



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



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

## MailCall No. 2151

March 24, 2013

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

Website

[www.517prct.org](http://www.517prct.org)

Send Mail Call news to

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

Mail Call Archives

[www.517prct.org/archives](http://www.517prct.org/archives)

2013 Roster (updated!)

[www.517prct.org/roster.pdf](http://www.517prct.org/roster.pdf)

Thunderbolt (Winter 2013)

[www.517prct.org/archives](http://www.517prct.org/archives)

## *Lt. Albert M. Robinson memorial*

I ran across the photo on the right in an old 596<sup>th</sup> Wings newsletter. I was unaware that there is another dedication in Draguignan to a member of the 517th, **Lt. Albert M. Robinson, Jr.**, who was killed August 17<sup>th</sup>, 1944. Does anyone remember Lt. Robinson? This street is still named after him. I believe that's **Charles Pugh** in the photo.



Albert M. Robinson, Jr.

Entered the Service From: New Jersey  
Rank: Second Lieutenant  
Service: U.S. Army, 517th Parachute Infantry  
Regimental Combat Team

Died: Thursday, August 17, 1944  
Buried at: Rhone American Cemetery  
Location: Draguignan (Var), France  
Plot: B Row: 4 Grave: 8



Dedication of street in Draguignan named in honor of Lt. Albert N. Robinson (KIA-1944).



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### MailCall News

Bob: I had no trouble with receiving or viewing Mail Call.

Am so sorry that Darrell broke some bones. But I thank the Good Lord that it sounds as if he is on the road to recovery especially if he is inspired by the nurses around him! Please tell him much love and hugs from us.

**Pat Seitz and Alan Greer**

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Hi,

I was wondering if I could get the address to the rehab where Darrell Egner is? I've met him at the Dragoon event in DC every year & email him, but would like to send a card.

Also, if there are any copies of Paratrooper's Odyssey, how would I go about obtaining one? Does the association have any hats, stickers, etc. ? I've been a member for a few years but have never seen anything like that advertised as being for sale.

Thanks,

John Coffee

*[Good question – Does the 517PRCT Association sell its own stickers, shirts, etc.? That's currently under discussion – BB]*

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Hi All

**Darrell Egner's address at rehab**

Cypress Village  
Mr. Darrell Egner  
4600 Middleton Park Circle East  
Room 209  
Jacksonville, FL 32224

Chris Lindner

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If **Joe David Brown** was with the 517th rct, he didn't jump on d day june 6th he jumped d day August 15th 44 in southern France invasion called operating dragoon.

Also **Joe Broudy** was in co a 1st btln. Ran with him many times up mt. Currahee . He was liked by all of us.

**Melvin Trenary**



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

Good Morning!...My name is Christine Gauthier Mace...I am the daughter of 517th **Cameron Gauthier** (6/25/2008)/ Phoebe Gauthier (3/8/2010)...in sorting through pictures I found from the Reunions ... I wondered if anyone was scanning on to a 517th site...I would send these photos on to this person...also I am looking for information on BEN GOMEZ (family contact)...I found several hand-drawn pictures signed by Ben that I would like to pass on to Ben or Family...thanks...have a wonderful day!

christine

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Hello Christine,

Glad to hear from you. I did not know your dad personally, but I'm sure that my Dad did. I see Cameron's name and pictures pop up all the time. He was a past president of the 517<sup>th</sup> Association, and a regular attendee of the 596<sup>th</sup> and 517<sup>th</sup> reunions. He seemed to always be in the center of attention. You should already know this, but he has some mentions and a photo in the "Battling Buzzards" book by Gerald Astor. (See photo on the right.)

I might be interested in the pictures from reunions, although we have lots of those. If any look particularly interesting, I'd be glad to take a few. I am more interested in pictures from training and WWII, if you have any of those.

Note: I am especially interested in developing short biographies of the soldiers to put on our "Meet the Troopers" page (<http://www.517prct.org/bios.htm>). I would be honored to put a short biography of Cameron on that page, if you have the interest.



