



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2130

November 11, 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
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www.517prct.org/archives
www.517prct.org/roster.pdf

Happy Veterans' Day, 517th!



HAPPY VETERAN'S DAY 517TH
From **Paul Abbene**



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This day was set aside to celebrate the end of WWI, and today it is set aside to honor all veterans of all past wars. Today, more than in the past, many restaurants and merchants are providing special discounts to all veterans. My thanks to them for, at last, remembering the many sacrifices the military has made for everyone. I presently have two nephews serving on active duty and a grandson entering the Air Force in February. My thanks to them, and all other men and women, who are striving to keep America strong and free. THANK YOU, ALL VETERANS!!

phil mc spadden

God bless all the Veterans past and future!!! God Bless América! Thank you for your service for my freedom!

Xavier

Webmaster: <http://usairborne.be/>



Webmaster: <http://us.army.39.45.xooit.com/index.php>



Nov. 10, 2012

Dear Bob, **General Seitz, Col. Dalrymple (Bob), Bill, Steve** and fellow members of MailCall

I write this hoping to time it with both the upcoming Veteran's Day and with Thanksgiving in mind. It is a long trip report of a very unusual vacation. I am certain that there are unintentional errors in my trip report because I never had the real world experiences of the men of 596 and 517. But I offer this trip report to you with the hope that it can be as accurate as anyone visiting the area where the units fought some 68 years ago. It is also written so that it can be shared with the younger generation. There are photos inserted into this note and I hope they come through.



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In August 2012 I received a totally unexpected e mail from a middle aged man (**Jean Michel Soldi**) who many of you know in France who was the co-founder along with **Eric Reneau** of the museum dedicated to the Liberation of France following the German occupation of France during WWII. The small museum honors the American paratroopers and army infantry along with British army and the French resistance fighters (called the "Le Maquis"--mostly communists) who participated in the liberation of the southern farming towns that lay between Nice, France and St. Tropez. I knew nothing of the museum until the e mail arrived. I have since learned that many of you have been there.



He contacted me after the e-mail exchange following **Bill Conger's** death. His note said that he had worked with my father in the 1980-2001 period before my father's death in 2001. He asked for a replacement photo of my dad for their museum. The request surprised me and I wondered if it was the latest gimmick on the internet--to find people who were adult children of those who fought in WWII and tell them that their father's photos were in a museum. I half expected a request for money. What surprised me was that the note included a photo of my dad with these two men taken in the 1980s. So I was indeed curious.

I verified the stories presented by the men with my elderly mother Ann, 89, who lives with me, along with **Col. Cross, Bob Dalrymple, Gen. Seitz** and **Bill Hudson**. My mother, Ann, knew far more of the story and remembered meeting Eric and Jean Michel who started the museum in their mid 20s back in the 1980s. Like many others of their generation, my parents had told my brother and me few of the details of my dad's wartime service other than that he had two purple hearts and there was a mysterious Croix de Guerre (which all of the group received) that hung in his office with no explanation.

I knew of the great movie "Band of Brothers" and knew the basic story of his paratrooper group (596) within the 82nd Airborne was very similar. That excellent movie was about a different paratrooper group but it gave me insight. I learned that WWII paratroopers were a new military experiment combining athletic training, communications equipment, conventional combat and the use of explosives in advance of the army infantry. They were often dropped in the wrong target zone due to poor aviation equipment or bad weather. These paratroopers were combined with glider planes (made of aluminum and silk parachute material) in many battles including Italy (Anzio), later in southern France (D day) and along the Cote de Azur or French Riviera, and later at the Battle of the Bulge.

My dad had told me very little about his war experiences except that he was in Italy, France, Belgium and during the occupation of Berlin. He offered a few funny stories (usually involving **Al Goodman**) but mostly kept quiet. He did comment that he loved France. Like most men of his era, he said very little and offered scant information about his wartime experience. He entered the military at the age of 17 and did not finish high school before entering paratrooper training. He weighed 139 pounds at 5'10 and carried a 30 pound communications radio along with the standard shovel, knife, rifle, tin of rations, essential medical gear and minimal clothes when he jumped out of planes. His own family, in Paducah, KY did not expect him to survive the war given the risks of being a paratrooper and threw out all his clothes and high school memorabilia after he arrived in Europe. That reaction was a reflection of the



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times.

