



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2117

August 5, 2012

*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
MailCall@517prct.org
www.517prct.org/archives
www.517prct.org/roster.pdf

Saints and Soldiers - Airborne Creed Premiere

From: <http://www.muscogemoms.com/2012/08/03/saints-soldiers-airborne-creed-premiere/> :

August 3, 2012 by [SDavenport](#)



The National Infantry Museum and Soldier Center is proud to sponsor in part with [WLTZ 38](#) to host the world premiere of [Saints and Soldiers: Airborne Creed](#) at Patriot Park IMAX.

Saints and Soldiers: Airborne Creed
Wednesday, August 15 @ 7 p.m.
National Infantry Museum, 1775 Legacy Way

Saints and Soldiers: Airborne Creed takes moviegoers back 68 years ago to August 15, 1944 when the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team (PRCT) jumped over South France. The film, written and directed by Richard Little, relives the history of the Soldiers who risked their lives in an effort to hold true to the Airborne Creed.

Prior to the 7p.m. premiere, Little as well as World War II Paratrooper, LTC Hal Beddow will hold an informal Q&A session. After the screening, Little and Beddow will be available on the mezzanine (upstairs in the museum) for a meet-and-greet to answer additional questions.

Admission to the screening is **FREE** and open to the public.

Please join us in this once in a lifetime event!



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The CBS news [The CBS Evening News with Scott Pelly] lady Alison sounded like they would come to my house to see the letters and learn more about the 517th. Your words are right on target and when she calls me back I need to tell just what you said. I like the idea of the connection with France and Belgium. I will promote that also. I just got off the phone with the producer telling him about all of this and he told me they are doing the national premier here in Salt Lake on the 15th of August and all the stars and cast will be here for that showing. I do think because Fort Benning is the home of Airborne it makes more sense to do it there, but then the publicist is also trying to get a hold of Fort Bragg to do a movie showing down there where the 82nd Airborne is along with 18th Airborne Corps. I kind of think we are now on the end of the tiger's tail and just have to wait and see what happens. Whatever it is I sure hope and pray it goes like you said.

Lory

Attached is an email I received from the movie producer, Ryan Little. They have been in contact with folks from Conneaut, Ohio, up by Cleveland. They are doing a D-Day reenactment on the 17-18 August in the Conneaut Township Park Conneaut Ohio, and will be showing the movie *Saints and Soldiers Airborne Creed*. They are very interested in honoring any and all 517th troopers that can make it to that reenactment. Please have any trooper contact me at 801-232-0009 if they would like to go so I can coordinate it for them.

Lory Curtis

Dear Veterans of the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team,

Until today, I had never heard of your unit, but after receiving a phone call this afternoon from a fellow colleague of mine, he's asked me to reach out to you in hopes to locate any veteran of the 517th to attend D-Day Conneaut, a living history event of the 2nd World War. I am the veteran's coordinator for the event, going on our 13th year.

At the event, as it has just been made aware to me, a new film of current production that features the 517th in action in Southern France is to be premiered at the event on Thursday evening, August 15th. I do not know much about the film as it has just been offered to our organization for the premier showing and more details are coming in. This will be held outdoors on our Parade Ground.

The event is in North East Ohio, far corner in a town called Conneaut. If by chance any veteran from the 517th might be close-by or well enough to travel, we would welcome them with thankful hearts. Please kindly take a moment to reply to my message here, or give me a call to discuss the event further. I would be happy to talk with you or anyone that may be interested in knowing more. My phone number is 412-726-6665

My best, and thank you...

Eric Montgomery
Veterans Liaison
D-Day Conneaut
www.ddayohio.us
www.soldiersandsailors.us



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More from the Kansas City Reunion

Hey Bob, sending a few photos from the reunion. Ciao -- Tom Copsy



Bob,
I might have hugged that child (I hug any female who will allow me that privilege) but the picture is probably not me. the shorts I was wearing are much longer and I wear the accompanying shirt with the tails hanging out in a vain attempt to hide what a friend calls my "food blister".

