



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2183

October 27, 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
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www.517prct.org/archives
www.517prct.org/roster.pdf
www.517prct.org/archives

MailCall News



F Cco. 517th **Gary DAVIS** new plaque on hill 1098.

Nouvelle plaque pour honorer la mémoire de notre ami. l'ancienne détruite par les conditions climatiques.

After few years in the hard weather of the mountains a new plaque honoring our friend was put yesterday, the original one damaged by snow, frost and hot sun in the summer.



Photos taken at Hill 1098

J. Mikael Soldi and Eric Renoux

From:

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.587035261331928.1073741836.251521034883354&type=1>



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Today, Monday Oct 21st, I received an email from the son of the man who influenced my Dad to join the paratroopers, **Willard Hill**. He said this:

My wife and I bought a copy of Airborne Creed on DVD. While watching the Special Features we were amazed to learn from your interview that my father Willard J. Hill had influenced your father in deciding to go Airborne. My father was raised in Long Beach, California. He was ROTC at UCLA and married my mother in 1939. He belonged to the 82nd Airborne and was awarded the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, and many other medals during the war.

This is what I put in the book that my father told me about Willard Hill:

"The next Sunday I attended church with my parents in the newly completed Park View Ward building on Ximeno Street in Long Beach, California. While there I saw an old friend who a few months before was my Sunday school teacher. He was dressed in an Army uniform. It was Willard Hill. He was now a Second Lieutenant and was wearing his Army officer's uniform. He was a paratrooper! He had jump wings on his uniform, and more impressive than that were his highly polished jump boots with his pant legs tucked into those boots. You could see your face in those highly shined boots. I had never been so impressed by a military soldier in my entire life. I was very impressed and wanted to know everything about the paratroopers. Willard told me how great it was to be a paratrooper. I believed every word Willard told me. I wanted to be a paratrooper! This type of adventure fit right in with my life style. I enjoyed danger. I challenged death on the rollercoaster (called the cyclone racer in those days) as a kid. I rode my bicycle sitting backwards on the handlebars using my hands to steer without seeing very well where I was going. I had moved out of my home at seventeen and I lived on my own. I did not take any guff from any person as I displayed with my school principal in San Francisco. I considered myself a perfect candidate for the paratroopers."

What a small world to actually hear from the son of the man who influenced my Dad to join the paratroopers.

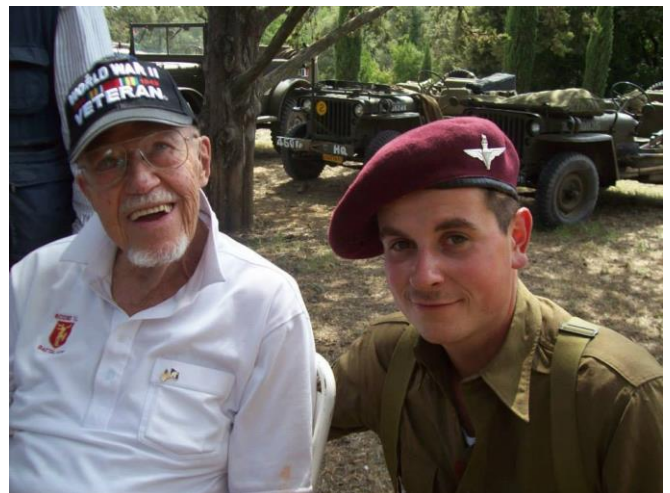
Lory Curtis, son of **Bud Curtis**, HQ, 1st BN

From: <https://www.facebook.com/FirstAirborneTaskForceTheForgottenFront>

Dear Friends, **Art Helmers** passed away yesterday in the afternoon. Art fought from Kiska to Germany and made the glider assault for operation Dragoon. He was part of the B Battery, 602nd Glider Flied Artillery Battalion. Rest in peace Art...

