



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2144

February 3, 2013

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

Website

www.517prct.org

Send Mail Call news to

MailCall@517prct.org

Mail Call Archives

www.517prct.org/archives

2013 Roster (updated!)

www.517prct.org/roster.pdf

Thunderbolt (Winter 2013)

www.517prct.org/archives

MailCall News

Owen Ervine called him today with the news of the passing of his father, **Wayne Ervine**, who was a member of the 517th. Owen reported that his father died peacefully. He also reported that he and his father had attended several reunions, including some at Palm Springs, and that they had enjoyed them immensely. Old buddies will miss him.

Regards,

Allan Johnson

From MailCall #826, January 2005

Hi my name is Roger Ervine, I got a chance to talk with my grandfather over the holidays and I told him that I was receiving mail call. He is Wayne Ervine if any of you guys served with him. **Boom Boom Alicki** told me to ask him about the mule stories so I did. He told me that they were tasked with taking them up a very large mountain pass that was about like a goat trail to help bring in ammo food etc. The one run that stood out for him was they had a mule loaded with a .50cal machine gun and at some point the mule lost its footing and rolled end over end down the mountain for about 150 yards or so. The mule managed to break its back and several other bones, so having been raised on a farm and knowing the only choice he borrowed a pistol and shot the mule dead. He told me that he caught a regular chewing from the officer in charge when they returned about having done this.

Bob: WOW -- what a great MailCall and a fabulous Florida Mini-Reunion. Sorry Dad didn't attend. We'll work harder to get him to come next year. Brenda is amazing to have found the trio. Looks like the guys had a super great time.

Pat Seitz and Alan Greer



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I am sending this at the request of my father:

Cpl James "Red" Eberle shares the news of the death of his beloved wife of 69 years, **Charlene M. Eberle**. "Red" and Charlene were married August 26, 1943 after his return from Camp Toccoa. Charlene passed away September 1, 2012.

He can be reached through his daughter's email billjeni@tampabay.rr.com or phone 765-742-4784.

Bill and Jenny Mourning

Dear Myron,

Thanks for your inquiry. Sorry for the confusion. Your father started with the 517th as part of the cadre at Toccoa, put in place before the recent inductees and jump school graduates arrived. I didn't join the outfit until November 10, 1943, when all the ranks were filled up and he was firmly established as the platoon sergeant of 3rd platoon G Co. Many of the old cadre washed out of the 517th, but your father was good enough to make the grade.

First and Second Battalions got most if not all of their men directly from the induction centers with no previous military training. Their first taste of the army was a gung ho blast from **Lt. Alicki** as they got off the trains. The process of selection took a lot of time as **Bill Boyle** and **Dick Seitz**, their battalion commanders, were very choosy. The higher ups bore down on the 517th as the Third Bn. started to fill up and required **Mel Zais** to take almost anyone who had graduated from jump school. Many of the 1st and 2nd Bn. men looked down their noses at 3rd because of this fact. However, we always upheld our end of the regiment. Many of our men were a little older and most of them had already gone through basic training. This gave us some advantages, but it seemed that 3rd was frequently trying to keep abreast of 1st and 2nd. Your father helped us to do that. **Sgt. Hopke**, who your father knew well, was always shouting that he had gone through basic training 3 times and was raring for combat, where he didn't do so well.

Although we had replacements joining us all through the War, virtually all of the men and officers of the 517th came from Toccoa to Camp Mackall, NC. There were those as I did who came in later to fill the ranks.

We appreciate your interest and hope you will keep in touch through the website and if you like the reunions. Consider yourself an official member of the 517th family.

Howard Hensleigh

A friend of mine sent this story to me about a WWII widow. It is a very touching story, and also reinforces the strong bonds that the 517th has with our friends in France and Belgium. Enjoy

Lory Curtis

<http://www.youtube.com/embed/8TT1XFS1LA0>



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Letter received from Bill Hudson:

MARV TETRICK

Marv has left us, but is far from forgotten. Also, that story of the Tetrick-Snyder saga will be fixed in our memories for a long time.