Cameron Gauthier was a member of the 460th Parachute Artillery Battalion. (Courtesy Cameron Gauthier)

I am copying Steve Gomez, son of **Benito Gomez**, on this email.  
Thanks,

Bob Barrett  
MailCall@517prct.org

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Hello...thanks for the reply...what was your Dad's name/which unit?  
Yes I am interested in following through on these pictures/information etc....I am away for this next month...I will continue "talking" to you...it will be at least the end of May before I can send the pictures/short bio...thanks so much...also thanks for the contact with **Ben Gomez's** son...I know if it was my Dad I would love to see these pictures/drawings...

christine

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Christine,

I am thrilled to find out that you have some of my dad's drawings!  
My cell # is 409-xxx-xxxx or if you don't mind please answer back with your # and I will give you a call.  
Thank you Bob!

**Steve Gomez**



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

Hello 517th,

Just letting everyone know that I will be attending the celebration at Toccoa and staying at the Toccoa Inn. I will be flying to Atlanta with **Lory Curtis** and meeting up with **Morris McDowell** who will be our driver for the trip. I look forward to spending time with friends. I didn't get to see Toccoa at the Atlanta reunion because we left that morning and headed for Myrtle Beach....My dad **Odas Sweet**, didn't train at Toccoa. He transferred to the 517th on Oct 9th 1944 from A company of the 504th. It will still be interesting for me to see though so I am looking forward to it. I hope I see you there!

### Rick Sweet

Found on an eBay auction:

“Great original identified 13th Airborne Division 517th Parachute Regiment / Allied Airborne grouping. I picked this up at an estate sale in Cleveland Ohio several years ago. All items were found in boxes in the attic of the home. This soldier was in the Allied Airborne at some point also, as I missed out on the bullion Allied Airborne patch that someone else snatched up first. Comes with 30 photos, many have writing on the backs as to who the person or people are. One photo shown of a soldier walking wearing a white t-shirt was KIA. Many of the photos are the soldiers buddies. Looks like a few photos are from the pacific area and a sailor photo, not sure if this is a buddy or family. Has his paybook which indicates him getting parachute pay. The paybook has his name and also looks like an address for his brother is written on it too. One of the greatest items is his flag armband. This has the areas he was in written on the back. Comes with his dog tag, NCO club matchbook from Fort Benning, still has several matches in it. Also comes with his immunization booklet. The soldier is in the three photo's, one of which shows him wearing an o.d. tank top holding the shovel. He is also in some of the other photos as well. This soldier, Charles Masterson, is listed in the 13th Airborne Division Unit Book. All items in this grouping came together.”

See the photos on: [Charles F. Masterson, B Company](#)





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

Gilles Guignard found this photo which also recently sold on eBay:



SIE 748041 (WP) . . . . . NEW YORK BUREAU  
ESCAPED NAZI CAPTIVE, GIVES INFORMATION  
BELGIUM -- CAPTURED BY THE NAZIS AT MANHAY,  
BELGIUM, DEC. 27TH, PFC. EDWARD R. SNYDER,  
AKRON, O., A MEMBER OF THE 517TH PARACHUTE  
REGIMENT, CAME BACK TO HIS OWN LINES  
AFTER THE US THIRD ARMORED DIVISION TOOK  
THE TOWN OF MALEMPRE. INFORMATION GLEANED  
WHILE HE WAS A PRISONER WAS VALUABLE, AND  
HERE HE POINTS OUT ENEMY POSITIONS TO BRIG.  
GEN. THOMAS T. BOUDINOT, BEVERLY HILLS,  
CALIF., COMMANDING GENERAL OF THE CCB OF  
THE THIRD ARMORED DIVISION. PHOTO BY  
HAROLD STEGMAN, ACME WAR POOL CORRESPONDENT  
CREDIT (ACME) (WP) 1/13/45 (L.C.)  
NY CHI AK LA

I found this story interesting since **PFC Edward R. Snyder** (H Co.) was captured by SS soldiers who were dressed as Americans and spoke perfect English. (Read Snyder's story on the next page.) This sounds a lot like the scene in *Saints and Soldiers - Airborne Creed* movie. (Lory – Any chance that your Dad described this or something similar in his letters?)



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More info about Edward Snyder's capture was recorded in **Eddy Montfort's** book, [L'Offensive Des Ardennes](#)

This story is from the "Battle of the Crossroads" chapter, translated by **Dieter Laes**.

