



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



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

## MailCall No. 2173

August 18, 2013

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

Website  
Send Mail Call news to  
Mail Call Archives  
2013 Roster (updated!)  
Thunderbolt (Spring 2013)

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

## 69<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Operation Dragoon Events in France

[AIRBORNE MUSEUM "15 Aout 1944" Association](#)

and once again it was the occasion to remember the sacrifice of the 596th Airborne Engineers who gave their life for removing mines and Nice Airport rebuilt. august 1944.





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## « DRAGOON 2013 »

### 14 AOÛT

- 10h00 Stèle du Mitan.
- 18h00 Cérémonie Officielle de la Motte.
- 20h00 Défilé de la Libération sur la place de la Motte.
- 21h00 Grand Bal de la Libération dans le centre de la Motte !



### 15 AOÛT

- 11h00 Cérémonie officielle Monument aux Morts de Puget sur Argens.
- 18h00 Cérémonie officielle de la Commune des Arcs sur Argens.



### 16 AOÛT

- 9h30 Cérémonie du Recueillement Cimetière Américain de Draguignan.
- 18h00 Cérémonie Officielle de Trans en Provence.

### 17 AOÛT

- 19h00 Cérémonie Officielle de Salernes.



### 18 AOÛT

- Parcours historique à la Mémoire de la Résistance du haut Var et Libération de Fox-Amphoux.

### 19 AOÛT

- 18h00 Cérémonie officielle de Sillans la Cascade.



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Putting the names to the faces on the company photo. **Allan Johnson** and **Roland Orengo** in Sospel.

- **Claire Giblin** in Sospel



### *MailCall News*

Greetings Bob, **Babbie Boyle** contacted me...she is not receiving Mail Call. She said she did receive the Thunderbolt but did not specify if it was the printed version or electronic.

Thanks, All the Best,

**Paul Abbene**

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Hi Bobby,

I received a note from **Jane Golenko**. She has not been receiving Mail Call and wants you to check her email address.

Also, I am starting to receive donation checks again. Where can I find the list of everyone's address so i can check it against the addresses that are coming in with the donations??

**Joanne Barrett**

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Yes there have still been issues in getting MailCall's delivered to everyone, as described In last week's MailCall. I think that the problems are mostly resolved. Remember that MailCall and recent Thunderbolts are always available to read online at [www.517prct.org/archives](http://www.517prct.org/archives)

Bob B

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Hello,

I'm Julie Black, **Ed Athey's** daughter. I heard from a French WWII writer that he'd seen news of Dad's passing, so I'm guessing you already have the information. I just found a 2011 Thunderbolt with the MailCall address and thought I'd send his obituary.

My husband and I had planned a trip to Europe on August 26, with a few days in Southern France in and around the Operation Dragoon sites, but it will be bitter sweet, as we won't be able to share experiences and memories with Dad when we return. If anyone can share tips on places we should visit, it would be appreciated. We're excited to stay with **Roland and Patou Orengo** in Sospel for a couple of days, and they plan to load us into a 517th jeep and show us around.

Thank you,  
Julie Black  
(541) 356-2550  
mikejulieb@gmail.com  
25437 Rocky Point Road  
Klamath Falls, OR 97601

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Hi Julie,

Yes, we did hear about Ed Athey's passing from a couple of friends. Word spreads quickly through this close-knit group. The info was posted in our MailCall a few weeks back at:  
<http://517prct.org/mailcall/2170.pdf>

I am sorry to hear of your loss. My Dad, Ben Barrett, was also with H Company served under Ed during the war, and knew him from past reunions and correspondence. Ben always spoke highly of him.

Regards,  
Bob Barrett

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Hi Bob,

Thanks for the quick reply and the lovely coverage of his passing and old memories in the MailCall. Dad loved his men and spoke of them often during the years, including your dad "Barrett".

