



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



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

## MailCall No. 2137

December 23, 2012

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





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

### *Christmas Greetings!*

Christmas is a season of joy.

I can never understand those who say that the season is depressing to some people. It never is to me. Take back in '44 when we were up to our ears in snow, bitter cold, German forces hitting us with all they had and we ordered to drive them back. We should have been depressed. It had been so cloudy from the first attack on December 16, 1944 until Christmas day that the air corps, which according to their song could not be stopped, were stopped by clouds, fog and snow. That was the case until Christmas morning which dawned cold and clear. Air support and the sun was our Christmas gift. I will never forget those planes with big stars clearly visible going overhead to give us some badly needed assistance.

(Incidentally, this is why whenever anyone sang, "Nothing can stop the Army Air Corps, the 517th troopers always added, "except the weather")

So, let us emulate those lowly shepherds on the lowest rung of the social ladder but first to get the message, "Lo, I bring you glad tidings of great joy, Christ the Savior is born".

Kent, you should never be cautious of letting the chips fall where they may. Although I may have a memory, I make mistakes and am the first to admit it. I tell the VA nurses here that all doers make mistakes, so if you don't want to risk mistakes, don't do ANYTHING. In the 517th we had the saying, "Don't just sit there, do something even if it is wrong". And this is bad advice to give some people. I knew your uncle **Floyd Stott** and **Jim Birder** very well and can tell them apart even today if I have a clear picture. Jim was a little heavier than Floyd. I knew Floyd better as he was another lowan I had known as long back as at our stay at Iowa U.

And yes, I do have some recollection of **Lt. Rea**. He was in the same BOQ with **Russ Miller** and me at Ft. Benning when we went through Jump School in October, 1943. Although Ft. Benning was a fine post with many permanent brick buildings, this was not a posh BOQ. It was a one story temporary WWII barracks with the latrine and showers at one end and all the rest open space with cots and footlockers designating our individual territory. So we had some acquaintance with all the other officers who filled the space. Lt Rea had a jump injury or some health problem that took him to sick call each day so he wasn't in out jump class. He may have already qualified as a trooper by then. He drove a big 4 door LaSalle automobile. (For those who don't remember the LaSalle, it was a Cadillac's little brother, like the Bentley is to the Rolls Royce.) On our last night at Ft. Benning, before we shipped out to Camp Mackall and the 517th, Lt. Rea offered to let Russ and me use his car for the evening. Although we intended to stay sober, and did so, we did not accept this generous offer and attended a movie to celebrate our completion of the courses and goodbye to Ft. Benning, our home since June for OCS and Jump School.

Lt. Rea joined us during the bulge and from this mail call was in B Co., 1st Bn. and Hq. 2nd. I was in neither so didn't get a chance to meet Lt. Rea again. I do remember that his death was the result of a direct hit from a German 88 which was reported to have dismembered his body. This is a sad note on which to end this Christmas message, but it was something we endured many times over in 1944-1945.

I wish all of you a VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS 2012 FULL OF PEACE AND JOY.

**Howard Hensleigh**



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

### *Christmas Greetings!*

What an outstanding interview with Howard. It was wonderful seeing him. Thank you, Howard, for being such a class act. Thank you for sharing the video. How timely especially as we near the anniversary of the beginning of the Battle of the Bulge.

A very Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to all the men of the 517th and their families. Thank you for your sacrifices to preserve freedom for all of us.

**Pat Seitz and Alan Greer**

---

MERRY CHRISTMAS 517TH PRCT. ALL THE BEST IN 2013 !  
**Paul Abbene**

---

**We wish you a beautiful Christmas surrounded  
with your close relations and plenty of  
enjoyment, love, friendship, serenity.**

**Merry Christmas**



**Patou and Roland  
from Sospel**



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

## Christmas Greetings

From the Combat Team Commander

On the occasion of our first Christmas overseas, I would like to take this opportunity to extend my heartiest congratulations and greetings to all members of this command.

Although we naturally miss being at home we do not feel sorry for ourselves but take comfort in living under the best condition possible and also take comfort in being with the comrades with whom we have served and whom we trust.

At this Christmas time I wish you all a Merry Christmas. May the New Year strengthen the ties of friendship and loyalty and keep us steadfast in our determination to serve our country well and honorably during the coming year.