Chez amis, Art Helmers est décédé hier dans l'après midi. Art avait combattu de Kiska jusqu'en Allemagne et a fait l'assaut en glider de l'opération Dragoon. Il faisait partie de la B Battery du 602nd GFAB. Repose en paix, Art...

Art Helmers, 602nd GFAB on the Drop Zone "A".
August 13, 2013 with **Adrien Jolagourde** (Soldi)



Thanks to my friend **JM Soldi**.



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Subject: Palm Springs 2014

Hi folks,

This may be a little early to ask, but do you have a list of guys who will be attending Palm Springs next March? I'm interested specifically in F company troopers, Earl's group. [Earl Boone] He wants to go only if he knows other guys who are going. Thanks.

Jim Kraus

Hi Jim,

Yes, it's probably way too early to know who's going to be at Palm Springs in 2012 (March 10-14). However, the host of the Palm Springs reunion is always **Gene Frice** (and his daughters), and Gene himself was in F Company, so there's at least one. And from everything I've experienced, it really doesn't matter which Company someone was with, they all have a lot of shared experiences and make friends fast.

I know that you recently helped **Earl Boone** travel to visit Jack Sowell in Arizona (I included your pictures in a MailCall: <http://517prct.org/mailcall/2174.pdf>). Any chance you could get the Sowell's and Boone's to attend? Then you'd have at least 3 couples from F Company, and that's a party right there!

Thanks for all you do!

Bob Barrett

Did you know that there is a Museum of Military Memorabilia at the airport in Naples, FL? Make sure you drop by and see some memorabilia, including some from our 517th troopers, **Gregory Oehm**, HQ/3, and **Ernest Freece**, G Company. -- BB



517th P.C.T. SSgt Gregory J. Oehm, Hq. Co. 3rd Battalion shelf 2 right



517th P.C.T. Pfc. Ernest R. Freece, Co. G., Operation Dragoon, 15 August 1944 Combat Jump Shelf 2 left



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

From: <http://www.museum-mm.org/new-airborne-case/>
Battle Braus: Reenactment - Col de Braus - 517th PIR/3 I company



Last weekend our 'Battle-Braus' association organized a re-enactment in memory of 517 PRCT between I ' Escarène, the Col de Braus and Sospel (Alpes-Maritimes). This year emphasis was focused on the 3rd Battalion of the 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment so we conducted a commemorative 4-hour walk of in the footsteps of the "I" company departing from I ' Escarène-Touët station ending at the powder magazine of the Baisse du Pape and the I company assault on the head of the rockslide.

Paratroopers of the "I", cut off from the rest of their battalion located on the side of 'Braus' had to go down to fetch water at the bottom of the 'base camp'! (we also found photographs from time on the same premises).

During this time the column of vehicles reenacted a historical journey throughout the area of the fighting. On Saturday evening the men prepared fox-holes to spend the night on the "Pas de l'Agree ". The next day 7 jeeps and trucks descended on Sospel by the strategic track because they were expected at Fort St Roch for the guided visit of the Maginot work (where the 517 were housed after the release of Sospel October 29, 1944).

We would like to thank all participants in this event as well as the President of association of Fort St Roch for the use of her home.

Nicolas [Arnulf] *(Translated by Bing and RNB)*

See more photos at:

https://www.facebook.com/battle.braus/media_set?set=a.171255753069821.1073741839.100005561913103





517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

I spoke with **Earl Tingle** this morning, and he gave me an update on **Leroy Johnson**. He was unable to talk on the phone today.

Leroy has been in hospice now and is increasingly tired. When he is awake, it brings a smile to his face to know that the men and families of the 517 are thinking of him.

Lee turned 94 recently. Earl, a paratrooper himself, will keep us updated.

Thanks,

Claire Giblin

Mardy McMorrow in the news!



Video: <http://www.valleynewslive.com/story/23672152/ndsu-homecoming-queen-from-another-generation-recalls-its-significance>

Fargo, ND (WDAY TV) - This weekend is a trip down memory lane for one South Fargo woman.