The amazing story of private Edward R. SNYDER member of "H" Company 517th PIR:

"On 27 December, after the "H" and "I" company took Manhay, the private first class Edward Snyder returned from an aid station in Vaux-Chavanne he was approached from the south-east by what he believed to be an American patrol. Not their equipment nor their weapons, could generate a slightest suspicion. When they were near him, the only wearing an insignia of sergeant asked him: "Where are you going to?" Snyder answered that he was going to Manhay. During this time, two other surrounded him, and began pointing the barrel of their guns in his back and demanded to drop his weapons. Four of the seven soldiers spoke perfect English." Snyder was taken to Malempré where he was questioned by an SS officer, who asked his name, rank, its number and regiment.

He refused to give his unit on which the officer gave him the answer. By different questions like "Are you from the armored forces ", the German officer was trying to learn what were the units to the left and right of the 517th parachute regiment. He was very persistent in its efforts and spent a long time to ask similar questions but all in vain.

Once the questioning ends, Snyder was taken near other prisoners that belonged to the 7th armored division. The Germans took a part of his clothes of which the prisoners wore, a jacket, two blouses, a pair of socks and other things Snyder wore. His dog tags were also taken. Each prisoner got a blanket and was forced to sleep outside, under guard, along a house while the American artillery was coming in. With the exception of the guard, all Germans were in the cellar.

During the day, Snyder was forced to clean the kitchen equipment of the Germans when they had finished their meals, cleaning the rooms of the officers and quarters of the troops. Each time a German soldier was killed or injured by American fire, prisoners were kicked, and the Germans spit in their face. That their treatment was inflicted as well by SS as well by the Volksgrenadiers.

When Snyder was a taken in Malempré the 27 December, the village was occupied by SS troops. He remembers the number 12. (It was probably the 12th Volksgrenadier division which was in the vicinity of Manhay on December 27). On the night of 29 on 30 December, the SS troops were replaced by a Volksgrenadiers unit. All prisoners were handed over to this unit and got the same treatment.

In the after-noon of January 3rd, just before our tanks entered the village of Malempré, Snyder and other prisoners escaped. When he joined his unit, Snyder stated that many American patrols in uniform, had been sent by the two units are the SS troops and Volksgrenadiers. A patrol was in operation for 4 days behind our lines.



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Found on Amazon:



*From Rome to Berlin via Bastogne The Travel of a World War II Paratrooper*

by **Merle W. McMorrow**

After high school the author spent 7 months in Bremerton, Washington working on ships damaged by the sneak attack by the Japanese at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. He returned home to Minnesota in December 1942 to volunteer for the US Army Paratroops. He saw service in Italy, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and Germany. He was discharged in December 1945.

[Available on Amazon](#)

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Hi Bob, My daughter tried to send you this but was informed it is too big. I hope this is what you would need for Leo's history.

I do not know the names of the other troopers but I bet someone will recognize them. Too bad Leo didn't write their names.

Our French friends have a nice page for Leo. <http://airborne-task-force-museum.com/en/history/veterans-recollection/76-leo-turco-460th-parachute-artillery-bn-of-usa.html>

I sent you a few things a couple of years ago.

Thanks,  
**Joyce Turco**

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Hi my name is Jim Miller,

I'm the grandson of **Byron Carroll**, Tec-5 460<sup>th</sup> D-Bat.. I would like to be added to mail call.



*Jim Miller*

**Placer County Department of Facility Services**  
**Building Maintenance Division**



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

### *LeoTurco – A Battery, 460<sup>th</sup> PFAB*



**D. LEO TURCO**, born Domenico LoTurco, Sept. 26, 1920, in Rochester, NY. After graduation from Edison Technical High School in June 1940, he enlisted in the regular Army July 30, 1940. The Army in error changed his name to Domenico Leo Turco, thus his nickname became Leo Turco.

His first assignment was in the 5th Field Arty. of the 1st Div. at Madison Barracks, NY and later to Ft. Devens, MA until 1941 when he was assigned to the Corp Area Service Unit at Camp Edwards, MA until 1942 whereon that same year he applied for parachute training and was sent in July 1942, qualified as a paratrooper Sept. 5, 1942, in class #32 at Ft. Benning, GA.