Relating to their being able to stay together in the service, I volunteered for the paratroops at Fort Snelling, MN in April, 1943. A non-com of the reception center staff later informed us that, earlier in the year orders were issued to the effect that staffing up for the paratroops had a priority, and that once a man had volunteered, he was not to be considered for any other job. I assume that's the loophole that Marv and Gene exploited.

MINNESOTA HEROES

In relation to Fort Snelling's processing of inductees, you may have noticed that the 517th had a higher than would be expected number of men from Minnesota. Were we braver? The answer may lie with the reception center PFC, who gave the pitch for the paras. First, he unveiled a poster of a dashing fellow (not unlike Errol Flynn) in a jump suit parachuting down to the attack. Then he told us of the \$50 a month extra pay, and then finished it off with saying, "And no KP!" (He lied about that.) This is the guy that should have gotten an award.

FORBIDDEN PHOTOGRAPHS

Mae West said, "When I'm good, I'm very, very good, but when I'm bad I'm better." The third platoon of the 596th Engineers must have adopted that as their guiding motto in many of their actions in the war, including the taking of photographs (a security no-no). While the rest of us, more or less, followed the ban, the third platoon violated the hell out of that rule.

What was the upshot? The result was that almost all of the photos of the engineers in the various war histories are of them. And they have never exhibited any shame about this. Is there any justice?

Bill Hudson

1st Platoon, 596th, and another former Calif Highway engineer

Bob... Mailcall is a fantastic publication... **Lee Johnson** doesn't have email so I printed the last Mailcall and gave it to him... he was at the reunion in Kissimmee, and there were several pictures of him that he proudly showed at our coffee call on Tuesday...

Maybe you know about the award of the French Legion of Honor to WWII Veterans who served in France. If you need information about this award, I can provide that.. and my guess is that most of the 517 troops are eligible for this award.. Lee submitted his application as did Phil some time ago, and the processing isn't complete but we hope it will be soon...

Thanks again for publishing the Mailcall.. it's a treasure for the boys of the 517..

Earl Tingle

706.399.0533

earl.tingle@us.army.mil



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To whom it may concern,

I'm writing you today on behalf of my family. Last night we lost a great grandfather, brother, husband, role model and most of all hero. **Pvt. Dan Knoechelman** was part of the Mortar Platoon, Hq. company, 1st Battalion and much more to those who he knew. He was contagious to be around and always the life of a party. His stories of WW2 are like something from a book; one filled with honor, courage, laughter and sorrow. I know we don't have much time before he is laid to rest but I was hoping that you may have some additional information that would send Dan out with the respect he and other veterans deserve.

Thank you in advance for your time and dedication!

Respectfully,
Nick Miller

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399 Old Seven Mile Pike
Shelbyville, KY 40065
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wrloghomes@bellsouth.net

I wrote you earlier to ask for additional information on my grandfather **Dan Knoechelman** but we've actually stumbled upon some of our own information. After looking over your website I couldn't help but think you may like to see this too.

I look forward to seeing if you can find any additional information. Thanks again for your time!

Nick Miller

15 2 2 bj/13

ENLISTED RECORD AND REPORT OF SEPARATION
HONORABLE DISCHARGE

1. LAST NAME - FIRST NAME - MIDDLE INITIAL KNOECHELMAN DANIEL	2. ARMY SERIAL NO. 35 700 535	3. GRADE CPL	4. AER OF SERVICE INF	5. COMPONENT AUS
6. ORGANIZATION 517th Parach Inf Reg	7. DATE OF SEPARATION 15 Oct 45	8. PLACE OF SEPARATION Sep Cen Camp Atterbury Ind		
9. PERMANENT ADDRESS FOR MAILING PURPOSES 1514 Heslock St Louisville Ky	10. DATE OF BIRTH 14 May 24	11. PLACE OF BIRTH Louisville Ky		
12. ADDRESS FROM WHICH EMPLOYMENT WILL BE SOUGHT See #9	13. COLOR EYES br	14. COLOR HAIR br	15. HEIGHT 5'8"	16. WEIGHT 150 lbs.
17. NO. DEPENDENTS 1	21. CIVILIAN OCCUPATION AND NO. Holder Ullas Arc			