After verifying with my dad's three living commanding officers that there was really a museum and that the French men were legitimate, I added 3 days in France to an already planned trip to Spain in October. Adding these days in France was an act of faith that this was not a tremendous waste of vacation days and an incredibly expensive change of ticket fee. My mother insisted that my dad would want me to go. Daily she inquired about my preparations. If she could have handled the trip, I would have brought her along.

Jean Michel and Eric co-founded the museum when they were only in their 20s (now in their mid 40s). They started collecting the artifacts as children. They were friendly to me and offered to take off time from their own careers to show me the three or four villages. These were the small towns where my dad's 124 paratroopers landed in August 14-15, 1944 to fight the Germans. The US paratroopers arrived, by accident, just in time to liberate the many small towns between Marseille, Nice and St. Tropez and release the French women, children and elderly from German occupation. Almost all of the French men who could have fought against the occupation were sent to work in German wartime factories in Germany in 1940. Many of the women had no idea where their husbands, sons, and fathers were for five years. A few men disappeared into the woods in 1939 or 1940 to work as Resistance fighters and sabotage the German army. This was a dangerous choice.

Some of these towns still today celebrate this liberation each August with parades, Big Band music, and the use of US military jeeps, tanks, and trucks. Many young French boys and men parade through the streets of these towns wearing authentic US paratrooper uniforms. This You Tube video captures one of the many annual festivals along the French Riviera towns. This one is of Le Muy where the Liberation museum is housed <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KPhLYyJ9y6o&feature=related>. Of course I realize that many of the soldiers knew this but I did not.

Jean Michel and Eric offered to take me to meet the elderly people who still owned the farms and orchards where the paratroopers landed or where those who had family members were scheduled to be executed for befriending the French Resistance. I confirmed with my dad's commanding officers that these guys were "on the up and up" because it was so improbable to me that they could find people who were still alive. It seemed like a really bad made-for-TV movie where I got an e-mail note and suddenly I would meet people from my father's past some 68 years before. You can imagine my skepticism. Both Bob and Gen. Seitz said something along the lines of "you have to understand that to them this was an extraordinary event and so many generations in France have spent time researching this. I have met them and they will deliver".

The two or three towns have a collective population of approximately 20,000 people today. According to the French perhaps many of these people would not be alive today if the Americans had not arrived when they did by sheer accident since the unexpected fog bank confused the pilots and deposited the paratroopers some 30 miles shy of the target zone. As the war wore on in France, the German officers began to take unmerciful acts of revenge for any significant or even perceived assistance to the Resistance movement. These towns lay in a critical transport route between Marseille and Paris. The Germans SS officers did not want to lose ground to the Americans, British or particularly to the French resistance. All acts of sabotage by the citizens were met with cruelty by late summer 1944. I am sure you know all too well what these acts of cruelty were. Fortunately I have been spared those details. But I read about this.



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Just weeks before my dad's group arrived in this region two other French towns had virtually all of the town's young children, women, and the elderly publicly hung or shot and left in open pits as revenge against Resistance or partisans who committed acts of sabotage against the Germans. In Oradour Sur Glane, all remaining 644 people were killed including a one month old baby after a few of the townspeople made acts of sabotage against the Germans. Oradour Sur Glane is a living memorial today where no commerce or rebuilding is allowed out of respect for the tragedy.

Of course all of you know (but grandchildren might not know) that the military operation that included my Dad and a few thousand other American and British soldiers is called Operation Dragoon (or Operation Anvil as Churchill called it). Winston Churchill thought it overly ambitious and foolhardy. He preferred to drop the paratroopers closer to the Balkans and fight over the scant oil resources. But General Eisenhower insisted on this way to eliminate the Germans in southern France and defeat them before the anticipated tougher battles in northern France, Belgium, and perhaps in Germany.

In anticipation of this trip I communicated with the elderly soldiers or sons/daughters and widows of about 60 men from my dad's group. Only 14 of the original paratroopers are alive today. This communication system is thanks to Bob B's MailCall. I chatted several times with **Bob D, Bill Hudson, and Gen. Seitz**. Mom called **Alice Goodman, Marge Conger, Gloria Hudson, Eddie Miller and Elaine Markle**. The men and the widows gave me a terrific sense of the events. **Col. Cross** sent a great military trip report. I read three books on military history to prepare—not my strong suit. I also studied the British Special Operations Executives (SOE) who designed and trained the many French resistance campaigns. Most Americans have little knowledge of this and it is fascinating. Netflix has three documentaries on the SOE.