His first assignment from Parachute School was A Btry., 376th Prcht. Field Arty. Bn. of the 82nd Abn. Div. He was subsequently assigned at a later date to A Btry., 377th Prcht. Field Arty. Bn. of the 101st Abn. Div. as a corporal in wire communications at Ft. Bragg, NC. A cadre was formed out of the 377th, 101st to form the nucleus of the 460th Prcht. Field Arty. of the 17th Abn. as field wire sergeant. After the Tennessee maneuvers the 517th PRCT was formed from a regiment of infantry (517th), a battalion of artillery (460th), and a company of engineers (596th), out of the 139th Engr. Bn., and in May 1944 they were sent to Naples, Italy. He participated in five campaigns in Europe and parachuted in the invasion of Southern France, Aug. 15, 1944.



After the war he went to school at Biarritz American University majoring in engineering. Returned to the States and was discharged Sept. 23, 1945.

He married Joyce Newell from Holden, MA in 1942. They had one son and three daughters, two grandsons and three granddaughters. He worked for nine years in Worcester, MA after the war then returned to Rochester, NY in 1953 and retired from General Motors Corporation after 30 plus years, June 1983. They moved to Murrells Inlet, in the Myrtle Beach, SC area for retirement, November 1983.

Leo died May 10, 2005 and his son Gary died September 13, 2005.

This story is now posted in our "Meet the Troopers" section of the website at:

[http://517prct.org/bios/leo\\_turco/leo\\_turco.htm](http://517prct.org/bios/leo_turco/leo_turco.htm)



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

### *Rémi Martin visits Arlington National*



**Rémi Martin** is a French friend we met possibly before, but definitely in 2009 in the tiny village of Sainte Cezaire. **Jean-Marc Atlan**, his wife, **Gilles Guignard** and others worked to bring the first observances to Ste. Cezaire. Rémi is dedicated to the history of WWII, and especially to the invasion of Provence and the path of the 517. He participates in events in Belgium, Normandy and Provence, for starters. We spent some time with him in Les Arcs this year, where he and his friends introduced my father (**Allan Johnson**, 596) and **Leo Dean** (Reg HQ) to Belgian beer. Like they needed another drink to enjoy! In France!

Rémi travels here to the States at least a couple of times a year, and yesterday visited Arlington National Cemetery (from New York!) to pay his respects to **Ben Barrett**; you can see he left a picture at Ben's headstone, from that 2009 trip.

As I told Rémi, this means a lot to anyone who loved Ben. He told me that it was important to him to do it, and I am grateful for such solid friendship and respect for our veterans. Friends like Rémi keep the memory of the 517 alive in Europe, and continue to honor the sacrifice of this elite unit. We greatly appreciate them.

**Claire Giblin**

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Note from Rémi:

Hi Claire. We visited Ben's grave this morning. As you told me i didn't put flowers but i prefer put a beautiful picture of Ben the last year he was in Cannes after Saint Cezaire. We stayed here a few minutes with them before visiting the cemetery. Thank for giving me the information about his grave site. We move to New York tomorrow morning. Talk to you later.



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[I had told him that there were guidelines for flowers at Arlington, and not to spend much money as they would undoubtedly be removed - Claire]

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We have lost many of our veterans - the march of time is cruel - but I miss Ben so much even now. He was a good friend. It's very important for me to do that Claire.

I met a veteran of 101st Airborne Yesterday. He's 96 so you're right the March of time is cruel that's why we need to have good moments together.

Have a good day

[Rémi Martin](#)

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Rémi, your photos are beautiful and I thank you so much. I am forwarding to Ben's son Bob. Ben was so special to me and to so many. Thank you for remembering him and making the long journey.

Claire

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Thank you, Rémi, from the entire Barrett family! – Bob Barrett



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## On This Day – March 26, 1945

545 26 MAR 45

### Vast German Mine Field Found by Airborne Units

WITH 82ND AIRBORNE DIV.—Paratroops and glidermen of the 82nd have discovered a mine field that "extends as far as you can see," according to 1/Lt. Joseph J. Novik, of Tarrytown, N.Y. and the Airborne Engrs. "It is worse than anything I have ever seen or heard about."

Discovered by the 517th Parachute Combat Team, the field is intricately crisscrossed with booby traps and anti-personnel mines and is perhaps the most elaborate encountered, First Army officers said.