It was back in 1947 that Mardy McMorrow was NDSU Homecoming Queen. She is being honored Friday as part of the university's homecoming celebrations.

Mardy was one of the few ever to be chosen queen without a sorority affiliation.

66 years ago, she and her court rode a convertible in the parade and wore fur coats furnished by a downtown business.

Mardy was set to wear a Queen's Royal Sash in the parade Friday night until it was canceled.

Here's another video of the story. Pay attention and you can also see **Merle** in the background.

<http://www.wday.com/event/article/id/88324/>



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Cali Owings, Published October 11 2013

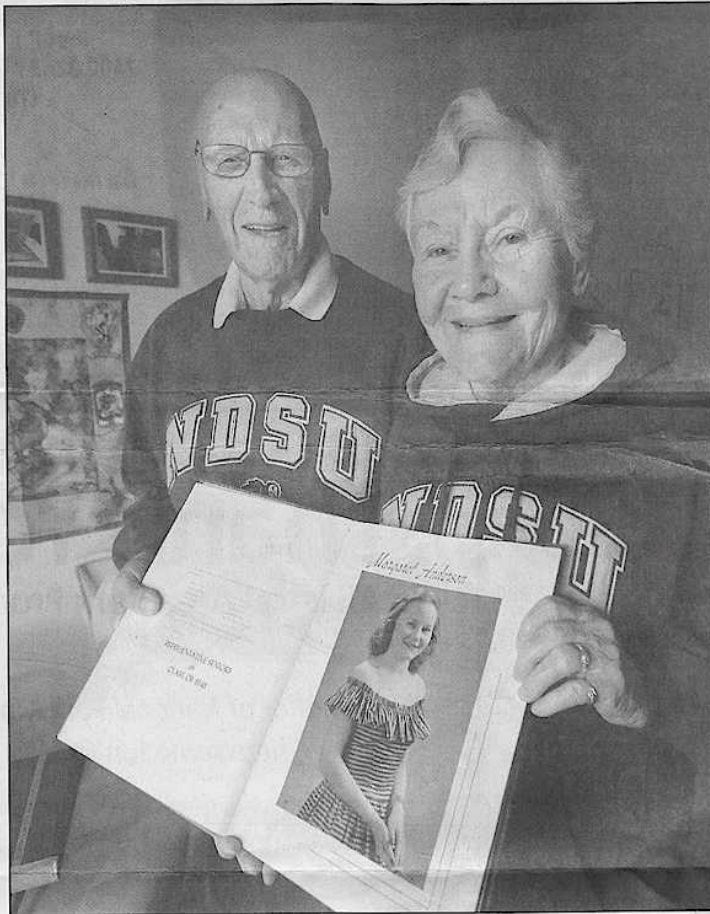
NDSU's 1946 homecoming queen says women have it better now

FARGO — When Margaret “Marty” Anderson, now McMorrow, rode in North Dakota State University’s 1946 Homecoming parade as the school’s homecoming queen, she and her attendants wore fur coats on loan from a local fur store.

“I think fur is completely out nowadays,” McMorrow said, citing one of the many ways times have changed in the 67 years since she reigned as homecoming queen.

McMorrow recalled her time as queen in an interview Friday, hours before she was scheduled to ride in NDSU’s homecoming parade in downtown Fargo wearing a sash over a Bison sweatshirt. The parade was canceled due to inclement weather.

When McMorrow was chosen as queen, she was one of the few to win votes from the student body as an independent candidate without an affiliation to a sorority. At that time, all of the campus sororities put up a



Margaret McMorrow was North Dakota State’s homecoming queen in 1946, as seen below in a picture from that year’s homecoming parade. She and her husband, Merle, were supposed to ride in this year’s parade before it was canceled due to weather.
David Samson
The Forum

A queen looks back

candidate for homecoming queen, and one of them usually won.