Julie

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Your message about the Boston Marathon was chilling and horrific and thoughtful. I live in Plymouth MA. and though not there at the Marathon, as all Americans and lovers of the freedoms we all share, thank you to all the Police, Nurses, EMT's, Firefighters, and those first to respond, and the public for listening to the authorities. Myself and my family will never, ever forget the kindness Ben and your family showed us to our Dad **Bert Jansson** B Company of the 517th in 2007 at the reunion in Washington D.C. The professional and swift response of all involved for justice after this atrocity on Patriots Day is a reminder to all of us the pride and dedication to duty all of those involved came to bear in halting and bringing those maggots to their rightful end.



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So much like the 517th and all of those who have served before and after in the name of freedom....From Plymouth Mass. to Cohasset Mass. to every part of those who appreciate the sacrifices all over this country and around the world....

### **Pete Jansson and family**

....Perhaps someday we can meet again Bob for a bite to eat and perhaps some reflection...Your Dad is a kind and heroic man..

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It has been a while since my last contact here. I hope to see a 517th reunion soon. Dad from B company passed away in 2009. His last enjoyment in my brother and mines opinion was going to the one and only reunion that he went to. was in Washington D.C. in 2007. Now that I am more in a position to attend another remembrance of the 517th, I would like to be there. And to Joanna Barrett, you will see a check coming soon in honor of all of the boys of 517.

### **Pete Jansson**

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Another great issue of Mailcall. When I see it in my inbox I get so excited to open it and read it. Thanks so much for doing such a great job.

Also, I received my Thunderbolt this past week and another great issue of events of our organization. Thanks Claire for doing such a great job on this!.

I also see **Claire** and the boys have gone to France. So glad **Leo** was able to make the trip. I received a text from **Eileen Brody Shaw** from France asking me about a National Reunion in New Orleans. I told her yes we are in the planning stages of trying to get everyone together next summer. I am hoping for the last weekend in June. We would arrive Thursday (as usual) 26th of June and leave Monday 30th of June. The National World War II museum is there and **Allan Johnson** our 517th President visited there and felt this would be a great place to hold a reunion. So let's hear from our 517th family and friends if they think they can come next year. You have 10 months now to start saving for the trip.

On another note this Thursday is August 15th, it is wonderful to think that 3 of our own 517th paratroopers are back in France 69 years later to celebrate the liberation of France; **Allan Johnson, Leo Dean, and Hoyt Kelley**. I want to thank each trooper of the 517th for their sacrifice and loyalty to our country in the most horrific time in modern history. These men truly were and are heroes. Thank you for preserving the freedoms that I enjoy today.

In my book "Letters Home a Paratrooper's Story I put this news article in about Operation Dagoon along with **Colonel Cross's** after action report.

In an Associated Press release in the newspapers nationwide on May 16, 2004, Mort Robenblum reported, "250,000 allied soldiers stormed France's Mediterranean shores on August 15, 1944. 70 days after the D-Day landings at Normandy, catching German troops in a pincer so tight that Hitler muttered to aides, "This is the darkest day of my life." Operation Dagoon was to have coincided with the June 6, Normandy assault, but there were no landing craft to spare. When it finally happen Paratroopers bore much of the brunt. Breuer (1997) reported, "It was a complete blackout as the gigantic sky train carrying initial elements of General Bob Frederick's First Airborne Task Force borrowed through the calm Mediterranean night. Hanging in majestic aloofness in the



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black heavens was a sliver of a crescent moon.” The official after action reports described by Retired Colonel Tom Cross of the 517<sup>th</sup> PRCT are available to read at the 517<sup>th</sup> web site that is [www.517prct.org](http://www.517prct.org)."

In Colonel Cross's after action report he said this about the 517th:

### ***Ground Phase***

"While in the grand scheme of the whole operation, enemy strength and actions could be considered light, it was a far different matter from the troopers standpoint as he and his comrades, in individual actions and small unit combat situations, struggled to get back to their designated DZs and Assembly Areas, from which they had been separated, due to a 50 percent dropping error during the final run into the Objective Area. To these "mission oriented" troopers this was in every sense of the word a "big war". How the Airborne Forces accomplished their missions under adverse conditions can best be illustrated by taking the largest airborne unit involved during this phase of the operation, the 517<sup>th</sup> PRCT, and highlight its D to D+1 combat actions.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the 517<sup>th</sup> PRCT dropped approximately 15 to 20 miles northeast of DZ "A" and was scattered over 8 miles of rough terrain from Élans east through Fayence to Tourettes and Callian, all a good days march from DZ "A". As this unit began to assemble and look for its equipment, three major sub-sections of this unit emerged; the first sub-section consisted of the first 10 aircraft loads dropped near Seillans which included most of Company I, the Battalion Commander, plus a Battalion headquarters contingent all totaling 160 troopers; the second contingent consisted of 60 troopers from the Battalion Headquarters Company and G and H Companies who dropped in the vicinity of Tourettes; and finally, the third group of over 200 troopers from units within the Battalion plus members from the 596<sup>th</sup>

Parachute Combat Engineer Company and members of Regimental Headquarters and Service Companies who had all been attached to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion for the drop. This entire last group had been dropped in the vicinity of Callian. The combined strength of these sub-sections totaled about 480 troopers. About 35 troopers were injured during the drop and had to be left behind, with an escort, due to the nature of their injuries. Seventy-five troopers caught up later and about 50 others were too far away to join up and so they resorted to independent actions of opportunity. By 0800 hours the Battalion Commander, Lt. Col. Melvin Zais, with almost all of his Battalion now intact commenced to march to be back to his Objective Area which was some distance away.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 517<sup>th</sup> PRCT was also dropped in a scattered pattern over an area 30 to 40 square miles west to northwest, and southwest of trans-en-Provence. At daylight Captain Charles La Chaussee of Company C and Lt. Erle Ehly of Battalion Headquarters Company, had managed to get together about 150 troopers in the Battalion Assembly Area and had made the decision to move out to the Battalion Objective Area without further delay. At this point, the Battalion Executive Officer, Major Herbert Bowlby, joined them and took command. The Battalion Commander, Major William Boyle, landed about 4 to 5 miles from Trans and having lost about two-thirds of his "stick" in the dark gathered the remaining 5 troopers and took off for his Objective Area. He entered the outskirts of Les Arcs in the afternoon and found an additional 20 troopers that included the Battalion S-3 and the Assistant Battalion Surgeon. Gathering up this group, Major Boyle again started out for the Objective Area. On the way he and his party got into a firefight with about 300 of the enemy and the situation became "touch and go". Additional 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion troopers coming in from the northwest joined Major Boyle until his force numbered 50 or more troopers. He was forced to set up a perimeter type defense on the southeast edge of Les Arcs and dig in. A third group from the same Battalion managed to meet up with Captain Donald Fraser who's Company A had been designated as the 517<sup>th</sup> PRCT Reserve Force. Captain Fraser managed to get together about 200 troopers to take over the Area of operations that was previously assigned to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 517<sup>th</sup> PRCT on the west of the Chateau Saint Rosaline; and Major Boyle encircled in the vicinity of Les Arcs.



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The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 517<sup>th</sup> PRCT, commanded by Lt. Col. Richard Seitz, at about 50 percent strength, was on its way to its Objective Area by daylight after having landed about a mile from its Drop Zone, which was DZ "A". By noon of D-Day the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion minus Company F was on its Objective. Company F which had dropped with part of the Regimental headquarters and part of the 596<sup>th</sup> Parachute Combat Engineer Company in the vicinity of Le Muy rejoined the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 517<sup>th</sup> PRCT on the Battalion Objective later in the afternoon.

The versatility of the airborne troops was demonstrated even more when the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 517<sup>th</sup> PRCT was ordered on D+1 to relieve the Regimental Reserve commanded by Captain Fraser and also to extricate the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Commander and his group in the vicinity of Les Arcs.

Meantime, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 517<sup>th</sup> PRCT arrived at the 517<sup>th</sup> PRCT Command Post at Chateau Saint Roseline about 1600 hours on D+1. Despite exhaustion from the forced march the Regimental Commander, Colonel Rupert Graves, ordered his 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion to take Les Arcs by nightfall. This action was essential as General Lucien Truscott, Commanding

General VI Army Corps, wanted Les Arcs cleared of enemy by the following day. At daylight, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion was 800 yards short of Les Arcs. The advance was resumed and Les Arcs was taken.