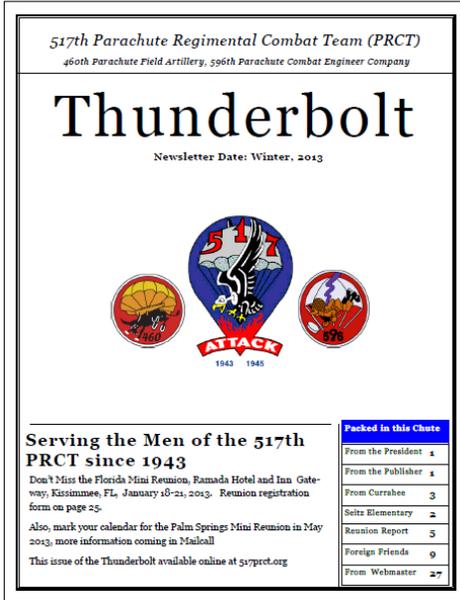
R. D. GRAVES,  
Colonel, 517th Prcht Inf.,  
Commanding.





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

## The Thunderbolt



I want everyone to know a new edition of the Thunderbolt will be hitting the streets very soon. I want to thank you and Joanne for the many hours you two put into establishing a new mailing list format for the Thunderbolt as required by our new printer. As you mentioned in mailcall you have determined 264 good addresses for our members who want and will receive an issue of the Thunderbolt. I also want to thank two wonderful ladies for their many years of service putting out the Thunderbolt. First, thank you **Claire Giblin** for the many hours you put in as Editor of the Thunderbolt, and for your willingness to continue as our Editor. She does such a wonderful job of putting the Thunderbolt together. Thank you Claire.

Also, our many, many thanks to **Helen Beddow** for the many years she has maintained the Thunderbolt mailing list, and taking the edited copy to the printer and ensuring each of you received your Thunderbolt. Her service to the 517th is praiseworthy and will always be remembered. Thank you Helen for your service.

As we move forward into a new era of news reporting, most of us now view our newspapers and periodicals through email or by going to a website to read important information. Most all newspapers have their editions online. We will start doing the same thing with the Thunderbolt. Although I have not talked with Bob our webmaster about this I think it is very plausible to have a Thunderbolt link on our 517th website along with posting a link on mailcall. I hope Bob agrees, he will have the final say as to posting the Thunderbolt online. For me as much as I love receiving a mailed copy of the Thunderbolt, I really don't need one when I can read it online. I hope many of you feel the same way and if so email me to let me know to take your name off the mailing list. For those who do not use the computer, or those who still want to receive a printed copy, of course we want to continue to mail you a copy of the Thunderbolt so you can see what your organization is doing. ~~You can contact me at [drvc@comcast.net](mailto:drvc@comcast.net).~~ [I spoke to Lory, and we decided it might be best if you send any address corrections to [MailCall@517prct.org](mailto:MailCall@517prct.org) That way we get all the info to one place. – Bob B.]

Thanks for you continued membership and service to the men of the 517th

**Lory Curtis**

Unbelievably, the Thunderbolt is going out tomorrow! **Lory Curtis**, our new publisher, has been working tirelessly with the new printer, and it will be leaving the building tomorrow. Yay.

A big thank you to Joanne and Bob Barrett, who worked to update the roster. I hear Joanne also has other good news, so we will have a nice year's end for the 517th.

Incredible job, Lory. thank you.

**Claire Giblin**



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

### *Other MailCall News*

Here is our new Email address. We hope you'll send future Mail Calls to us here:

[HUDSONWG@COMCAST.NET](mailto:HUDSONWG@COMCAST.NET)

**Bill Hudson** of the "596th of the 517th" (1943-45), and **Gloria Hudson** of "Crowley Launch and Tug" which docked almost all of the Pacific Fleet in San Francisco Bay during WWII (1944-45).

---

Jodi,

I put your note into the last MailCall newsletter, asking for info about **Lt. Thomas Rea**. Here is one response I got back from Howard Hensleigh.

Bob Barrett

---

Thank you so much for this. I will send to Tom and know he will appreciate reading it.

Happy Holidays to you!  
Jodi

Hi Bob,  
There is a lengthy interview with **General Seitz** online from 2010. It says it was by 517 PRCT. Would you happen to know how I can get a copy of it on DVD? Thanks again.

Jodi

---

Here is the link: <http://vimeo.com/m/10189840>

Thanks!  
Jodi

---

Jodi,

That interview is part of the raw video interviews, as filmed for use in the 517<sup>th</sup> documentary "A Cut Above". If you haven't seen that documentary, it is the best video history of the 517<sup>th</sup> training and action.

See: <http://vimeo.com/10951367>

I'm not sure if there are extra copies available, but I can check. If I can get a copy, do you want that interview or the whole documentary "A Cut Above"?

Bob Barrett

---



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

Hello Sir

Here are some pictures of the 517th veterans on tour in Belgium.

I don't remember me the year of this return.

You can see **Major Frazer** on the pictures and **Suzan Boyle... Col. Boyle's daughter!**

Henri HANNON

Have a good Holiday seasons!!