McMorrow, who will turn 87 next month, said that in 1946, the year she was queen, it was the second year after veterans came back to campus after World War II. In the years before then, she said it was like going to an all-girls school.

Still, women at the college didn’t have many options.

“You wouldn’t even dream of going into engineering,” she said.

McMorrow studied food and nutrition, made good grades and was involved on campus.

“I think this is a much better time for young women,” she said

While McMorrow said she accomplished much more in college than winning the homecoming contest, the title was a big deal for her parents.

“The best thing I remember is my dad standing there with tears down his cheeks,” she said.

Her parents took the train from Arnegard, N.D., to see her in the parade.

McMorrow’s mother took a job as a bookkeeper to help put her through college, at a time when it wasn’t common or popular to work outside the home.

“That was one of the reasons I wanted to do it all,” she said.

McMorrow still has great pride for the school – though she’s not a huge football fan, as it was always too cold wearing nylons and high heels at games, as was expected in 1946.

But her husband and two of her children also graduated from NDSU. Her youngest went to the University of North Dakota – which was against “family law,” she said.



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Bob... the 82nd Airborne posted a very nice tribute to **LTG Seitz** in their Paraglide magazine for September. Sorry about the smudges, but I scanned several times, and they're there. If you want the original page, I'll snail mail it to you.

The other attachment is something that every jumper has heard more than once. [See Military Humor]

And I saw **Lee Johnson** this morning and he's doing well – the World Series has his attention these days.

Airborne!

Earl Tingle

Former AIRBORNE SCHOOL, 82nd & XVIII AIRBORNE CORPS COMMANDER LIEUTENANT GENERAL RICHARD J. SEITZ passed away at age 95 on June 8, 2013 in Kansas. A Life member of the Association since 1967; LTG Seitz served as the Commander of the Airborne School (Ft. Benning -1950-53), 82nd Airborne Division Commander (1967-68) and later the CG of the XVIII and Fort Bragg from 1973-75. In 1939 he was commissioned as a 2LT in the infantry and in 1940 was called to duty as a Company Commander with the 38th Infantry; while in training at Fort Benning he saw the original Test Platoon and decided to become Airborne. Despite his Battalion Commander's objections, he became a paratrooper and later commanded the school. Upon graduating, LTG Seitz served with the 503rd PIR and in 1943 by then a CPT; he was selected to command the 2nd Battalion, 517th PIR. He was one of the youngest infantry commanders in WWII, 3 days short of his 25th birthday, and led the famed Task Force Seitz during the Battle of the Bulge. His unit was to have been awarded the Presidential Unit Citation Award for their gallant efforts (they lost over 400 out of 600 men) but a paperwork error prevented the issue; instead he earned a Silver Star. After WWII he served from 1947-1949 with the 11th Airborne Division. In 1958 he came back to the Airborne and was stationed at Fort Bragg as Commander of the 503rd Parachute Battle Group until June 1959 when he became the G3 for the XVIII Airborne Corps. Following service in Vietnam and with the Department of the Army; he was promoted to MG and in 1967 once again returned to Fort Bragg where he served as Commander of the Division during which the Division was involved in the Detroit Riots, the Golden Brigade was deployed to Vietnam and the Washington DC Riots following Dr. Martin Luther King's assassination. After his duty as CG was over, he once again left the home of the Airborne until his final assignment as the Commanding General of the XVIII Airborne Corps and Fort Bragg from 1973 until his retirement in 1975. LTG Seitz has been credited with the wearing of the maroon beret, the creation of the 82nd Division Chorus and with assisting in the creation of the Ranger School. He is survived by his four children; MAJ Rick Seitz, Judge Patricia Seitz, Dr. Catherine Seitz and Dr. Victoria Seitz. For more information on LTG Seitz' career, accomplishments and awards please visit [www.wikipedia.org/Richard J. Seitz](http://www.wikipedia.org/Richard_J._Seitz)



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Taps

Please cancel my husband's subscription to the Thunderbolt Newsletter as he passed away August 30, 2013. His name is **Grant E. Doherty** of Phoenix, AZ. Thank you.