MILITARY HISTORY

22. DATE OF INDUCTION 27 Mar 43	23. DATE OF EXPIRATION 3 Apr 43	24. DATE OF ENTRY INTO ACTIVE SERVICE Fort Benjamin Harrison Ind	25. PLACE OF ENTRY INTO SERVICE Fort Benjamin Harrison Ind
26. SELECTIVE SERVICE DATA YES NO	27. SOCIAL SECURITY NO. #78	28. COUNTY AND STATE Jefferson Co Ky	29. HOME ADDRESS AT TIME OF ENTRY INTO SERVICE 130 Central Ave Louisville Ky
30. MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALTY AND NO. Mortar Gunner 7607		31. BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS Combat Infantryman Badge	
32. BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS Naples-Foggia; Rome-Arno; Southern France; Ardennes; Rhineland; Central Europe			
33. DECORATIONS AND CITATIONS BADE Theater Ribbon w/6 Bronze Stars; Purple Heart w/2 Oak Leaf Clusters; Bronze Star Medal			
34. WOUNDS RECEIVED IN ACTION France			
35. LATEST IMMUNIZATION DATES			
36. CHALLONER	37. TYPHOID	38. TETANUS	39. OTHER (specify)
			TY Nov 44
40. SERVICE OUTSIDE CONTINENTAL U.S. AND RETURN		41. DATE OF DEPARTURE	
42. DATE OF RETURN		43. DESTINATION	
44. DATE OF DEPARTURE		45. DATE OF RETURN	
46. HIGHEST GRADE HELD		47. HIGHEST GRADE HELD	
48. FROM SERVICE		49. FROM SERVICE	
50. REASON AND AUTHORITY FOR SEPARATION Conv'n of Govt (unmobilization)			
51. SERVICE SCHOOLS ATTENDED None			
52. EDUCATION (Years) 8 0 0			

FAY DATA 1810

53. UNEMPLOYMENT FOR 30 DAYS	54. UNEMPLOYMENT FOR 90 DAYS	55. UNEMPLOYMENT FOR 180 DAYS	56. UNEMPLOYMENT FOR 270 DAYS	57. UNEMPLOYMENT FOR 360 DAYS
2	5	9	3	0
58. TOTAL AMOUNT, NAME OF DISBURSING OFFICER \$ 4.20 150.20 R F GILLIS Capt PD				

INSURANCE NOTICE

59. RISK OF INSURANCE	60. HOW PAID	61. DATE OF BIRTH	62. DATE OF DEATH	63. PREMIUM DUES
		14 May 24	30 Nov 45	6.50
64. INTENTION OF VETERAN TO X				

54. SIGNATURE OF PERSON BEING SEPARATED
Daniel Knoechelman

55. SIGNATURE OF OFFICER (Type name, grade and organization - signature)
W. T. Goldstein Capt AG

56. REMARKS (This space for completion of above items at entry of other items specified in W. D. Directives)
9 days lost under AW 107; Level button issued; Inactive Service in ARC from 27 Apr 43 to 2 Apr 42; ASR (12 May 43) 82

WD 450 FORM 13, 12 7 November 1944

Honorable Mention

Corporal Daniel Knoechelman, 35 700 535, (then Private First Class) 517th Parachute Infantry, United States Army, for heroic achievement in action. On the afternoon of January 13, 1945, in the vicinity of Coulee, Belgium, Corporal Knoechelman, 81mm Mortar Platoon Gunner, was called on to place fire on enemy positions during an attack in that sector. During the attack, in which the other gun in his section was knocked out and his own disabled, Corporal Knoechelman left cover, despite intense enemy fire, and, taking parts from the other disabled gun, repaired his own and took over the sector with one gun. Although subjected to heavy mortar, artillery and direct tank fire, Corporal Knoechelman, with utter disregard for his own personal safety, stuck to his position and continued to place mortar fire on the enemy positions, causing heavy casualties and disorganization. Entered the military service from Louisville, Kentucky.



