



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



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

**MailCall No. 2129**

**November 4, 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](http://www.517prct.org)  
[MailCall@517prct.org](mailto:MailCall@517prct.org)  
[www.517prct.org/archives](http://www.517prct.org/archives)  
[www.517prct.org/roster.pdf](http://www.517prct.org/roster.pdf)

### *MailCall News*

I received this email from an old Army buddy.

Lory

### **The One Hurricane Picture You Will Want to See Today — Trust Us**

As the rest of the Federal Government gets the day off due to hurricane conditions around Washington, D.C., there is one group of workers who you can count on showing up and performing their jobs perfectly — and outdoors, no less. That group is the elite guard at the Tomb of the Unknown soldier in Arlington cemetery. And if you are interested in what they are doing right now, here is a look:





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

It is with great sadness that I report that I spoke with Susan Collins today, and she told me that her dear dad Jack died last night.

Jack was a regular at the Kissimmee reunions and we will miss him greatly. He was a wonderful playful soul who made us laugh. He so loved his family and the 517.

Claire

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**Subject:** Memorial/burial arrangement **Jack Collins** – Passed away 10/31

Memorial service will be held at Faison Presbyterian Church (502 West Main Street, Faison NC) at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>; burial service at 3:00 p.m. that afternoon in Lumberton, NC at Meadowbrook Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the following organizations:

Carolina East Home Care & Hospice Foundation  
PO Box 887  
Kenansville, NC 28341

517<sup>th</sup> PRCT Association  
Attn: Brenda Verbeck Mortensen  
13046 Race Track Road #220  
Tampa, FL 33626

Thank you all for your prayers and condolences.

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Susan Collins Mikitka  
Jack Collins Produce Co., Inc.  
PO Box 155  
Faison, NC 28341

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Jack was in HQ. Company 2nd Battery, Mortar Platoon. He was in our company from Toccoa all through the war.

The last reunion he was able to handle due to health reasons was in Atlanta last year. He was a good trooper and always fun to be around. He can be seen in our video "A Cut Above". Two things I will always remember about him was he carried a little note book through the War that most of us signed with our home information, etc. He pulled it out every time we would see him at Reunions to make sure we didn't owe him any money.

The other thing he would not let us forget was he was younger than most of us. He just turned 88 years old just before he passed away.

**Darrell Egner**

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

I am sure I speak for everyone when I say, our thoughts and prayers are with everyone living on the east coast. I hope they are all well, dry and protected. Very concerned **for Alan Johnson, Claire** and their entire family, and all in the New Jersey/New York area. Let us know how you are when you can.

**Lory Curtis**

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Sandy Update: Wed 10/31/2012 4:34 PM

Hi all

We have heard from friends around the country and the world...all hoping the best for us in the path of the hurricane. We are in New Jersey about 35 miles from the ocean and the power has been out since Monday night. We are together now that Dad has arrived...we have a fireplace so we are warm.. a generator so we can keep devices charged and plenty of beverages. We still have hot water and no flooding...a surprise since we often do.. so we are lucky in that respect.

There are more trees down than we can count and many are leaning on power lines. The wind on Monday night was like nothing I have ever heard.

No cable...no tv. .but we hear the images are incredible. Hope everyone else is good and out of harm's way.

Best to all

**Clare G.**

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RE: Unbelievable new weapon.

I think this is awesome, but why let information like this out to the public??? We give all our military secrets out to our enemies!

**Phil McSpadden**

<http://www.youtube.com/embed/ZFjGbOyd2ek?rel=0>

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

Hello. Thank you for your wonderful website. My dad was a member of the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team. His name is **Msgt. Francis E. Whitaker** and he was with the 460-D. He passed away in November of 2002.

I would like to submit some photos of him as I round them up.

Also, I was wondering if there is somewhere I can sign up for any and all info related to my dad and his former combat team. He had received a roster update in 1999 and if you could send me any current info it would be greatly appreciated. My address is below. My dad's former address on Murray Blvd is no longer current and has not been valid for many years.

In his honor, I am working on putting together a history of his life in the Army for my grandsons. They are extremely interested and are full of questions. One of my grandsons is wanting to follow the lead of his great-grandpa and join the military as soon as he is able to. It is all he has talked about since he was three years old. He is now eight.

One day I hope to visit the areas that my dad never had the opportunity to "revisit during a time of peace".

It has taken me this long to start this project because I was taking care of my mom. She was diagnosed with Alzheimer's shortly after my dad's passing. But my family and I are putting this together now and your help is greatly appreciated.