Grant was the son of **Edward Doherty**.

596th Family and friends,

We lost two 596ers in August, **Al Kunzer** and **Bill Christian**, both of the first platoon. Both were born in New York state, Al upstate and Bill in Brooklyn. Later, in a telephone call to Illinois, I learned from his wife, JoAnn that her husband, the 596's **Dr. James Lyons** passed away on January 2012. He was one of three comrades who later became dentists. One of the Lyon's hobbies was the raising of buffalo and red deer. I remember Jim telling me that one had to be careful handling buffalo. He and JoAnn attended the St. Louis reunion some years ago, which Gloria and I missed. His son is now a dentist in Savannah, Georgia.

As I understand, **Al Kunzer** was a longtime specialist for a major upstate New York utility. Looking abck to 1943, Al said that our training after being drafted was relatively easy for him, because in his prior civilian life he was working over 60 hours a week, owing to the needs of the country at war.

After WWII, **Bill Christian** graduated from Dayton University, where he starred on the football team with Chick Noll (later head coach of the Pittsburgh Steelers). In the 1960's Bill and Sophia moved to Southern California. For many years he was a manager for the PBS television outlet in Hollywood, CA, which, because of its close association with the movie and television industry in the area, is one of the nation's two major PBS outlets (the other, New York).

Over many years, **Bill Christian** dedicated extensive effective effort work fir the 517th Association. Years ago, Bill and **Carl Kiefer** ran the national 517th reunion in Palm Springs. Beyond this, for many years, he and his wife Sophia, ran the West Coast minis held in PS each spring. Don't forget that he was preceded in this by **Jack Smothers** (the originator) and **Carl Kiefer**. In the last few years the **Gene Frice** family has succeeded Bill, and is now carrying the West Coast minis ahead.

Over the years many other 596ers did much for the 517th, including **Bob Dalrymple**, **Al Goodman**, **Joe Miller**, **Charlie Pugh** (our great organizer), and our current leader, **Allen Johnson**. THEY DID THE JOB.

As I see it, there are currently eleven 596 vets: **Bob Anderson** (Nebraska), **Bob Dalrymple** (Arizona), **Lyle Madison** (North Carolina), **Ed Phillips** (Maine), **Vince Podransky** (Pennsylvania), **Herb Reichwald** (Wisconsin) , **Hal Roberts** (Washington), and **Manny Ventosa** (Washington).

More Later.

Bill (and Gloria) Hudson

Santa Cruz, CA

*[According to our current Thunderbolt roster, we have at least a few more 596ers still around, including **Bill Conger**, **Harold Eddy**, and **Don Saunders**. And, of course, **Allen Johnson**. – BB]*



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

1st platoon member **Vince Podrasky** (Deceased Sept. 2013) was with the 596th from MacKall to Berlin. He got back together with us around 2001 in Palm Springs with his second wife, Pat. Both he and Pat have been in poor health lately.

From **Bill Hudson**



September 18, 2013

Vincent David Podrasky

The Tribune-Democrat

JOHNSTOWN, PA — PODRASKY – Vincent David, 88, Johnstown, and Palm Desert, Calif., passed away Sept. 18, 2013, at Memorial Medical Center. Born Feb. 22, 1925, in Johnstown, son of Jakub and Susanna (Legath) Podrasky. Preceded in death by parents; first wife, Mary Joan (McCaffrey); and siblings, Albert Podrasky, Leonard Podrasky, Robert Podrasky, Clement Podrasky, Ann Coffta, Stephen Churilla, Mary Stevens, Edmund Podrasky and Helen Barbush. Survived by wife, Patricia (Simmons) Hart Podrasky; beloved children, Jeffrey, married to former Laurie Burkhart, Johnstown; Gary, married to former Mary Ann Datillo, Missouri; Donna, married to Joseph Simko; Jane Smith, and her special friend, Durwin Thomas; Barbara, married to Randy Cummins; and Paul, and his special friend, Kara Shields,