The other paratroopers had never told their own kids of these events just as my dad had never told my brother and me. My dad had been active with these men after the war although my dad was not career military. But he had organized many WWII reunions in the US and taken a group of retired paratroopers to Normandy at the 50th anniversary of D Day. Much of the mystery of my dad was that he was very close to these men and talked to many of them on every Sunday during my childhood. This tradition of weekly calls continued until his death in 2001. As a kid, sometimes the **steady** succession of Sunday calls irritated me. Sometimes the phone rang for hours. My dad was often very quiet for hours after those calls. Oddly, he rarely told us anything about his own WWII experiences but he had an unbreakable bond with these 50-60 men for decades after the war. He eschewed our own family reunions but meet yearly with these men in FL or CA until his death. I had helped with WINGS as typist or did the collating and mailing of the newsletters to the retired paratroopers for almost 20 years.

Steve Markle had a fantastic supply of scanned photos, day passes, trip reports, diary or journal snippets, and letters along with maps that he organized. He collected these from many of the families, by soldier's name, and shipped them to me on discs. These electronic collections will be enormously helpful to Jean Michel and Eric along with, perhaps, countless historians for decades to come. Steve's contribution of time and dedication cannot be underestimated.

Steve, along with Bob and Gen Seitz, also advised me on the plaque that I took over to hang in the newly restored museum. A photo of the plaque is below. It is the Camp McKall group photo of the 596 but the citation reads from the 596 and 517 in honor of the courage of citizens of France. A separate photo of this was sent to MailCall last month. The plaque's terrific photo of the 250 men in uniform (at Camp McKall) was provided by the Moses family. We are very appreciative of this moving photo that



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gives life to faceless names.

Part of my mission to France was to take over 900 items electronically scanned by Steve. Later we will add several hundred that Alice Goodman sent. Those photos are most appreciated but arrived too late to be scanned before I left. Steve and I will make sure they are sent later. I also carried the new plaque and two US flags that were flown over the US Capitol. The plaque was designed as a group effort by Steve and I along with Bob D and General Seitz, now 96 and incredibly lucid and living in Kansas. Gen Seitz called me "Pugh" on the phone twice and gave me affectionate but very specific directions that I should go and have this experience. He expected a trip report for all of you with photos for the 14 remaining soldiers and for the larger group of families of those men who have since died. I hope this trip report is up to your standards, sir. (Smile) I hope to meet him in 2013.

While in France I met four women and men who were teenagers when my dad's paratrooper group accidentally landed on their farms at 4 am on August 15. They were alert, talkative and extremely kind to me. I had no expectation that I would actually meet the families who owned farms or houses where US paratroopers landed. I also did not expect my own emotional reaction since I rather doubted that any of the ninety-something year old people still existed –or wanted to talk to me. Thanks to Eric and Jean Michel who had known my dad I was taken to the very farm where my dad landed in St. Marie de Callian, a tiny medieval farming town. I also met their mayor, in his 40s, who kindly presented me with a plaque at a small but charming reception with champagne and chocolates. How French, indeed.

The mayor's grandparents and parents had been also deeply affected by the war and he told me that they too would not talk about their experiences. The two people who owned the farm where my dad landed were invited to the reception. It was remarkable and very touching that Eric and Jean Michel knew of my father's unit and could pinpoint the exact farm where he landed. I presented the mayor of St Marie de Callian with a U. S. flag that flew over the US Capitol.

Perhaps you already knew that both Jean Michel and Eric were the grandsons of women who had been tortured by German SS officers for perhaps two months before the arrival in August 1944. The German SS officers arranged for the torture of these women (and presumably many others) since they suspected (correctly) that they were the sisters, daughters or wives of men who were French Resistance fighters. These two women, after torture (and perhaps rape) were scheduled to be executed on the morning of August 15 in Le Muy, France only a few hours after my dad and the group of 123 men arrived unexpectedly by parachute and glider. As a result of this drop of 124 men across 40 miles untold French lives were saved.