The town of Le Muy, which had been assigned to the British 2<sup>nd</sup> Independent Parachute Brigade Group as a D-Day Objective, proved rather difficult to take even though the British troopers had captured the main bridge leading into town well ahead of schedule. General Fredrick, Commanding General of the 1<sup>st</sup> Airborne Task Force, reassigned this mission to the newly arrived 550<sup>th</sup> glider Infantry Battalion which captured Le Muy on D+1."

May we never forget what these great men did for each and every one of us!

Airborne All the Way!

**Lory Curtis**

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My name is Lynnette Myhre. I am helping Marlys Buchenau in her efforts to get her brother, **Gordon J. Lippman** inducted into the South Dakota Hall of Fame. I was on the website for the 517th, checked the "Christmas Roster", and found that Gordon was listed as a Staff Sergeant for Headquarters Company 1st Battalion. In March 1943, Gordon enlisted in the Army and became one of the most decorated military men from South Dakota. He served his country in combat in three wars. He was wounded in December 1944 in the Battle of the Bulge, for which he was awarded a battlefield commission of 1st Lieutenant. (Gordon was killed in Viet Nam in 1965.)

We are looking for pictures or articles about Gordon and his service in World War II. If you have any such items, we would love to hear from you.

Any help you can give us in our efforts would be much appreciated.

Lynnette Myhre  
Marlys Buchenau

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Hi Lynnette and Marlys,

I will put your request into the next MailCall that I send out weekly to the troopers and friends. **Bill Boyle** who passed away a couple of years ago commanded the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion. If you read the history, you will see that the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, as well as all the 517<sup>th</sup>, fought many heroic battles. Back in 2007, Boyle did say this about Gordon:

“I barely knew him in the 517. I talked to him before he went to Nam at Ft. Bragg. It was this that caused me to say I remembered him. He was a good man or he would not have been with us.”

While we are waiting for anyone to respond, I know that there is a page about Lt. Lippman at

<http://www.sdvietnamwarmemorial.com/lippmangordon.htm>

With your permission, I would like to include that write-up on the 517<sup>th</sup> website. We are trying to collect as many 517<sup>th</sup> biographies as we can.

I am looking through the website for other pictures and stories, but I don't think there is much there that didn't come from you. One minor item I found, as sort of a souvenir, is that Gordon was one of the signers of a “short snorter”. See the story on page 3 of this

Mailcall: <http://www.517prct.org/mailcall/2069.pdf>

There are some photos of the HQ Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, including: [http://www.517prct.org/photos/hq1\\_dress.htm](http://www.517prct.org/photos/hq1_dress.htm)

PS: My Dad, Ben Barrett is also buried at Arlington National Cemetery. Next time I go to DC, I will be sure to visit Lippmann's gravesite, and look for his name on the Vietnam Memorial.

Regards,

Bob Barrett

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Mr. Barrett,

Thank you for the information and pictures. Marlys is putting together some pictures she has to send to you. She would like you to wait to put a bio for Gordon on your website. She may have a different one that she would rather have you include. I will forward what she brings me as soon as I have them.

Lynnette Myhe

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My dad received the Thunderbolt newsletter, and loved it. I am sorry to say that my father, **Leonard Gardner** passed away June 7, 2013. He served in World War II as a paratrooper. He was very proud of that fact until the day he died. May he rest in peace.

Could you please remove him from the mailing list?

Thank you very much,  
Bonnie Gross





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Hi Bob and 517th family,

Thank you all for your thoughts and prayers. Thank you **Paul Abbene** for your unexpected card and your fellowship at our Toccoa trip. Paul said he knows that being the son of a buzzard will help me gut it out. You aren't the only one Paul that knows this about me. When times are tough I do think about the men of the 517th prct and what they had to endure during WWII. My friend and drummer in my band, Tom Rammer, also knows this about me and made a sign to hang on my wall to give me inspiration. After spending two weeks at the University of Tennessee hospital without any surgery or intervention except raising my ribs off of my left lung, they sent me to a nursing home near my home of West Chester, Ohio for five more days of therapy and getting used to wearing a neck and body brace 24/7. After seeing my orthopedic doctor on the fifth day I came back and demanded that they release me and send me home. They said it may take until 9am the next morning but like a good paratrooper, I did persuade them into releasing me within an hour. Tom did a great job on the sign and I wanted to share it with you. Thank you Tom. Airborne all the way!