Regards,
Allan Johnson



??? and Dorothy Ross



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More from Operation Dragoon – D.C.

Gentlemen,

Here is an article we've written and pictures from the Operation Dragoon event. Please pass these on to your associations for further publishing.

Rock of the Marne All the Way!

Monika Stoy



Darrell Egner receives the French Legion of Honor

Additional Dragoon photos - Claire and Gang

Tom Copsey





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MailCall News

Greetings, all -

Wow - what a summer! We are going from Kansas City and that fantastic reunion, to Washington, DC where **Darrell Egner** received the Legion of Honor, and now we depart for France tomorrow!

Dad - **Allan Johnson**, 596 - has tried twice with me to locate where the 596 had been during its time in Chablis. Twice we have failed - and then Dad got to talking to **Bill Hudson**, who not only told him we hadn't gone far enough - he mailed Dad a map! Armed with this map and his letter (written back in 2004 - but we haven't been in the area since then), we hope that the third time will be the charm.

We will make a short side trip after Chablis to see **Gilles Guinard** in Geneva, and then we will motor down to Provence together. We will then spend time with **Eric Renoux** and **Jean Michel Soldi** near Draguinan, and **Patricia and Roland Orengo** in Sospel. I will try to report in from France for Mail Call if possible.

Item #2 is the Thunderbolt roster: The last Thunderbolt contained a postcard that needed to be returned in order to receive the Thunderbolt. When we were at Kansas City, there was some reluctance to contract the mailing list from its current 800+ to about 300 (those who returned their postcards), and many offered to help us call those who hadn't responded.

If you would like to help call a page or two of the roster, please send an email to me at clairejgib@comcast.net. I will compile a list of volunteers and figure out how we will make the phone calls necessary. This will be a September weekend project - it'll be an easy one and it's a great way to help the Association.

Airborne all the way -

Claire Giblin

My great uncle, **Frank Aloysius Croshal**, was a member of the 517th Combat Parachute Team. He passed away in 1998. I have more information but thought I'd start with this.

Wesley Miller

Bob,
I was speaking with Brenda Carlan, the curator at the Stephens County Museum in Toccoa, GA, and she brought to my attention that this coming March 2013, marks the 70th anniversary of the organization of the 517th at Camp Toccoa. I think it would be a great mini reunion for those who could attend there. I myself would rather go down in the summer, but March is when it was organized. Please let our folks know about it.

Lory



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Ben,

Please add Currahee Military Museum to your emails update/news list. We are working very hard to find the men and their families, to let them know that we are interested in their history in Toccoa, throughout the WWII war and their careers, civilian or military. . We have started a "Camp Toccoa Veteran Showcase". Which we will have a Camp Toccoa man on display in the museum for 6 months and then rotate to another and so on. This is our way of helping to preserve and promote the men and their dedicated time in the service. We have a very nice 517th exhibit, but would like to make it more personal by adding stories and the history of more of the men, the showcase would allow us to do this for the men and their families.

I will send you more on this if you are interested in including in your mail call. Also, we are very interested in hosting the 517th men and their families in March 2013 for the 70th anniversary of activation at Camp Toccoa in 1943.

I have cc'ed this to Lory Curtis as he has been in touch with us over the years about the history of the 517th. Question, would you be willing to share your active list of members of the association? If not, which we understand it not, as we only give our information to related associations of Camp Toccoa and even then there may be restrictions.

Again, we would like to work with the group for the museum and the Camp Toccoa at Currahee project.

Kind regards,
Brenda

Keep in mind; Tomorrow, today will be history.