Thank you again,

Tricia Parks  
827 Hollywood Way #110  
Burbank, CA 91505  
(213)217-0358

p.s. My nickname is Saki which is why the email is from note\_from\_saki@yahoo.com :)

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Hi Tricia,

We don't have a lot of official records of the 460<sup>th</sup> on the website. There are some photos submitted by others, but not much from D Battery. So yes, we would love to get copies of whatever photos you have.

In the meantime, I will post your letter in the next MailCall newsletter and see if anyone else has info.

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

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

Hi,

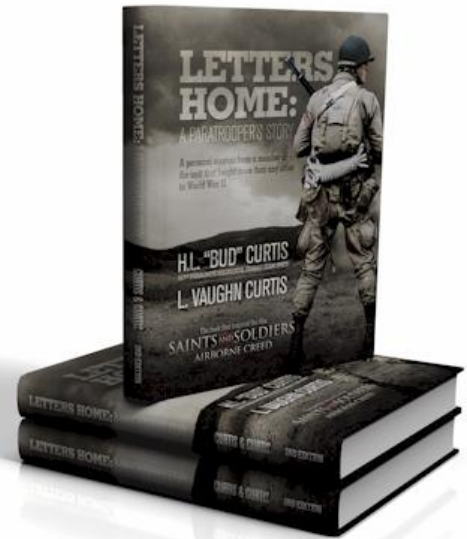
I would like to contact **Leo Dean** and **John Jonientz**. I taped them sharing stories with **Mel Dahlberg** during the reunion and I wondered if they might want a copy. Any assistance is appreciated!

Thanks,  
**Chris Bunce** (Ray's daughter)

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Bob,

Please thank Betty so much for the update on **Myrle**. Our prayers have truly been answered. I am so glad to hear he is doing so well. Wow!! that is great 70 years of marriage, congratulations to Betty and Myrle. To answer Myrle's question, the movie was film here in Utah, primarily in The Alpine area which is in the northeastern part of Utah County (south of the Salt Lake City area). It is a beautiful area, and still pretty much untouched. So glad you liked the movie. The DVD comes out November 12th, along with my book that has a new cover and has been changed in size to 7X10. The book will be on Amazon, Barnes and Noble and in local book stores here in Utah, and maybe some western states around here. See the attached picture. My brother Tim tells me you can pre order the DVD on Amazon.



Also, Thanks to **Tony Patin** for telling us the story of **LT Charles Whitney**. I never knew this before.

**Lory Curtis**

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Hi Bob -

I am going through Mail Calls for the Thunderbolt. In 2116, **John Doherty** seeks information about his grandfather. Though Dad was in a different platoon, he does remember **James McFadden**. Can you please forward this to him? He can call my dad at 908 852 1424 (home - you must leave a message. He gets lots of solicitation calls and must screen).

Thanks -

**Claire**



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

Dear Claire, Ben, President Sir **Kaare Allan Johnson** and 517<sup>th</sup> Vets,

Thanks for having sent me the sponsoring voucher before reenactment weekend in homage to 517<sup>th</sup> RTC soldiers.

I'm proud you trust me with making official the reenactment my brother Julien and me organized. I want to let you know that every time we are on those battlefield places, we do that thinking of 517<sup>th</sup> troopers who suffered and died for our freedom. We, young French, don't forget what young Americans did for us.

During this weekend, we were 14 participants with 3 jeeps and a GMC truck. We took positions in fox holes at "Hill 1040" feet because the weather was very rainy all night long. Then we took the road for historical places like "Plan Constant (460<sup>th</sup> PFAB)", Col de l'Ablé, Peira Cava and "Tête du Pin" mountain (517<sup>th</sup> PIR). We did some wonderful pictures attached to this message. I hope you will publish it on your website and will show it to our dear veterans.

Then we went down on Col de Braus and did a night patrol toward Sospel (in memory of the village freedom on October 29 1944). Back, we had diner all together on our positions, full of history... When we woke up, it was very cold in fox holes and we were surprised to see a snow storm!! We went on the weekend doing a souvenir ceremony in memory of the fights, on top of "col de braus", this ceremony was followed by a walk in the snow toward Tête de la Lavina, along the hill crest, called "bloody stump" by our dear 517<sup>th</sup> troopers.

Thanks again for you trust and honor. I would like to thanks all the Forty Four Memories' association participants. Thanks also to my friend Gilles Goberti for coming with his GMC truck and my brother Julien who helped me to organize this reenactment and ceremony.