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Hello Nick,

I am sorry to hear about the loss of your grandfather.

I did a quick search of our website records and found a couple of items. But I will also post your inquiry in the next MailCall newsletter, which I send out weekly to the 517th troopers and friends.

Dan is listed in the December 1944 roster at: <http://517prct.org/documents/xmas1944/xmas1944.htm>

The second item is a photo of the HQ/1 team in Italy preparing for Operation Dragoon:

... HQ/1 Company in Italy, just before Operation Dragoon. This is in *First Airborne Task Force : Pictorial History of the Allied Paratroopers in the Invasion of Southern France*, by Michel De Trez, and it is also in 'Battling Buzzards' : The Odyssey of the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team 1943-1945, by Gerald Astor, which is still available in bookstores.



August 14, 1944 at Canino airfield, Italy. The men belong to Mortar Platoon, Hq. Company, 1st Battalion, in front of the C-47 that will take them to Southern France.

Standing left to right: 1st. Sgt. John Forrest, Pvt. Francis X. Steggert, Pvt. Carl G. Larsen, Pvt. Marvin J. Connors, Pvt. Glen E. Bice, Pvt. Robert A. Morrow Jr., T/4 Thomas E. Hunter, Pfc. William L. Finley.

Front Row, left to right: Pfc. Joseph H. Anderson, Pfc. Walter S. Duzinski, Pvt. Joe E. Huasen, Pvt. Daniel Knoechelman, Pfc. Charles A. Lytton, Cpl.

And finally, I do also see a note that Dan Knoechelman was wounded along with 3 others on Sept 9, 1944.

Returned to Duty on 9/21. He also had a "non-battle casualty" on Oct 26, 1994. See:

http://517prct.org/records/casualty_reports.htm

Hope this helps,

Bob Barrett



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For this link & the previous Mail Call link...I click on them only to have it go to the browser & say "LINK CANCELLED"

What can I be doing wrong here??? Also I think they are available elsewhere, but cant remember where????

Thanks for all the good work you do for the 517th!

Lyn Vickers

THE WIDDAH LYN, THE GOOD DR RUTH, & THE ELDERLY LILLYDOG

Hi Lyn,

I checked and the links are good, the files are there.

One possibility is that the files have not yet been replicated into AOL's systems. (My Dad used to use AOL, so I've seen this before with AOL.) It seems that AOL somehow makes its own copies of internet pages and files. When I would update a file, it worked from everywhere except AOL, which would still keep the older version of the file. But usually within a day or so, AOL would catch up to the current version. If you can't open these after a couple of days, let me know and we can try something else.

[2143](#) - Jan 27, '13

[2142](#) - Jan 20, '13

You should be able to get them all at: <http://517prct.org/mailcall>

PS: Your name was mentioned in #2143, so make sure you read it.

Bob Barrett

OMG!!! FAME AT LAST!!! So glad now I asked you about the links! Shocked to see my name in there....and I have written Myron too to let him know I am ONLY 24yrs younger!!! LOL

Thanks, Bob!

Lyn Vickers

517/460/596 Roster Review

Help us update the roster! Check your address and contact info on the new roster at www.517prct.org/roster.pdf. Send any corrections to 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. See: [Winter 2013](#)



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Dear Bob,

I have a note for **Myron Gadoury**:

I remember your father very well. When I arrived at Camp Mackall, NC in November 1943 I was assigned as assistant platoon leader of the 3rd platoon of G Co. Your father was platoon sergeant. **Ed McKillop** was platoon leader and **Capt. Grant Hooper** was company commander.

Your father was a little older than the recent high school graduates that made up most of the platoon, like **Ray Scruggs** and **Elsworth Harger**. Ray Scruggs and El Harger have both made their final jump, a term we use for passing on to the great beyond. I last saw El at the reunion in Savannah. He graduated from Michigan State and became a forest ranger. He and his sons won a lot of long distance races as a team. I am sure these guys along with McKillop are having a 3rd Platoon G Co. reunion upstairs in a better place than all the mud we slept in over the years.