Brenda J. Carlan
Executive Director
Currahee Military Museum
Stephens County Historical Society, Inc.
160 North Alexander Street
Toccoa, Georgia 30577 30577

www.toccoahistory.com
toccoahistory@windstream.net
706-282-5055

I have seen the message about our chaplains several times. We had two: The catholic chaplain was **Father Guinetti** (sp?) (who got stuck on the tail of the plane on one of our jumps) and **Brown** was the protestant. It had to be one of those two men on which they are seeking confirmation. One email had both of their names spelled correctly I think with correct first names. There were other men who acted as assistants to the catholic chaplain such as **Chuck Boyer** for 3rd Bn., whom some of the men might have called padre, but that is unlikely.

Congratulations on your new job for which you are being paid. The 517th is most fortunate to have you aboard with services free of charge.



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Glad you had a good reunion and thanks for a thorough report.
Highest airborne regards,

Howard Hensleigh

Dear Bob

Thank you so much for forwarding **Howard Hensleigh's** answer. It is a nice confirmation that I am on the right track and I like the mention that there were assistant chaplains

May I use a little bit of your time with the following inquiries? that would help me greatly

1/ Is it possible for you to post an inquiry asking for impressions, feelings, anecdotes, stories from soldiers of the 517th who were in Grasse (either those who arrived on the August 24 and liberated the town, mainly the 2nd Bt, or those who may have come later to rest in the town) and maybe ask if they have pictures that could be used for my book ?

2/ could it be possible for me to reproduce a picture of the paratroopers that you may have and also the coat of arms of the 517th with the eagle for my book? there are pictures of American troops in Grasse in the local municipal archives but they are pictures of soldiers relaxing in the town. I'd like a picture of soldiers in the planes for example. I can pay if there are expenses of course.

3/ Do you know where I can find the regimental archives?

Thank you for your kindness. What you do is so useful to historians like me

With my best wishes

Gilles

Gilles,

1. I will post your request on the next MailCall.

2. You are welcome to use the logo, stories, and any pictures from the web site for your book. Just copy any pictures you need. If you let me know which pictures you want, I might have larger copies saved.

3. I don't know that there are any official regimental archives. (That's one reason that we created the web site.) There are small pieces of documents in the national archive records, and probably other locations, but the primary history is "A Paratroopers' Odyssey", which is on the web site, and now "A Cut Above", the recent documentary, which you can find on YouTube.

Bob Barrett

[Actually, the most complete regimental archives are in Howard's head, as you'll see below. – BB]



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Subject: inquiry Chaplains 517th

Dear **Howard Hensleigh**,

Sorry to bother you. I am the French historian trying to figure out which one of the chaplains of your regiment was in Grasse in 1944. Thank you very much for your answer which was forwarded to me by Bob.

To complete the picture would you mind answering a few questions?

1/ Which battalion were you in?

2/ Were you in Grasse yourself? If so do you remember that period (impressions, anecdotes, how you were welcomed etc...)

3/ Do you remember meeting or seeing the two chaplains?

4/ if so can you describe them to me? what were your impressions about them? Were they appreciated? did many men attend their services ?

Any anecdotes concerning them? or the services in general

5/ Do you know any survivors who have been in Grasse (from the 2nd Battalion?) who may have been to the services in the English Chapelle in Grasse.

6/ I have details from an English Lady who lived in Grasse and was so relieved to see you guys when you liberated Grasse. She mentions several American soldiers who came to rest in Grasse after the end of the campaign in south of France and before the regiment left for Soissons. These soldiers came to mend the church or do some gardening. Do you have any details about that?

7/ do you have memories and anecdotes of your stay in South of France?

I hope I am not asking too much. I am so fortunate to be able to be in contact with you...

with all my best wishes

Gilles Teulié

Salon de Provence

Dear Gilles,

Here are my answers to your questions:

1. 3rd Bn. I was S2 Intelligence on Bn staff during the S. France campaign.

2. No. I was not in Grasse. We bypassed it pursuing the Germans who were retreating rapidly at this phase of the S. France campaign.



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3. I met and saw both chaplains many times but not in Grasse.