At Chateau St Rosaline Abbey and winery, where we met on October 25, we had a wonderful private tour with the owner. If you ever are in southern France, visit this winery and request to see this Medieval chapel and reliquary. It is very moving and contains terrific art spanning 6 centuries. They also produce delicious wine.

At Sainte Roseline Eric showed me photos of the US and German occupations because this abbey/winery had been a hospital for both the Germans and later the Americans. The Germans who were defeated in combat nearby or voluntarily became POWs were housed at Sainte Roseline under the US forces. Eric brought photos showing that the Germans looked weak and emaciated. Looking at those photos it was (and is) impossible for me to not pity the German soldiers despite their status as combatants. Some of the German POWs were only 12 years old. Some older German soldiers looked



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to be in their late 60s or 70s but were really men in their 40s or 50s who had spent 1943 fighting for Germany in Stalingrad (St. Petersburg) where millions starved or froze to death. The photos of the old men who looked 20 or 30 years older than their actual age were just as startling as the pictures of 12-15 year old boys who fought for the Germans.

Through Eric and Jean Michel I met three families with people in their 90s or late 80s who remembered the landings, had relatives who would have been executed by the German SS officers or whose relatives were French resistance fighters. One of the few things that my dad did tell me was that they fought alongside the Resistance in many places in France and Belgium. Often the Resistance fighters had better intelligence or better maps than the Allied soldiers. While my dad was an accomplished man, I had to remember that he entered the army at 17, engaged in combat at 18 in Italy and was in France fighting at the ripe old age of 20. They were not seasoned warriors.

One of the few things that my dad told me as a kid was that he was taught more by the Communists and Socialists than by Uncle Sam about blowing up bridges, trains and other critical infrastructure. It was one of the few teachable moments where my dad admonished me to not judge European socialists and communists too harshly since we had no idea what difficult circumstances they had endured before the war and during the war or why they wanted such broad political and land reforms. He offered a much more nuanced view of communism in Europe in the early part of the 20th century. He said their circumstances were entirely different than those that we had in the U. S. He explained that we had with a middle class, a thriving merchant class, and enormous land ownership opportunities for all. *This coming from a very conventional Eisenhower-Goldwater-Reagan Republican father was quite a surprise.*

Below are few photos taken that day. Please excuse the emotional shot taken when I met 89 year Josette. Her stories of how her family dealt with both the German and American soldiers, hunger, confiscation of all their valuable possessions by the Germans and survival were quite emotional. She described how the sheets were taken by the US soldiers to make bandages and to wrap up the died. Overall the day was quite positive and this photo was shot a moment when what she said choked me up. Only seconds later she had me laughing when she told me, with a sly smile, that perhaps my father had been one of the men who ate all their chickens. She also told a great story about a young man who got into the barrel of fermenting fruit for wine. He was so hungry that he ate the fruit by the handful. Her father warned him that he would have one nasty hangover after eating all of it. The young soldier ate it anyway and later was found slumped over in the field--sleeping it off for many hours.

Days before I left for the trip to France I received a second unexpected e-mail note from **Imma and Arnold Targnion** from Trois Ponts, Belgium. They are friends of **Marie Gaspar**, the thoughtful 73 year old woman in Trois Ponts, Belgium who knew Eric and Jean Michel and many of you. I believe that she is on this mailcall listserv. I am impressed that the survivors maintain a close contact in France and Belgium. (My mother remembers meeting Madame Gaspar about 15 years ago at a WWII reunion). The Targnion family wrote to offer their home and hospitality to me for a future trip explaining that my dad's paratrooper unit kept Madame Gaspar (at age 4), her mother and grandmother alive during the Battle of the Bulge in Trois Ponts, Belgium. In a remarkable but simple e mail she described the battle with 3-5 foot snow in Trois Ponts (that we call Battle of the Bulge). There the US soldiers from the 596 & 517 supplied her family of three and a growing brood of 9 orphaned children with Hershey candy and whatever could be found outside during the dreadful winter of 1945. She said they survived for 2



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months on what the soldiers brought them. I rather suspect a future trip will take me to Trois Ponts. Even if my own father was not involved in their family's survival, how can I not be curious to meet them? (My mom and I suspect that my dad was in the field hospital by then for loss of his eye).