Your father was an excellent soldier and noncom. Like **Dallas Long**, the G Co. first sergeant, he not only kept good disciplinary order, but was a little like a father to the rest of the platoon. The third platoon was a wild bunch lead in some of the pranks by **Hank Wengryzinovicz**. Hank hid a possum in his footlocker. On Saturday morning inspection, Hooper's dog rushed to the footlocker and barked up a storm. When **Lt. Col. Zais** asked Hank what he had in there, Hank replied that he had just received a care package from home with a lot of meat in it. I don't know whether Zais believed Hank, but he let it pass. We all wondered what would have happened if Zais had decided to examine the contents of the footlocker. On platoon problems the red forces always learned the tested platoon's countersign when being challenged. So the third platoon challenged with Hank's name and the countersign was to spell it. It took the platoon several weeks to learn to do that, but none of the red troops ever got the hang of it.

Your father fought through all of our battles from Italy to the last stages of our Southern France campaign. He was wounded in what we called Ridge X, just to the left of Col de Braus. Ridge X overlooks Sospel, France, the last town we liberated there. G and H companies battled for several days to take this ridge and then later joined the battle that rejoined I Company with the rest of the battalion. **Kaylor**, a 3rd platoon 60mm mortar man held off a German counter attack singlehandedly until we could rush a platoon to help him. Your father would have known all these men and what they did.

In 1968 I moved to Carlisle, MA. Since I knew your father was from Massachusetts, I kept a lookout for anyone who knew him. In church one day I met some people named Gadoury, so I inquired. They said they had a relative who was a paratrooper but he had passed away. So, your father and I came close to connecting, but just missed it. I'm honored to have the opportunity of making contact with his son.

Highest regards,

Howard Hensleigh



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I recently ran across some news from Arlington National Cemetery, that they recently released a new app for iPhones and other smartphones, to help visitors to ANC.

Find a Gravesite

A New Way to Explore
ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY

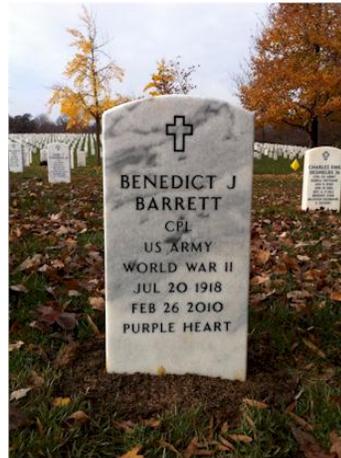
Available on the **App Store**
ANDROID APP ON Google play
 Get it at **BlackBerry App World**

Mobile **Website & Kiosk**

Arlington National Cemetery has developed *ANC Explorer*, an application that is available across common web browsers and on mobile smart phones. This app enables veterans, family members and the public to locate gravesites, generate front and back photos of a headstone or monument, and receive directions to those locations.

Launch the *ANC Explorer* in your browser or download a mobile app by clicking the link for your device above.

This phone application, as well as the ANC website, lets you locate gravesites, and also provide maps and directions to the gravesites and other memorials. What was a surprise to me was that the app also includes pictures of each monument. So I was able to see the headstone for my Dad, Ben Barrett, and Fran who was buried with him. At Fran's burial, the headstone inscription was not completed, so this is the first time we have seen it, since we haven't been back to Arlington this year.