4. **Brown** was the taller of the two and was probably better looking. Both were good men and appreciated by the troops. The Catholic chaplain held more services during combat operations and got around to the battalions more frequently to serve communion. He had helpers who assisted with mass. I think he is the only one whom the men called Padre.

Chaplain Guinette (sp?) played poker at the small regimental officers club at Camp Mackall, NC until **Col. Louis Walsh**, the regimental commanding officer, ordered him to stop. Walsh was replaced by **Rupert Graves** after Tennessee maneuvers shortly before we embarked for Naples, Italy. Graves commanded the 517th until it was disbanded in 1946.

The most interesting anecdote is that **Father Guinette** once jumped out of the C47 aircraft on a training jump and his parachute harness got caught on the tail of the plane. He wasn't very heavy and the plane may have hit a down draft. The chute did not open or the prop blast would have pulled him free. The air corps flight crew fed a rope out to him which he tied to himself and his harness and they pulled him back into the plane. We used to joke that this greatly increased mass attendance.

Our men in the rifle companies joked about anyone who wasn't up there in the lines with them. When the chaplains came around they would say that it must be safe because the chaplain is here. They didn't mean that the chaplain's presence gave special protection from the Almighty.

5. No.

6. No.

7. I have many, but will limit myself to what I remember about the Grasse area. At this time we were moving rapidly as the Germans retreated. Grasse was well known to us as the perfume capital of the world. It was the job of the S2 section to know where the enemy was and that was hard to do in view of the rapid movement of both forces.

So, often we would be way out front in a black Fiat fourdoor we had "requisitioned". Just beyond Grasse we got too far out, were being surrounded and, after we turned around, chased by motorized German troops. **Rene Benoit**, my French Canadian driver, had the car wide open when we ran out of gas. We coasted into what I thought was a large farm complex to abandon the car. Benoit jumped out of the car and talked excitedly to a Frenchman who came out of a building. He ran back into the building and came out with a funnel and a bucket of liquid which they poured into the gas tank. We escaped. When there was time to talk I told Benoit that what had happened was impossible because the French had no gasoline. Benoit told me that it wasn't gas, but alcohol used to make perfume. After that the timing on the Fiat was a little off, but Benoit, who was also a good mechanic, fixed it.

Thank you for your interest.

Howard Hensleigh



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Dear Gilles,

When I replied yesterday I failed to mention that I do recall being in Grasse after the S. France campaign was over for us and we were waiting for transportation to the north. Although this account may not be helpful in rounding out your story on the church, it does provide a framework for its happening.

The 517th was on the lines without relief for 94 days. Mine was extended ten days as I was assigned to orient the armored infantry outfit that relieved us on the lines between Sospel and the Italian border. My time in the Nice area before boarding 40 and 8s for Soissons was very short. However, during that time we were provided the transportation for a daytime visit to Grasse. This was not a mass movement of the outfit and probably no more than one truckload of us went there each day. I think **Col. Graves** and his staff were looking for activities to keep the troops occupied in beneficial endeavors and out of the bars.

I visited a perfume making facility and saw how the abundant fields of flowers surrounding Grasse were converted into perfume. The perfume of course was for sale at the facility. I bought a large (for perfume) metal container four or five inches tall and stored it in my B bag (a duffel bag stored in the rear when we were in combat). This perfume made it back to the States as a homecoming gift for my mother.

So, it is quite plausible that one of our chaplains was on one or more of these trips and that he with some of the paratroopers did some things beneficial to the church in Grasse as related by the English lady.

I am sure this puts the story in context.

Howard Hensleigh

I have a personal request. Someone (Nancy?) took a picture of me with General Seitz at the KC reunion. Can I get a copy?

Bob Barrett



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RE: Jim Marohn

I have included a few pictures of the items I found in my grandfather's possessions. The first appears to be a medal that I assume was awarded to the 517th for the liberation of Southern France. I imagine this was attached to a ribbon that has since been lost and with the *Republique Francaise* on the front and name and regimental affiliation on the back.