SOB (son of a buzzard)

**Rick Sweet**

(Son of **Odas Sweet**, H Company)



PS

I forgot to mention that I received 7 broken ribs and a broken left clavicle, 2 fractured neck vertebra (C4 and C7) and T5 vertebra was compressed and fractured on both sides. I also had multiple bruises and hematomas all over my body. All are left to heal on their own except for the neck and body brace that they said I need to wear for 6 to 12 weeks. I go back to the doctor for a cat scan on Sept 16th to see how I am mending. I do take off the brace for showers and eating. It's hard to move my jaws with so much resistance!

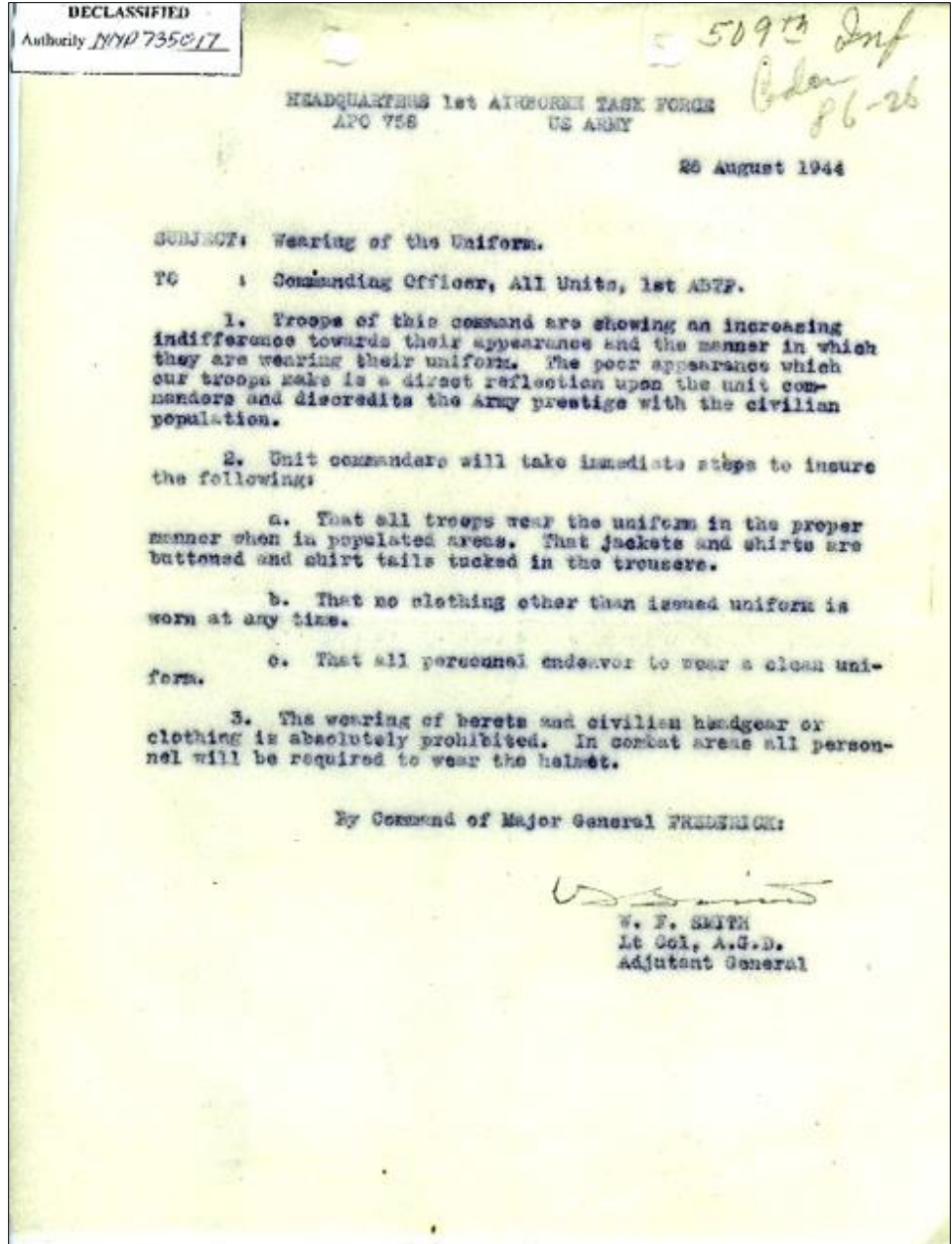


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I met a 517 the veteran in Le Muy today, **Allan Johnson**, who requested a copy of this letter.

v/r

Paul Arentz  
CPT, JA  
416th CA BN (A)



I wonder why Gen. Frederick thought there was a dress code problem. -- BB





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Have you visited the new website for the First Airborne Task Force – The Forgotten Front?

Visit: <http://1stabtf.com/>

**FIRST AIRBORNE TASK FORCE**  
**The Forgotten Front**

Bibliographie - Lien - Contact - Remerciement

**Dday Operation "Bigot-Dragoon"**  
8-15-1944

**"Champagne Campaign"**

*Pour ne jamais oublier ceux qui étaient là aussi...*

« In a larger sense, the operation was intended to keep the German coastal forces from getting north and impeding the movement of Allied forces across northern France. It was a beautiful use of the airborne. Also, the nature of the terrain and the situation in the South of France was such that regular, heavy infantry outfits would have had a lot more difficulty in accomplishing those missions. The airborne was more flexible. For instance, we chased the enemy up into the Maritime Alps and then deployed along the passes in small groups and engaged in mountain warfare. You couldn't expect a regular