I offer this trip report with respect to all who fought, to the citizens of these towns, and to those who live in France today. I remain tremendously grateful to Jean Michel and Eric for making this trip happen. I wish that the 2013 reunions would include an invitation for them to speak to the soldiers and the extended families that attend. I am determined to take my mom to CA or FL even though long flights are tough for her. It would be my hope that the reunion expenses might cover the travel expenses for Jean Michel or Eric. I have no idea if they could leave their jobs and family to join in on the reunion but it would make it so meaningful.

I have also wondered if a group trip, including children and grandchildren for the 70th anniversary of D Day and the liberation of the South of France might be possible. I would like my own brother, nieces and nephews to have this great experience.

On election night, when I returned from Europe, my mom, brother, and sister in law and I opened a lovely bottle of Chateau Sainte Roseline wine and toasted my Dad, the men of the 596 & 517 and the people of France.

While the 9 day vacation to Spain following the brief visit to France was great and relaxing, it was eclipsed by this completely unexpected trip to France. In the last few months I have thought a lot about this chance to know so much more the war, that remarkable generation and how I often misjudged those who were under siege in France. Perhaps strangest and best of all, I *met* my father.



(left) Jean Michel Soldi, TP and Eric Reneau who introduced me to the people of Le Muy, Le Motte and St Marie de Callian. They started the Liberation Museum in Le Muy in their 20s with helmets, dog tags, uniforms, photos and other memorabilia found around their own houses and those of their neighbors.

Later the town gave them a building for a museum. The museum now contains tanks, jeeps and a truck along with more than a thousand photos. Their grandmothers were tortured by the Germans to find the

Resistance group in the nearby forests. The plaque contains an etched photo with the faces of 250 men of the combat units taken in 1943.

(right) The Croix de Guerre presented to my dad and his combat team by Gen. Charles De Gaulle after the war that hung in his home office but was never explained. I learned this summer that it was for the liberation of this part of France. Few US soldiers received this high honor.





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My dad, Charles Pugh, fall 1944, aged 20, after the liberation in Nice, France



TP and Josette, 92, who welcomed me to her farm where US paratroopers landed, fought Germans, established a POW camp in her side yard and buried the dead beyond. Seconds after this photo was snapped she had me in all smiles and laughter as she implied perhaps my father stole their chickens. Her family built a 6 foot marble monument, right, to those who fought and liberated on her farm. A US 82nd Airborne glider frame sits next to it.

Picture of Chateau St. Roseline's 13th Century Abbey and winery (established by the French pope in the 13th century) where my dad's combat team landed, took in German POWs and established a hospital. The owners gave me a private tour of the Abbey and the fields. The Abbey contains fabulous art by Giacometti and Chagall along with 11th-13th century medieval art. We tasted their wonderful wine after the very memorable private tour. I brought home a bottle to toast my dad, his friends, and the French with my mother, brother and sister in law on election night.





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Photo in my father's collection of Gen Eisenhower giving instructions to a paratrooper just before D Day invasion (my father bought this photo)

This small painting of the historic bridge of Sospel France suddenly was in the center of my dad's home office wall in the late 1990s. He resisted many questions about it and why it was in our house. After many questions he told me that the Mayor of Sospel gave it to him when he and my mom returned to Sospel after almost 55 years. My father had been hesitant to return to Sospel wondering if his presence would be welcomed. Sospel has really never recovered from WWII's toll. This famous bridge was the salt weighing station for the medieval travel and sale of salt from Russia, Poland, and Germany that traveled through Europe. Salt as a spice or preservative was enormously valuable in the middle ages. This is a painting from my father's home office. After several inquiries he said that the mayor of the town gave it to him in the 1990s. When I pressed my father to explain why the Mayor would give my dad a painting he and answered very quietly with a one word answer "Forgiveness".



Later this summer I read that many of Sospel's townspeople, including women and children, were killed by collateral damage caught between the Germans and US soldiers. This included death by starvation and their bodies were found in barns, houses and root cellars after the 49 day siege. It has hung in my own house for the last decade and I knew nothing of the full story until now. I did not have the same courage as my dad to go there although it was only one hour away. Despite the bittersweet background of the painting, I admire the painting all the more after knowing the full story and that my Dad returned to face it. There are no happy endings and great reunions between the 21st century French and middle aged daughters In Sospel. For me, the painting is a reminder of my Dad and why we should do all possible to avoid war.