A Co. advanced down a mud-bound road, and hit six dug-in pillboxes, which covered the roadway with a curtain of cross-fire. The company called for artillery.

B Co., armed with information passed on by the 517th Parachute Combat Team reconnaissance and accompanied by engineers set out to pass directly through the mined field under cover of darkness, exploding charges as it went.

They encountered Schu mines, with charges in small wooden boxes, designed to blow the feet off advancing soldiers. There were "potato mashers," "egg grenades" and rockets fastened to trip wires. "B" mines were set to spring into the air when stepped on, spraying shot for yards around. There were other cylindrical concrete mines, filled with shrapnel, armed with trip wires.

Despite such intricacy, B Co. cleared a path. Aided by 155mms A Co. pushed the Germans from the pillboxes.

The two companies swept aside the infantry opposition, converged, and took their objective.

### 83rd Tank Runs Amok With Doughboy Aboard

WITH 83RD INF. DIV.—A big white tank which suddenly went berserk must have scared a lot of Germans recently near Bovigny. The 83rd's assault on the Bois de Ronce, a German-infested woods west of Bovigny, was the occasion.

The cause of all the commotion was Pfc Vester Skinner, of Dawson Springs, Ky. and a member of B Co., 331st Mounted on light tank, he accounted for many of the 600 Nazis found stiff in the area next day.

Skinner sprayed the forest with .50 caliber anti-aircraft machine-gun fire in the tank turret during the rapid advance, until he ran out of ammunition. Then, seizing a Tommy gun from Tank Commander S/Sgt. Nels K. Jensen, he emptied clip after clip from that weapon, using up the supply of shells. Meanwhile, the tank also was letting go with its own 37mm and light machine guns.

Soldiers in the area said the tank sounded and looked like a charging giant on a rampage.

Skinner finally wound up using his M1 until that, too, ran out of ammunition; then he tossed out all the available hand grenades. He had let loose at least 500 rounds in a few minutes.



SCHMIDT



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

## Camp Toccoa 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



This Month marks the 70th anniversary of the activation of the 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment at Camp Toccoa, GA.

I have made arrangements with Brenda Carlin, the director of the Camp Toccoa/Currahee Museum to have **a 517th Get-Together on Friday, May 31, and Saturday June 1st.** Everyone is invited to come. There is no registration, (because this is not a reunion), but please come and celebrate the activation of the 517th. I know our President, **Allan Johnson** is planning on attending along with many others I have spoken with.

As you know there is no National Reunion this year and our organization is having two great mini-reunions, one in Florida that was held in January, and the Palm Springs California Reunion this month Mar 11-15th. Thanks to all who are putting these reunions on, I know what that is like.



On the weekend of June 1, 2013, the Camp Toccoa/Currahee Museum will be hosting a D-Day fun run up and down Mount Currahee on Saturday morning.

(see [http://www.toccoahistory.com/2013\\_D\\_Day\\_Run\\_form.pdf](http://www.toccoahistory.com/2013_D_Day_Run_form.pdf)) I'm not sure how much fun that will be, but I and Brenda are planning some fun activities for the 517<sup>th</sup> while we are there. Brenda has recommended that we stay at the Country Hearth Inn, 302 W Savannah St Toccoa, GA 30577 (706) 297-7799, or the Toccoa Inn and Suites, 106 Stephen Cir Toccoa, GA 30577, (706) 886-1048 <http://www.toccoainn.com/Home.html>

Brenda is expecting a large group to these events so I recommend making your motel reservations soon. I am excited to return to Camp Toccoa to see where our fathers trained. I hope to see you there Airborne All the Way!

**Lory Curtis, son of Bud Curtis, HQ, 1st BN**



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## Military Humor



*"Hell, no I don wanna go to a rest area. That's where they start show down inspeckshuns, close order drill, and everything else injurious to a man's health."*

By **W.F. "Monk" Huffman**,  
map maker for the 517<sup>th</sup> records

from a 1943 Thunderbolt

## 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](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 future Thunderbolt newsletters 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](#) So, unless you've told me otherwise, everyone on MailCall has been marked "O" for Online, and will NOT receive a paper copy.

## 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