**Men**

**Les monuments**

Docier spécial : Les Chasseurs

I'm not quite sure who are the author(s). The site includes many stories and photos or Operation Dragoon and the battles in Southern France. Here are a couple of items about the 517<sup>th</sup>:

[La Motte – August 15 1944](#)

[Trans-en-Provence](#) (1<sup>st</sup> Battalion and Col. Boyle)

[Le Col-De-Braus](#) in 3 parts



Ce squad de la Dog Company à laquelle appartient le Pvt. Michael Kane, dans le secteur du Col de Braus, est en plein briefing en vue d'un coup de main imminent. Preuve en sont les grenades déjà placées sur les manchons des fusils M1. L'équipement est allégé au maximum. Un homme porte l'insigne de la 17th Airborne à laquelle le 517th PRCT n'appartient plus depuis plusieurs mois ! Les casques sont camouflés, certains ont déjà perdu leur filet. L'un d'eux porte un bérêt civil. (Mike Kane)



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After reading **Steve Gomez**, son of **Ben Gomez** B Btry 460 AFA, letter in MailCall No.2145, Feb 10, 2013 about his jump with WW II ADT I started doing PT every other day and collecting the WW II gear required for summer jump school. Two weeks ago, 27 July 2013, I completed 10 days of training with Cadre of the **WW II Airborne Demonstration Team** at Frederick Oklahoma Army Airfield and 11 other trainees. Training consisted of many days of parachute landing falls from a platform in the PLF sand pit. Hanging in harnesses we trained for emergency response for water, trees, high voltage wire landings and multiple canopy malfunction and deployment of reserve chute. We practiced exiting a C-47 mock-up with all of the jump master commands and had many hours and days of classroom instruction about all of the safety requirements and details of the pre-jump DZ briefings that would be given us prior to each jump.