I also looked around and found a couple of other 517th troopers and some monuments:





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Odd WWII Facts

You might enjoy this from Col D. G. Swinford, USMC, Ret and history buff. You would really have to dig deep to get this kind of ringside seat to history:

1. The first German serviceman killed in WW II was killed by the Japanese (China , 1937), The first American serviceman killed was killed by the Russians (Finland 1940); The highest ranking American killed was Lt Gen Lesley McNair, killed by the US Army Air Corps**.
2. The youngest US serviceman was 12 year old: Calvin Graham***, USN. He was wounded and given a Dishonorable Discharge for lying about his age. His benefits were later restored by act of Congress.
3. At the time of Pearl Harbor, the top US Navy command was called CINCUS (pronounced 'sink us'); The shoulder patch of the US Army's 45th Infantry division was the swastika. Hitler's private train was named 'Amerika.' All three were soon changed for PR purposes.
4. More US servicemen died in the Air Corps than the Marine Corps. While completing the required 30 missions, an airman's chance of being killed was 71%.
5. Generally speaking, there was no such thing as an average fighter pilot. You were either an ace or a target. For instance, Japanese Ace Hiro Yoshi Nishizawa shot down over 80 planes. He died while a passenger on a cargo plane.
6. It was a common practice on fighter planes to load every 5th round with a tracer round to aid in aiming. This was a big mistake. Tracers had different ballistics so (at long range) if your tracers were hitting the target 80% of your rounds were missing. Worse yet tracers instantly told your enemy he was under fire and from which direction. Worst of all was the practice of loading a string of tracers at the end of the belt to tell you that you were out of ammo. This was definitely not something you wanted to tell the enemy. Units that stopped using tracers saw their success rate nearly double and their loss rate go down.>
7. When allied armies reached the Rhine, the first thing men did was pee in it. This was pretty universal from the lowest private to Winston Churchill (who made a big show of it) and Gen. Patton (who had himself photographed in the act). <http://www.scrapbookpages.com/EasternGermany/Buchenwald/GeneralPatton.html>
8. The German Me-264 bomber were capable of bombing New York City, but they decided it wasn't worth the effort.
9. German submarine U-120 was sunk by a malfunctioning toilet.
10. Among the first 'Germans' captured at Normandy were several Koreans. They had been forced to fight for the Japanese Army until they were captured by the Russians and forced to fight for the Russian Army until they were captured by the Germans and forced to fight for the German Army until they were captured by the US Army.
11. Following a massive naval bombardment, 35,000 United States and Canadian troops stormed ashore at Kiska, in the Aleutian Islands. 21 troops were killed in the assault on the island..... It could have been worse if there had actually been any Japanese on the island****
12. The last marine killed in WW2 was killed by a can of spam. He was on the ground as a POW in Japan when



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rescue flights dropping food and supplies came over, the package came apart in the air and a stray can of spam hit him and killed him.

** General Lesley James McNair (May 25, 1883 – July 25, 1944) was an American Army officer who served during World War I and World War II. He was killed by friendly fire when a USAAF Eighth Air Force bomb landed in his foxhole near Saint-Lô during Operation Cobra as part of the Battle of Normandy.

*** Calvin Graham's battles end Tuesday when the secretary of the Navy personally returns to Graham's widow the last of the medals he won during some of the bloodiest fighting of World War II, only to be stripped of them because he'd lied about his age when he enlisted in 1942. He was 12. Graham was only a few months away from a 6th-grade Houston classroom when he manned an anti-aircraft gun as waves of Japanese planes attacked the battleship South Dakota during the battle of Guadalcanal in the South Pacific.

**** Landing of Kiska Island 15-16 Aug 1943 During the winter of 1942 to 1943, Kiska Island was reinforced by sea. Like Attu, however, surface ships ceased visiting Kiska after the Komandorski Islands action. Nevertheless, by Jul 1943, 5,200 Japanese were present on the island. After the tough fight on Attu Island, Americans feared a similarly difficult battle, therefore a much larger force was deployed for the Kiska operation. 29,000 Americans and 5,300 Canadian troops landed on the island on 15 Aug and 16 Aug, respectively, supported by a powerful fleet centered around three battleships and a heavy cruiser and 168 aircraft, only to find the island deserted. Taking advantage of heavy fog more than two weeks before the invasion, the Japanese successfully evacuated the island of Kiska without detection on 28 Jul 1943. The Japanese did, however, leave deadly booby traps that killed upwards of 20 men as they secured the island.

West Coast Mini Reunion

West Coast Mini
Palm Springs, CA
March 11-15, 2013
[Registration Info](#)

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 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