[henri.hannon@buildingsagency.be](mailto:henri.hannon@buildingsagency.be)

*Can anyone help identify these troopers, and what year this was?*

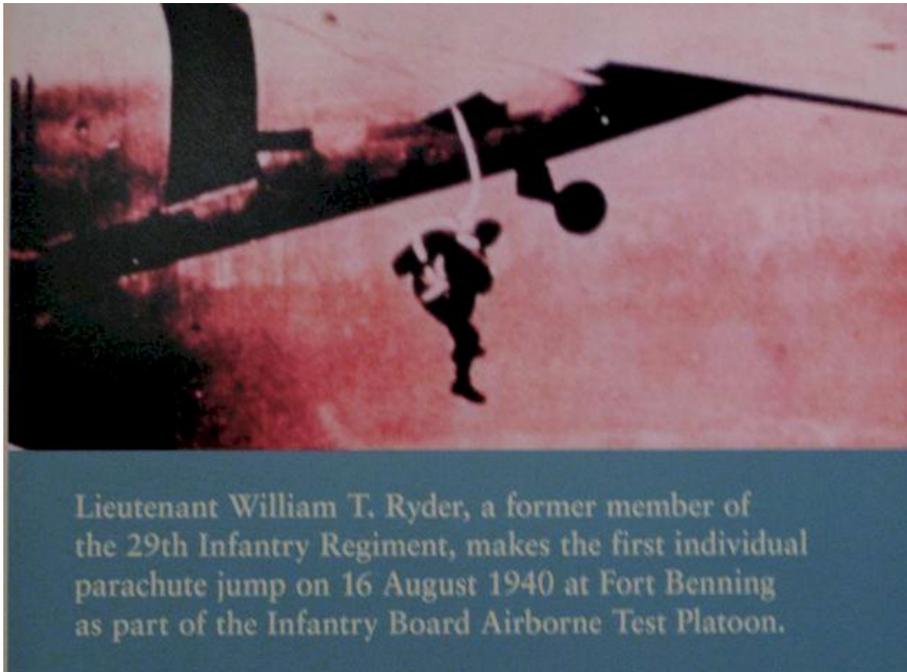




## *517<sup>th</sup> Parachute Regimental Combat Team*



From **Paul Abbene**:





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

### Guestbook Entries

Submitted by	Comments:
Name: <b>William (Will) Prevost</b> From: Versailles, Mo E-mail: <a href="mailto:shield_faith@yahoo.com">shield_faith@yahoo.com</a>	I was first aware of this unit when I watched the movie "Saints and Soldiers: Airborne Creed". I was already interested in WW2 history. The interest was sparked by the fact that a majority of the available men in my family fought in this war. My paternal grandfather was a small arms repairman in the Pacific (Army), maternal grandfather was anti-tank squad lead with the 104th Inf and a great uncle was wounded at Pearl Harbor just to name a few. I grew up close to my maternal grandfather since other one died when I was very young. My longer living grandfather told me his war stories from being in the front lines in Holland, Belgium and Germany. Anyway like I said I enjoy reading and learning WW2 history. In regards to airborne, I primarily heard about 101st and 82nd so after becoming aware of this one I wanted to check out this unit's history. <hr/> Added: December 21, 2012
Name: <b>Henry Filipczak</b> From: Nothfield NJ E-mail: <a href="mailto:bekkifilipczak@gmail.com">bekkifilipczak@gmail.com</a>	I am wondering how I can obtain a copy of the latest 517 video that was made several years ago...if anyone knows this or a phone number of someone I could reach I would greatly appreciate it my phone number is (609)641-1998. Thank you. <hr/> Added: December 11, 2012
Name: <b>Henry Filipczak</b> From: Nothfield NJ E-mail: <a href="mailto:bekkifilipczak@gmail.com">bekkifilipczak@gmail.com</a>	Merry Christmas to everyone! <hr/> Added: December 11, 2012



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

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)  
2012 Roster (updated!) [www.517prct.org/roster.pdf](http://www.517prct.org/roster.pdf)

**Help us update the roster!** Check your address and contact info on the new roster at [www.517prct.org/roster.pdf](http://www.517prct.org/roster.pdf). Send any corrections to [MailCall@517prct.org](mailto:MailCall@517prct.org).

Note that only people marked with a green **Y** will receive the Thunderbolt newsletter in a paper version. But if you receive weekly MailCalls, you don't need to receive the paper copy since we will be posting all future Thunderbolts on the website and in future MailCalls.

## 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 Donations, In Memory of... etc.) and make all checks payable to:

**517 PRCT Association, Inc.**  
c/o Joanne Barrett  
70 Pleasant Street  
Cohasset, MA 02025



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

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 15<sup>th</sup>** 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