**Nicolas Arnulf**

2418 Chemin de Montagnac

06440 L'Escarène

France

[arnulf.nico@gmail.com](mailto:arnulf.nico@gmail.com)

This a video link about our "week-end" : [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UiKnLcD\\_cDA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UiKnLcD_cDA)

The pictures !! :



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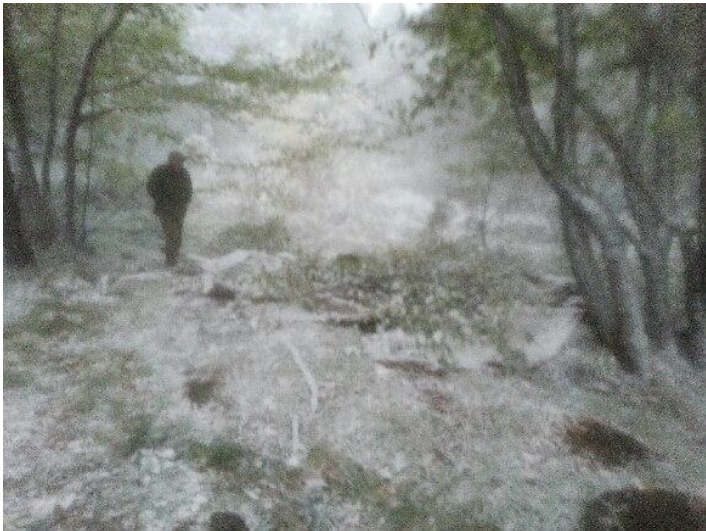


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## Name Those Troopers

517<sup>th</sup> PRCT Reunion, Chicago  
August 14, 1961

*Mrs. Don Murphy, (pointing to her home in Nice),  
Governor Terry Sanford and  
Major Don Fraser*



Follow-up question: The woman from Nice is Mrs. Don Murphy. I know Pvt. Murphy was friends with other 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion troopers. We don't have much about him on the web site. But he did hold one position of responsibility with the 517<sup>th</sup>. What important role did he have in 1943?

Dear Bob,

In the early days before we were incorporated into a formal Association, **Don Murphy** from Chicago played a large part in keeping 517th troopers in contact with each other and planning reunions, particularly the first ones in Chicago, the first one being held in November or early December of 1949. He, **Don Fraser** (postmaster of Blue Island, IL) and **Whitey Hillsdale** played a big part in setting up this first reunion. I'm not sure exactly what his duties in the 517th were during the War, but I knew of him then and it seemed that he was involved in all the recreational events of the outfit, including boxing matches etc. After the War, I'm sure his attractive wife from Nice was involved in all Don's 517th work to keep us connected as a band of brothers.

At the first reunion in Chicago we had our first business meeting and elected officers and a board of directors that kept things moving forward from then until now. I remember this quite clearly as **Whitey Hillsdale** approached me on my arrival saying they were all set but needed someone to preside over the business meeting, asking if I would do it. All of those who know me know how delighted I was to take the job.

Highest airborne regards, HH [Howard Hensleigh]

**Don Murphy** was also the editor of the original Thunderbolts:

See: [The Thunderbolt - August 1943](#)



Editor . . . Pvt. Don Murphy

Editorial Staff

- Pvt. Frank Steggart
- Pvt. Reeves Moran
- Pvt. D. K. Brooks
- Pvt. Nace B. Cohen
- Pvt. Don Gagnon

Art Staff

- Pvt. Lewis L. Cavett
- Pvt. Wm. Huffman
- Pvt. Geo. Rumsey
- Pvt. Tony Marsinko
- Pvt. Donald B. Mattson



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

### *Administrivia*

- If you miss any MailCalls, they are all available online at <http://www.517prct.org/mailcall/>
- At any time, if you want to be added or removed from the MailCall list, just let me know.
- Send any news, stories, or feedback to: [MailCall@517prct.org](mailto:MailCall@517prct.org)
- If you send me email that you do not want included in MailCall, just label it as FYEO.
- I now understand how Ben could get confused about what he already posted and what he didn't. If I miss something, please just send it again.
- Donations for any programs involving the 517th should be sent to our new Association Treasurer: Identify the purpose of any donation (Annual Dues, etc.) and make all checks payable to:

**517 PRCT Association, Inc.**

c/o Joanne Barrett  
70 Pleasant Street  
Cohasset, MA 02025

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