Then he loses a pulse. We increase our resuscitative efforts. We cut open his chest wall and spread his ribs, exposing his lungs, heart, and diaphragm. We take hold of his heart in our hands, squeezing it for him, because it is not adequately squeezing itself. We do everything we can! We inject adrenaline directly into his heart and pump unit after unit of blood directly into his veins. We do everything we can! Then I make a decision to STOP. We cover his body with an American Flag, the symbol that he is fighting for. The symbol to which he gave every bit of himself. We gather his belongings: A wedding ring, a uniform that has been cut to shreds, his



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sunglasses, a couple photos in his pocket. We are composed, we had been acting on instinct and digging for knowledge and skills that we have obtained over years. Then there is a calm, and we think about what just happened and suddenly composure requires more effort. I try to think about why this young man should have a fate that is different than so many others with similar injuries that we see day after day and whom we send home alive. We did everything that we could!

Preparing the trauma bay for incoming casualties.

This is not the first time I have had a situation like this. Any of my Emergency Medicine or other medical colleagues have probably had similar days, similar cases under different circumstances. At home we talk to the family. We try to explain what happened. We call the medical examiner. We take it in, and we move on and come up with our own way of coping, and continue to see all the patients who show up in the Emergency Department who have been waiting during our resuscitation. Here, we do not contact the family, and I am grateful. I can't imagine trying to explain to a mother, a father, a spouse, or a sibling that their son/daughter/husband/wife/sister/brother was blown up in war . . . that his last words were "give me some fucking morphine!" Here, we have a dignified transfer from the hospital. The body is quickly prepared, pallbearers are gathered and the hospital comes to a halt. All staff not immediately involved in care line the hallway. We stand at Parade Rest awaiting command. As the pallbearers march the body down the hall we salute our fallen comrade. We maintain a thousand yard stare as the flag draped body passes us by. We fight back tears and listen to the occasional snuffle of our colleagues. The chaplain says his words:

*God calls Warriors to Serve their country To lay down their life for their country Men & Women who give their life for things bigger than themselves This warrior made the ultimate sacrifice for the United States of America We honor that service and sacrifice today As we commit his/her body to God Earth-to-earth, ashes-to-ashes, and dust-to-dust*

A bell is rung, and our fallen comrade leaves the hospital. We then return to our duties and prepare for more casualties.

We had 3 of these patients in 24 hours, a sailor, an army infantryman, and a marine. The sailor was a Master-at-Arms dog handler. He was shot in the lower back when bending over. The bullet went under his armor and penetrated his heart. I heard that it was his and his dog's first mission. The injured sailor's dog bit the flight medic who attended to his master's wounds. The dog was present at the Dignified Transfer ceremony at the hospital. The injured flight medic returned to work, evacuating more casualties and sought our care from us later that day as the mission paced slowed for the evening. We had two more Dignified transfers just a couple days earlier and had to certify the deaths of those who did not make it to the trauma bay . . . those who sustained injuries incompatible with life, severed torsos, split heads, severe dismemberment, and burns beyond recognition. The process begins to wear. We have each other for support, but there are days where it is hard. I went back to the barracks that day and cried, only to get called in later for more casualties.

This is Igor, a military working dog he is well known in our hospital. He is a 9 year old Belgian Shepherd/Malinois bomb sniffing dog on his final tour in Afghanistan, after which he will retire back home with his current handler. Without a doubt Igor has saved the lives of many people by sniffing out IEDs. Stacie sent me 3 boxes full of dog toys and treats (including the rope ball in his mouth in this picture) and Igor was fortunate enough to benefit from these.

After a few very hard days, our Executive Officer (XO, or second in command) sent us these words, which I found relevant.



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The wounds we see in this theater and emotions you feel are nothing like those you may experience in any other place. The mechanisms you use at home to deal with the day's stresses, like watching a baseball game, having dinner with friends or even talking with your spouse will, by themselves, be inadequate here. "Honor, Courage, Commitment," Army Strong, Semper Fidelis, "All the Way" are not just words. They, along with your other anchors of strength, will secure you at your home port in a stormy sea. Your respective uniform, your homeland's flag and what they represent are necessary to put in perspective the loss we all witness. Know others are standing by to help you if you need it. War is hell and death is an inevitability of war. Our job is to stand ready for those that have taken the fight to the enemy. No matter how hard we try, we will occasionally lose a warrior. Our mission is to be ready for the next one that comes through our doors and provide them the "Best Care Anywhere." That is a mission I know we will not fail.

Before our fallen service members leave Afghanistan we have a larger Dignified Transfer Ceremony on the Flightline as their remains are loaded on an aircraft for transport home. I attended my first one when the above service member passed. There were two fallen heroes being transferred to their aircraft at the ceremony, which was attended by a few hundred soldiers and sailors. There were Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines. They were American, British, Australian, Belgian, French, Slovak, as well as other nationalities. Each in their different uniforms, each marching in their own unique way, each saluting their fallen friends, and each there of their own will to show their respect. We stood in formation out in the scorching mid-day heat. It was over 100 degrees Fahrenheit in the shade. Our uniforms soaked with sweat and small pools seemed to gather at the feet of some, a combination of sweat and tears. The bagpipes played and words were spoken about each service member, their life, their families, and their service. They were loaded onto the C17 which then took off for their final journey home.

A dignified transfer ceremony from Google Images. Judging from the uniforms, this is at least 6 months old.

This Memorial Day was unlike any others for me. We had a ceremony here at the Role 3. It was moving, but what was most moving is seeing the Rifle placed vertically behind a pair of boots, with a helmet on top of the rifle butt stock and dog tags hanging down. This is commonly used as a symbol for fallen soldiers, but seeing it that day, it was more than a symbol. It was the actual belongings of someone who a few days later would have occupied those belongings. These artifacts belonged to someone who passed through our care and is now probably being placed to rest back home. It was a Memorial Day that hit closer to the heart, and one that I hope will leave a lasting impression. In the future, not only is memorial day a 3-day weekend to gather with friends and family, but it is a day to remember, respect, and honor those who willingly served their country and gave the ultimate sacrifice so that we can appreciate our 3 day weekend with friends and family. We all die eventually, and these individuals death will not be forgotten.

What is left behind. The symbol of a fallen hero. A marine mourns the loss.

I cannot really explain it all in words, but these past few days have been very emotional. It is through my respect and solidarity with these fallen and wounded warriors that I am inspired to be here. It is something I feel very strongly about. Stacie, I know it is hard for you to have me away, and it is difficult to understand why I want to be here. It is not for my "support of war," for blind patriotism, or any kind of political statement, but for my support, respect, and sense of obligation to those who serve in our the Armed Forces those of our Allies. I'm sorry to Brad and all my good friends whose weddings I have missed because I am here. I so wish I could make a trip home to be there for your special occasions. And to my family and friends who I miss so much, I can't wait to see you when I return home. This is not something I want for my whole life, but it is something I feel that I need to do and am proud to do. We cannot all say, "let someone else do that." It is a fraction of our time and our years, and I truly





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believe that giving moments of life for what each of us believe in also gives even more meaning to the time we have at home with our family. It elucidates the value of that time we have at home, and the value of every moment of our lives. Thank you all for your support and for your support of our troops.

Happy Memorial Day!!!

Thank you for reading, and sharing this experience with me. I know I'm a week late, but I wish you all a wonderful Memorial Day with many more to come!

Cheers,

Jeff

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- 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:

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c/o Joanne Barrett

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