The next item was a bracelet my Great Uncle Jim wore.

After that are his orders for his Purple Heart (You'll note the proud Army tradition of misspelling 'Marohn', "As long as your social's right", as my S-1 used to tell me...).



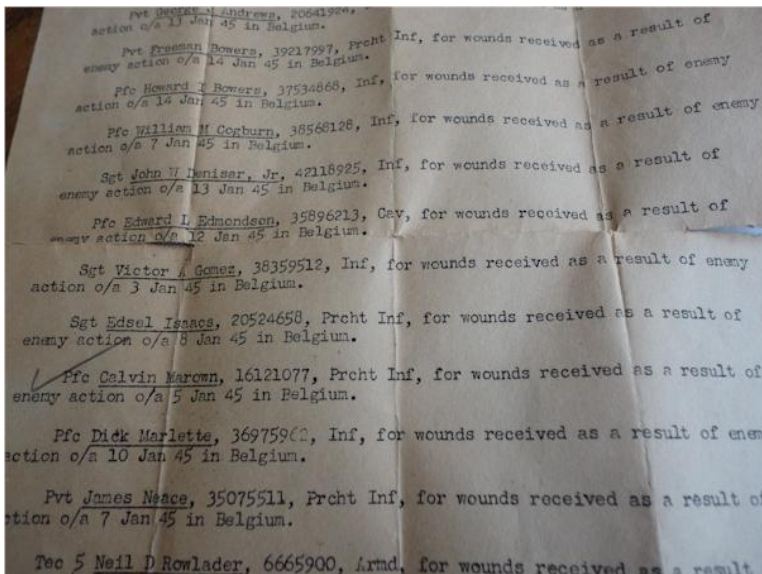
Next is an article that talks about his being injured at Bergeval and his recovery. The article talks about an imminent return to his unit, but in reality he ended up losing his leg, and dying as a result of the complications from the wound a couple years later.

Lastly, my grandfather, having served in the 325th GIR, has a copy of "Saga of the All American" which is the year book given to all the troopers who served in the 82nd in WW2. There is a section which outlines the 17th Airborne's exploits in Southern France. If I figure out how I can scan these pages and forward them to you if you'd like.



Again, thanks for this amazing website and the hard work you've done to keep it running.

Matthew Marohn





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Submitted by

Name: **Angela Forrest-Burge**
From: Mansfield, Georgia
E-mail: Aefburge@aol.com

Comments:

My father was **2Lt. John W. Forrest** who passed on May 25, 2012 (Memorial weekend fittingly). He always considered himself a soldier even though he lost his leg in combat and was retired. He celebrated his association with the 517th and highly respected all the men he served with. The more I learn about them all, the more humbled I am by all of their sacrifices. For the families and veterans that happen to read this, my admiration of what you gave for our freedom is boundless. Thank you is not enough....
Angela Forrest-Burge

Added: August 1, 2012

Allan,

This note (above) reminded me -- Did you ever locate the pictures from the reunion?

Bob Barrett

No. I have no idea what happened to the material on **John Forrest**. It was my intention to send it to you to be included in our archives. However, when I went to gather the collection it had disappeared. It was a well-researched piece on one of our family. It also included several pictures of him with comrades. Could you put this in Mail call?

Thank you,
Allan Johnson

From **Nila Gott**:

The story of Medal of Honor recipient, Roy Benavidez:

http://www.youtube.com/watch_popup?v=RZ7968BbMnU&vq=medium



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I wish I could've been at the Kansas City reunion. I miss you all! I am attaching a picture of **Al Sperry** from the Atlanta reunion of 2011. I was taking pictures and as I pointed the camera towards Mr Sperry he moved to get out of my way. I said "No, I want you in the picture." and he stopped and smiled for me... I see there are some who just do not want to give up on the National reunions! I couldn't make it this year but maybe next year? I know I missed a good one. Also maybe I could attend one of the Florida reunions. I live near Cincinnati Ohio, so it's always nice to leave here and go to Florida during the winter! I had so many costly repairs to vehicles and my boat this year and just didn't have the funds to attend.