Finally after being tested for qualification we made pre-dawn preparation for manifest call, DZ briefing, parachute issue, equipment checks and 2 JMPI's we boarded a 71 year old C-47 named "Boogie Baby" that was built in Oklahoma in 1942 and had served in many operations including London, Italy and Operation Dragoon Airborne assault of S. France 15 August 1944. At 0600 in between thunderstorms I made my 1st of 5 round canopy static jumps at 1500 feet! The final 4 jumps were made in 2 lifts over the next 2 days culminating in open hanger day and graduation ceremony. My wings were pinned on by 93 year old WW II veteran Dick Fields who had jumped in Operation Dragoon with the 551st PIB 82 Airborne Div. Then the Commanding Officer Colonel Ray Steeley steps up and says, "Sgt Perry take 1/2 step back with your right foot" and with the palm of his hand drives the wing pins into my chest delivering my "Blood Wings"! Hooah! Remember, Honor, Serve! That is their creed and that is what I did in remembrance of my father, **Cpl Floyd Russell Perry**, who served with the 517th PRCT in Operation Dragoon invasion of S. France and received 2 Purple Hearts for wounds received in Belgium during January 1945 in the Battle of the Bulge and served with the 513th PIR 17th Airborne Div. in Operation Varsity invasion of Germany! Many thanks and much gratitude and appreciation goes out to the founders of WW II ADT, 1sg Wolf US Special Forces Ret., Colonel Ray Steely Us Special Forces Reserve, Dedicated Cadre and Support Crew for assisting me in making a living tribute to my father and the troopers and units that he served with!

I just received an intel-e-mail 9 August 2013 from WW II Airborne Demonstration Team ( <http://www.wwiiadt.org/> ) Frederick Oklahoma, Frederick Army Airfield, about their trip to Southern France this week to jump in honor of the 69th anniversary of Operation Dragoon 13 August 2013! The statement that follows is copied from a message I received from an ADT member.

*"TODAY IS THE DAY .....that the ADT DRAGOON det. deploys.*

Ten jumpers, a total of 13 ADT men and women, will depart CONUS and rendezvous in southern France to spend a week in-country participating in the 69th anniversary ceremonies commemorating operation DRAGOON. We are scheduled to jump late afternoon on Tuesday the 13th just outside of Le Muy. Our base of operations will be out of Draguignan. The AO will encompass the French riviera from Nice to St. Tropez and north and west into the Provence region where we will focus on the airborne AO in the vicinity of Le Muy, La Motte, Le Mitran and Draguignan. Dick Field is scheduled to join us.

Prayers for a safe successful journey will be greatly appreciated.

AIRBORNE!"

Son of a Battleing Buzzard, **Cpl Floyd R. Perry**  
**Sgt Dannie Perry**



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Hello Bob,

Copied and am pasting this email I just sent to my daughters in California. Since today marks the 69th Anniversary of the 517th Operation Dragoon and subsequent jump into southern France, I thought it appropriate to pass along to you. Not sure if it is anything for Mail Call but it definitely had me interested for over an hour of watching TV.

### **Kenton Floyd Immerfall**

Nephew of **Floyd A. Stott**, 1st Lt. 3rd Bat. Co. "I", 517th PRCT

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Dear Kim & Kari,

Neither of you probably care that much about Family History or Genealogy....but thought this was an interesting coincidence...so I'll share it.

Happened to watch "most" of a TLC network program the other night titled, "Who Do You Think You Are?" The program used to be on NBC and after they canceled, TLC picked it up. Apparently, the program started with new guests this past July. Didn't know that. Is on Tuesday evenings now.

Missed the beginning of the first guest Tuesday night but when I heard that her grandfather was German decided to see if I could pick up any ideas for my research. The program is partly sponsored by Ancestry.com which is the huge genealogy site most people go to when starting Family History look ups.

The guest celebrity was Chelsea Handler, a "supposed" female comedian and talk show host. She's pretty raunchy for my taste but the subject of her grandfather had me watching until the end.

Chelsea's grandfather (can't remember his first or last name...something like Stoeger?) was a young man in Germany during the 1930's and conscripted (basically forced to join) to the German labor camps. These were camps set up by the German government to "train" their male youth since the Treaty to end WW I did not allow Germany to train a formal army. Even before Hitler became chancellor in '33, and pushed the Nazi political party into power, Chelsea's grandfather was already part of an artillery unit.