all of Johnstown; stepchildren, Laurie Hart, married to Joe Zott; Teri (Hart), married to Andrew Louder; Steve Hart, married to Jean; and Thomas Hart, all of California; beloved grandchildren, Jessica Little; Christopher Podrasky, married to Sarah; Ryan Simko, married to Nicole; Jeffrey Podrasky; Justin Simko, married to Julia; Brianne Reckner, married to Robert; Lauren Podrasky; Kristin Podrasky; Brittany Yarbinitz, and her special friend, James Collins; Chelsie Smith; Courtney Simko; Zack Podrasky, and his special friend, Ashley Crowe; Marc Smith; and Trent Simko; and great-grandchildren, Violet Amouk, Bryce Podrasky, Landon Reckner, Ryder Podrasky, Jace Simko, Peyton Reckner and Timothy Collins. He was a World War II combat engineer/paratrooper, U.S. 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team attached to 82nd Airborne. Entered the Army in April 1943 and honorably discharged Dec. 2, 1945. Received 5 Battle Stars for combat- Rome-Arno, Italy, Invasion jump into Southern France 8/44, Ardennes (Battle of the Bulge), Rhineland, Germany, Central Europe. Also awarded the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart, Good Conduct Medal, American Campaign Medal, and World War II Victory Medal. After the war, he was with the Army Occupation in Berlin for three months. He then came back to the states via the Queen Mary. He was a retired engineer with Conemaugh and Blacklick Railroad with 38 years of service. Member of Hollsopple VFW Post 8861, Harmony Singing Society, Sons of Italy, Moxham Old-timers and longtime member of Oakbrook Golf Club, where he twice made a hole in one. Longtime usher and member of St. Andrew's Parish. Friends received from 2 to 8 p.m. Friday at John Henderson Co. Funeral Home, 215 Central Ave. Funeral Mass will be held at 10 a.m. Saturday at St. Andrew's Church, Father Angelo Patti. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made St. Andrew's Church or Conemaugh Township EMS.



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

More MailCall News

Hi Ben,

My name is **Eric Montgomery** and I am a friend of **Ponnie Davis**, Cleveland Ohio, sister of **Bill Davis**, 517ths own. Two years ago I made an inquiry as to any Cleveland/Erie/Pittsburgh area 517th veterans that may be in the area. The event in which I am the WWII veteran coordinator, D-Day Conneaut, was searching for veterans to attend the public premier of Saints and Soldiers. Ponnie got a hold of me on the day that we proudly showed the movie in our outdoor amphitheater before the August 2012 event. She introduced the movie to the crowd!

Ponnie and I spent some quality time over the weekend and she wanted me to find the email address and/or phone number for **Kent Immerfall**. Can you kindly send that to me so I may forward it onto her? She is truly a remarkable woman, sharp as a tack even in her 88th year. I've attached a photo of her and I, taken on Sunday morning, 20th of October.

Thank you so very much...

Eric Montgomery





517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



Gallucci

Mr. Barrett,

Thank you for including my grandfather (**Frank Gallucci**) in the last MailCall, it meant a great deal to my family and me. My address is:

27 Library St. NE
#304
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

My blog (which doesn't have any substantive posts yet, but I will start blogging regularly soon), is at:

<http://mygrandfatherswarbattlingbuzzard.blogspot.com>

I will be going through pictures soon and preserving them, so I will email you within the next month or so about adding them to the site.

Please let me know what else I can do to help out the association. I was a history major in college and, before going to law school, I worked at a WWII fortification in Delaware called Fort Miles (<http://www.fortmiles.org>) as a historical interpreter. This is my passion and I want to contribute.