Theresa Pugh
October 2012
Alexandria Va



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MailCall News

Ben, I belong to V.F.W. post 6695 Plymouth Michigan, and just received their newsletter. The Post Chaplain listed the death of **CLAUDE [Tinker] BYNUM** and as I recall he was in H Co. I thought there may be someone that remembers him and would be interested in the info.

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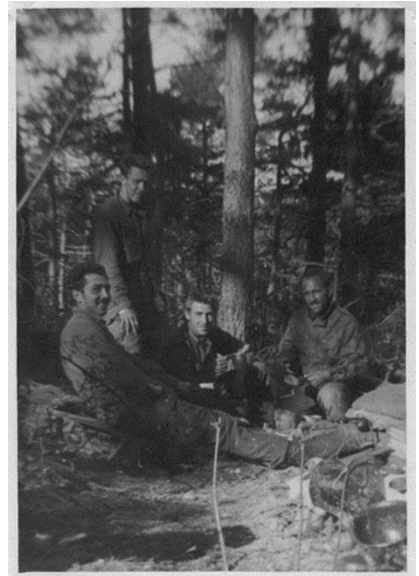
Hello, I came across photos of **Pvt. Harry A. Hill, B Company**.

http://www.517prct.org/photos/harry_a_hill/harry_hill.htm

I can tell you that the pictures:
WWII 18 to 37 were taken at Nice
WWII 39 to 45: I'm not sure whether near
"col de Braus / Sospel"

Greetings

Marc ENDINGER



We feel for everyone hit by Hurricane Sandy. We learned from Hurricane Andrew, the post storm restoration work is painfully slow and extremely hard on everyone who is already under such stress. Hang in there -- things do return to normal, people do rise to the occasion in helping each other and the process provides an excellent reminder of many blessings we sometimes take for granted. Our prayers are with you all.

Pat Seitz and Alan Greer

I was so said to hear about the passing of **Jack Collins**. I remember sitting next to him and his son on the bus trip to the Infantry Museum. He told me stories of hauling that big mortar tube up and down the hills.

Dennis Sura son of **Mike Sura** H Company



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Bob,

I recently read the piece on **Lt. Whitley Co E**. I have a V-Mail that my dad wrote from a hospital bed in England asking **Dave Hines** if Lt. Whitley got back yet. I can only assume that they were either wounded or evacuated at the same time possibly from the same action. The letter was returned as Dave Hines had been KIA by the time it reached the unit. I noticed you also had a morning report from that time from Co E. I was wondering if you had others or any mentioned of my father **Donald Sliker** who was in the same platoon and squad as Dave Hines, **Russ Brami** and the Lt.

Don Sliker

PS: I do remember my dad mentioning **Lt. Patin** over the years as he seemed to think he was related to a high school teacher or football coach he knew.

Hi Don,

I pulled out all the morning report records for **Brami, Sliker, Hines, and Whitley**. I attached the results as a printout. You can see that Whitley was KIA around 3-Jan-1945, and Hines was KIA around 21-Jan-45.

I also attached a copy of the actual 9-Oct-44 and 29-Dec-44 morning reports that mention your dad.

Note: I am now able to search these records only because of all the work that **Mike Wells** did in transcribing the morning reports. Thanks, Mike!

Bob Barrett

Claire/Alan - glad you weathered the storm relatively OK - hope power is back to you by now. We were very lucky here in DC/MD.

Messieur Arnuff - thank you and your hardy French comrades for honoring the 517th. Looking forward to revisiting you wonderful reenactors soon. Vive La France!