He was initially sent, with his unit, to the Eastern Front in early 1944. The Germans lost many men during that time because of Russian resistance and the very harsh winter conditions. One of my German Immerfall contacts told me that a German Immerfall was a POW and died in a Russian camp during this time.

When the Allies started the D-Day invasion of Normandy, Chelsea's grandfather's artillery unit was quickly moved to southern France. This happened about the end of August 1944. Interestingly, my Uncle Floyd's paratrooper regiment dropped into southern France 69 years ago today, 15Aug1944.

The grandfather's unit, and many other German soldiers were captured near Saint Raphael, just SW of Nice, France, by American troops. He and many of his comrades were shipped to America to wait out the rest of the war. Initially, the TV program had stated "Montana" as his POW destination. Then right before a commercial break, they changed it to "IOWA." Of course my ears and eyes became more alert



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as I know of the POW Camp, during WW II, that was out where the Algona airport is now located.

Sure enough, when the commercial was over, there was Chelsea flying in a small plane (that's all Algona can handle) into the Algona airport. Didn't know the fellow who met her but he explained that the acres and acres of "now" airport and farmland at one time was the German POW Camp. As an aside...and if I've told you this before forgive me...I recall every Christmas my family would go to what was then the Armory on the fairgrounds property to view the Nativity Scene that a German POW made from papier-mâché. Now I wonder if Chelsea's grandfather helped with that enormous project.

Chelsea was then taken into Algona to the POW Museum that used to be the Bradley Implement building. I've been there twice to view the really interesting displays. The guide had photos of her grandfather from when he was first inducted into the Camp (she commented how thin he looked) and then a month after, when he had been fed decent food. Chelsea was pleased he looked so much healthier. The guide also had a photo of her grandfather playing the violin with a group of German musicians. The POW's were encouraged to put on plays, musical performances and the like. Couldn't believe the little museum in Algona had those types of documents. Also enjoyed seeing the shots of downtown Algona, some the same places I walked by when a kid.

The other piece of information the guide shared with Chelsea was that many of the German POW's were sent out to farms in the Algona area to help with chores and harvesting. Since her grandfather was in the Camp early in September of 1944, and until the end of the war, and since many young American men were serving their country, the farmers needed all the help they could get. I recall my older first cousins telling me about the German POW's that helped on the farms around St. Benedict, where our Immerfall Century Farm is still located. What a coincidence if this same grandfather actually helped my grandmother. The fact my grandmother was of German ancestry, could definitely speak German, might have added to the likelihood. Grandpa Immerfall died in 1941 so male help on the 160 acres was important.

Anyway, thought you two might find this interesting since your Mom & Father were born and raised in Algona, as were your grandparents who lived in and around the area. In fact, the Bjustrom family that grew up around Hobarton, just west of Algona a couple miles, would have been able to view the elevators in one of the video shots as the guide was pointing out to Chelsea where the POW Camp was located. Heck, your Grandma Dort probably walked by the Camp and its fenced-in huts quite often.

Back to my To Do List before I clean up and head for Red Cross...Love ya!!!

Kenton

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

### More from: 69<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Operation Dragoon Events in France

517th paratrooper **Hoyt Kelley** came back to France for the first time since he landed . we find the place he landed and place his best friend died in the first hours of D day after visiting his grave . lot of émotions this morning .... Thanks sir.

J. Mickael Soldi)



At [69ème Anniversaire du Débarquement de Provence](#), (from **Claire Gilblin's** Facebook page)





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



great privilèges to Have at our ceremony our wonderfull vétérans and madame the consul mr the ambassador of united Stades . thankyou mes amis for coming - **Jean Michel Soldi**





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

## Administrivia

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

## Operation Dragoon Anniversary – August 15, 1944

This week is August 15, the 69<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Operation Dragoon. It is a good time of year to remember to pay your annual membership donation (only if you can afford it). Suggested donation: \$30

Enclosed is my annual donation contribution towards the 517 PRCT Association.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Yes, I would like to receive the Thunderbolt magazine sent to my address above

No, I do not need the Thunderbolt mailed to me, I can just read it online

Make checks payable to: **517 PRCT Association, Inc.**

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