Thank you again for including me and my grandfather in the MailCall.

Best,

Alex Gallucci

Bob

Saw you have contact with **Steve Gomez**.

I've lost Steve's email address and would be grateful if you can please forward this message to him and ask him if he can please contact me.

I have some 75mm Pack Howitzer shell cases recovered from one of **Ben Gomez'** gun positions (460th PFAB) in the South of France and said I'd send him one as a souvenir when I saw him in Provence earlier this year.

Many thanks

Tim Bell



*"Art Helmers of the 602nd FAB who arrived in gliders with their pack howitzers. Next to him is my friend **Tim Bell** who is a 75mm pack howitzer expert and owns two of them as well!" - **Steve Gomez**, August 2013*



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

I see that the *U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center* in Carlisle, PA has updated their index of collections. It has "boxes" of files, including:

- Infantry 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team papers, 1944-1984. (7 boxes)
- Melvin Zais photograph collection. (18 boxes, 2281 photographs)
- Rupert D. Graves photograph collection.. (1 box, 133 photographs)
- Papers of Robert E. Seale ("*WWII as I remember it : friendships, foolishness and cannon fodder*")
- Louis A. Walsh, Jr., collection, 1930-1981.(18 boxes)
- The Cross family papers, 1865-1981. (The Cross Family papers include papers and official documents covering military career, telegram concerning assassination of Abraham Lincoln, collection also contains five scrapbooks dealing with his citations and newspaper clippings.)

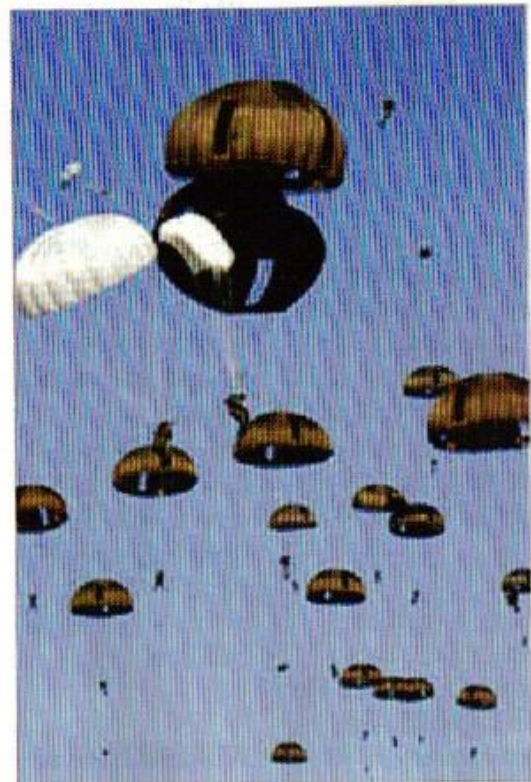
...and more. I am glad to know that there is a place that people can send their photos, records, and files. Someday, I'll get there and try to scan in important stuff. -- BB

Military Humor

BEAUTIFUL STREAMER

(TO THE TUNE OF "BEAUTIFUL DREAMER")

Beautiful streamer open for me
Blue Skies above and no canopy
Counted nine thousand - waited too long
Reached for my ripcord - the darn thing was gone.
Beautiful streamer, why must it be
White silk above me is what I should see
Just like my mother looks over me
To hell with the ripcord, t'was not made for me.
Beautiful streamer, follow me down
The time is elapsing and here is the ground
600 feet and then I can tell
If I'll go to heaven or end down in hell.
Beautiful streamer, this is the end
Gabriel is blowing "My Body Won't Mend"
All you jump happy son's of a gun
Take this last warning - Jumping's no fun
TAKE THIS LAST WARNING - JUMPING'S NO FUN



Paraglide, Summer 2013 Number 3



517th 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
- 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