Tom Copsey

My name is **Melvin Trenary**. I was in A Co. First. Btl. I meet with WW 2 veterans every wed. In Conroe, Texas, a young man came up to me and asked what outfit I was in. I told the 517th. He said his dad was in the same outfit. His son told me he was going to visit his dad. He did and he brought his dad back with him. We had good get together. They also interviewed us. We could tell we had been in the same places during the war. His name is **Elmo Kunkel**. He was a replacement and I think in Co. B. I brought some of our books on 517th. He showed me his picture. He's on page 100 in the 517th prct. A white book. *[The Turner publishing book - 1998]*

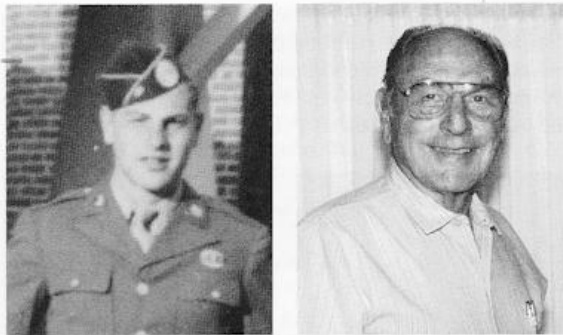


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MELVIN C. TRENARY, born Nov. 30, 1924, in Los Angeles, CA. Went to Grammar School in Alhambra, CA and Los Angeles. Went to Manual Arts High School in Los Angeles. Was drafted March 3, 1943, and sent to Ft. MacArthur Induction Center where he volunteered for the paratroops. Within a week he was sent to Toccoa, GA to join the 517th RCT.

He was put into the 1st Bn., Co. A. He qualified for machine gunner. Stayed with the 517th through Italy, the southern France invasion and the Belgium Bulge.

He was wounded in southern France. Later in the Belgium Bulge he got frozen feet. Stayed in hospitals and rehabilitation centers until August 1945 when he was honorably discharged.



He went to Chuianard Art Institute in Los Angeles, but ended up being a piping design draftsman, designing refineries and chemical plants, etc.

Married in 1946, had two sons, both are draftsman. Trenary worked for Fluor Corp., Kellogg, Fish Eng. and ARAMCO (Arabian American Oil Co.).

Has been married to his second wife 24 years Sept. 27, 1996. Lived in Texas most of his life retiring in 1986. Moved into a motorhome and has traveled a lot in the States. Has a home base in Livingston, TX. His hobbies are art, ham radio, woodworking and very amateurish at the election organization.

ELMO D. KUNKEL, born Nov. 1, 1921 in Hamilton Co., TX, entered the US Army June 5, 1942 at Houston, TX. After completing special training in aircraft armament he was sent to Oran, North Africa to participate in the invasion of North Africa. Assigned as a replacement crew member for any vacant position on any aircraft going into combat, he flew over 500 combat mission hours in various positions such as gunner, bombardier, co-pilot, etc., and on several different models of bombers, including B17, B25, B26 and A20. He survived one B26 crash while on that assignment.



He was later transferred to Italy where he had the opportunity to volunteer for the Abn. Service, and was accepted and returned to North Africa for training. He was again transferred, this time to Rome, where he received his wings and was sent to southern France as a 517th Abn. Replacement. He served with the 517th in the French Alps, the Soissons, France area, and then on the Belgium to fight in the unforgettable Battle of the Bulge campaign.

Although he was wounded and hospitalized in February, 1944, he soon rejoined the 517th, serving in Germany. There he was again hospitalized with injuries, this time including a severe lung concussion which proved to be a permanent service connected disability, ending his combat time and for which he received the Purple Heart and partial disability benefits. He remained hospitalized in France until after WWII had ended in both theaters of operation.

In late 1945 he was returned to the States by Hospital Air Carrier and he was honorably discharged from Service Co., 517th Parachute Inf. at Ashburn General Hospital at McKinney, TX on Nov. 1, 1945, his 24th birthday.

Much of his civilian working life was spent on military bases as a civilian contractor, representing Boeing Military Aircraft Co. While working for Boeing, he also earned a law degree, which he found to be valuable in many areas of responsibility in his line of work.

He and his late wife, Lillian, raised two sons, both of whom have also honorably served their country in the Armed Forces through times of grave conflict. He retired from the Boeing Company in 1983.

Now, as an active member of the VFW Honor Guard of Post 9063, Bella Vista, AR for the past 12 years, he again proudly wears his Abn. Wings and insignia patch on his Honor Guard uniform on the numerous occasions in which he is called upon to serve in performing military funerals or memorials or for the many other patriotic events the Honor Guard participates in. His wife, Jo Carlene (they are known as "Mo & Jo" to friends and associates) also participates in many Honor Guard events such as parades, patriotic programs and the like. And, like many other veterans, he also holds membership in and supports almost every national veterans organization.