I was able to go to Lake Erie and do some Walleye fishing, the first weekend in June. That was a blast. It was cloudy and windy with a little rain. The fish seemed to love it. The wind was blowing so hard it made the straps on my boat top hum. One fish broke my line and then I caught 5 walleye and 1 channel cat! The waves built up to 8-10 feet but I didn't want to leave but finally thought it was best. It took me a long time to get back to the boat ramp. A 1/2 hour ride turned into 2 1/2 hours. The next day 2 friends drove up and joined me and as we got out to where I wanted to fish, the boat broke down and they both got sea sick....Regardless of the situation

we still caught 2 more walleye.... I had to call the Coast Guard and they came and towed me to Put N Bay. On the way we picked up two guys in the channel between the islands whose kayaks had been swamped by the big waves. If not for us breaking down they probably would've died from hypothermia. The water was in the low 60's and mine was the last boat fishing in the area so they may not have been seen. It was around 6:30 pm. I had to grab a taxi after getting to Put N Bay and get on a Ferry to take me back to the mainland so I could get my truck and trailer and get back across to the island and load my boat and then go back to the mainland. I had to bribe the ferry crew \$60.00 to wait for me because it was 8:00 pm and they were the last ferry back to Port Clinton for the night. I got back to the ferry at 8:14pm and they loaded me up and we took off for Port Clinton. We fried the fish and had steak with it that night and I came back home the next morning after 2 days of fishing. The repair was just a rubber grommet on the prop had slipped and stripped out so I couldn't get any traction. It was a cheap fix which was good but I have only used the boat once since then. It's always an adventure when I go to Lake Erie.. Keep up the great work Bob and thanks to all who continue to serve the 517th.

Rick Sweet -- Son of **Odas Sweet, H co.**



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From **Phil McSpadden**:
A story never heard....

A chaplain, who happened to be assigned to the Pentagon, told of an incident that happened right after Flight 77 hit the Pentagon on 9/11. A daycare facility inside the Pentagon had many children, including infants who were in heavy cribs. The daycare supervisor, looking at all the children they needed to evacuate, was in a panic over what they could do. There were many children, mostly toddlers, as well as the infants that would need to be taken out with the cribs. There was no time to try to bundle them into carriers and strollers.

Just then a young Marine came running into the center and asked what they needed. After hearing what the center director was trying to do, he ran back out into the hallway and disappeared. The director thought, "Well, here we are, on our own."

About 2 minutes later, that Marine returned with 40 other Marines in tow. Each of them grabbed a crib with a child, and the rest started gathering up toddlers. The director and her staff then helped them take all the children out of the center and down toward the park near the Potomac and the Pentagon. Once they got about 3/4 of a mile outside the building, the Marines stopped in the park, and then did a fabulous thing - they formed a circle with the cribs, which were quite sturdy and heavy, like the covered wagons in the Old West. Inside this circle of cribs, they put the toddlers, to keep them from wandering off. Outside this circle were the 40 Marines, forming a perimeter around the children and waiting for instructions. There they remained until the parents could be notified and come get their children.

The chaplain then said, "I don't think any of us saw nor heard of this on any of the news stories of the day. It was an incredible story of our men there. There wasn't a dry eye in the room. The thought of those Marines and what they did and how fast they reacted; could we expect any less from them? It was one of the most touching stories from the Pentagon.

It's the Military, not the politicians that ensures our right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It's the Military who salutes the flag, who serves beneath the flag, and whose coffin is draped by the flag. If you care to offer the smallest token of recognition and appreciation for the military, please pass this on and pray for our men and women, who have served and are currently serving our country, and pray for those who have given the ultimate sacrifice for freedom.

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