"Mo Kunkel and his wife are active members of the Lutheran Church and are blessed with a blended family of five children and an abundance of grandchildren and great-grandchildren. They are especially grateful that they are still able to actively serve God and their country.

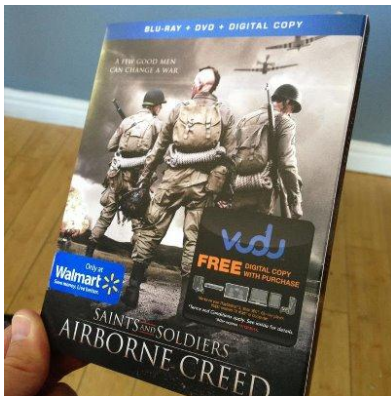


517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Director Ryan Little shared this photo and note from the sold-out final screening of the movie *Saints and Soldiers – Airborne Creed*:

From the director...

Thanks so much to everyone that came last night to our "Farewell Screening". It was SOLD OUT, a Director's dream! Fantastic audience and lots of fun. I have to admit I was a little sad when it was over.



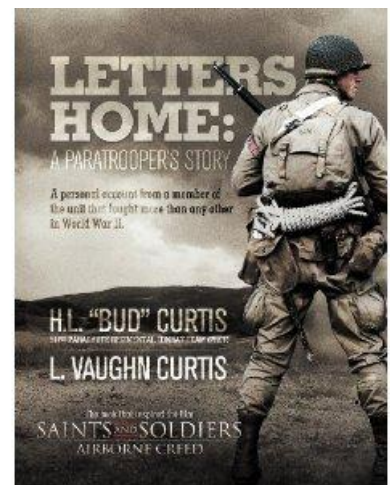
The DVD will be available 11/12/2012 at Amazon, Walmart and www.airbornecreed.com It will be available on RedBox on 11/13/2012

Check out the new 10 minute movie preview:

<http://www.airbornecreed.com/preview>

And don't forget to also order **Lory and Bud Curtis' Letters Home: A Paratrooper's Story**, with the new matching cover.

http://www.amazon.com/Letters-Home-Saints-Soldiers-Airborne/dp/1427650306/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1352611349&sr=1-1





517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Hey All.

I got this cartoon from **Jean Micheal Soldi**.....I thought it was worth sharing!

Rick Sweet



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

517 PRCT Florida Mini Reunion 2013
Ramada Hotel & Inn Gateway, Kissimmee, FL

Reunion Registration Form
January 18 – 21

Name_____ Spouse_____

Guest Names_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

Phone (Home)_____ Cellphone_____

Unit_____ Arrival Date_____

Registration Fee - \$45.00
(Includes Banquet Dinner and Hospitality Room)

Banquet Dinner: Roast Beef_____ (# of people)

Chicken Marsala _____ (# of people)

Fresh Catch of the Day_____ (# of people)

Please send this registration form with your **check made out to**
517 PRCT Reunion by **December 15th** to:

Brenda Verbeck Mortensen
13046 Race Track Road #220
Tampa, FL 33626
Phone: 813-335-8002
Email: bverbeck@gmail.com

517 PRCT FLORIDA MINI REUNION, January 2013

WHERE:

Ramada Hotel & Inn Gateway
7470 Hwy 192 West
Kissimmee, FL 34741

800-327-9170

WHEN: January 18 – 21

(Hospitality Room Opens Evening of January 18)

RATES:

A double room is \$65.00,, Tower rooms \$75.00. They will provide these rates for the period +/- five days of the actual reunion to allow for early arrivals and stay-overs.

MAKING YOUR RESERVATION:

CALL 800-327-9170

Identify yourself as attending the 517 PRCT Reunion to get this special rate, WHICH INCLUDES BREAKFAST.

SCHEDULE:

The hospitality suite will be open 5pm to 10pm on Friday
10 am to 10 pm on Saturday through Sunday
10 am to 5pm and after dinner on Monday

Registration: Saturday morning

Rides to Services on Sunday can be arranged

Monday: Memorial Service 6:30 - 6:45 pm; Banquet 6:45 – 10pm

Hospitality suite open following the dinner

For further information contact

Brenda Verbeck Mortensen, 813-335-8002

bverbeck@gmail.com