



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



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

## MailCall No. 2187

November 24, 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)

## Armistice Day, Belgium – November 11, 2013



WANNE - TROIS-PONTS  
- Armistice day -  
ceremonies at the belgian  
and US monuments.

Photos of the Vice-Mayor,  
a child and flags

As you can see the children take part and pay homage with us and the community authorities. In the morning, Father RADERMECKER celebrated a Holy Mass for the US and belgian heroes who suffered and died for our Liberty. We think of you and we send our Love to all of you. God Bless you.

For CADUSA (US airborne Reception Committee)

**Arnold and Irma TARGNION**, Trois-Ponts



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

### *In Memorium – Lee Johnson, Service Company*

## Leroy (Lee) Johnson

United States Military Veteran

Leroy (Lee) Johnson, age 94, passed away peacefully on 18 November 2013 at Sandalwood Nursing Center in Daytona Beach.



Lee was born on 10 October 1919, in Detroit Michigan where he spent his childhood. Lee voluntarily enlisted in the Army on 19 June 1941, just 6 months before the attack on Pearl Harbor. After basic Infantry training, Lee decided that he was tough enough to be a paratrooper so at the age of 23, he volunteered for Airborne training at Fort Benning, GA. Upon earning his paratrooper wings, Lee was assigned to the 517<sup>th</sup> Parachute Regimental Combat Team (PRCT) knowing that the 517<sup>th</sup> PRCT would see combat in the European Theater. Lee deployed with the 517<sup>th</sup> PRCT to Southern France where the 517<sup>th</sup> entered combat for 94 consecutive days – a feat unmatched to date. On 17 December 1944, the 517<sup>th</sup> was moved into Belgium where Lee saw combat at the Battle of the Bulge. Afterwards, the Presidential Unit Citation for heroism was awarded to the 517<sup>th</sup> PRCT. Having honorably served 4 ½ years as a paratrooper, Lee was discharged. Returning to Detroit, Lee

became a founding member of VFW Post 7573 and he served as Post Commander from 1949-1950. His outstanding Army service earned him the Good Conduct and Bronze Star Medals. Burial will be at Jacksonville National Cemetery with military honors.

Lee and his family are especially thankful for the compassion and care provided by Case Manager Marianne of Halifax Health Hospice as well as the staff of Sandalwood Nursing Center. At Sandalwood, a special thanks to Gus, Pat, Tania, Felicia, and Dana for their unwavering care and comfort that Lee enjoyed.

Lee is survived by his wife Doreen, his sister-in-law, Pauline, numerous nieces and nephews and his paratrooper friend, Earl.

Share a memory with the family at [www.BaldwinCremation.com](http://www.BaldwinCremation.com).



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Lee at the Kissimmee reunion, January 2013

See Lee Johnson's bio page at [http://517prct.org/bios/lee\\_johnson/lee\\_johnson.htm](http://517prct.org/bios/lee_johnson/lee_johnson.htm)

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Dear Bob I'm sorry to report that **Earl Tingle** has written to say that **Leroy Johnson** has made his final jump. It was wonderful to see him this past January in Kissimmee.

**Claire G**

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... all things considered, Lee made the most of life and he departed peacefully. He was sleeping when I last saw him - about 2 hours before he signed off.

Lee was most proud of his Army service and that was the focus of his last years. He spoke many times about the reunion(s) especially the one last January - his last reunion was something he greatly cherished among his other adventures. I keyed on what was important to him - the 517 and his friends this past 70 years. No doubt at the next reunion, there'll be a tribute to Lee and the others who passed on this year.

Your card was on Lee's bedside table unopened, but I opened it and read it to him last night - very nice, and that was a young Lee in the photo.

Lee's mailing address is 23 Bogy Circle, New Smyrna Beach, FL 32168 if the 517 wants to send a card to Doreen...

I'll take photos at the funeral and pass them on to you and Bob...

My best to you and my 517 friends....

**Earl Tingle**



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

### *In Memorium – Joe Calder, HQ Co, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion*

# Joseph Hardacre Joe Calder



RALEIGH - Joseph "Joe" Hardacre Calder, 92 of Raleigh, died Tuesday evening, Feb. 5, 2013. Funeral service and celebration of life will be held 2 p.m. Sunday, at Bryan-Lee Funeral Home chapel, 1200 Benson Road, Garner. The family will receive friends an hour before the service, from 1-2 p.m. Immediately after, there will be a procession to the Montlawn Memorial Park at 2911 S. Wilmington Street with full military honors.

Joe was born in Flint, Mich. on Jan. 4, 1921. His father, Alexander, was a [veteran](#) of WWI after serving for many years in India as a member of the British [Army](#). After the War, Alex and Joe's mother, Alice Smith Hardacre, immigrated to the United States from Dundee, Scotland and Alex worked in the Buick factory in Flint until his death in 1947.

Joe graduated from Mt. Morris High School, Mt. Morris, MI, in 1939. Signing up with the U.S. Army in 1941, Joe attended Parachute Training and Officers Training School, and received a combat commission as a 2nd lieutenant in 1942. As a Combat Intelligence Officer assigned to the 517th Parachute Infantry Combat Team, Joe was sent into North Africa and Italy before being part of "Operation Dragoon" in which the 517th paratroopers, among other Allied forces, dropped into Southeastern France on August 15, 1944. Joe spent the long winter of 1944 in Belgium fighting in the Battle of the Bulge.

After the War, Joe met Mary Ellen Carr, a native of Newton Grove, while she was working on base at Fort Bragg. Mary Ellen and Joe married in April 1946 and their son, Joseph Alexander "Sandy" was born the next year. Right after Sandy's birth, Joe, who had learned Japanese and received Counter Intelligence Agents training was sent to Japan to assist with reconstruction and intelligence activities. Joe, Mary Ellen and Sandy served for two tours in Japan over about five years, while returning to the U.S. for Joe to receive additional training and lead offices stateside. From 1957 to 1961, the family lived in Germany; after learning Russian, Joe was stationed near Kaiserslautern leading a counter intelligence Field Office operating against targets in Eastern Europe. In December 1959, the Calder family met five-day old "Barbara" in a Pirmasens, Germany hospital, whom they immediately adopted and named Carole Lynn.

Returning to the U.S. in 1961, Joe continued to be involved in intelligence operations, including special warfare activities involving the Cuban Missile Crisis. When he received orders to for a tour in Southeast Asia, Mary Ellen convinced Joe to retire. After a distinguished 23-year U.S. Army career, Joe retired in 1963 as a Lieutenant Colonel, Intelligence Corps Detachment, 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne). Joe's many honors included [Bronze Star](#) Medal with 2 Oak Leaf Clusters, [Purple Heart](#), Presidential Unit Citation and Army Commendation Medal. Mary Ellen always said he would have been general if he hadn't argued with his superiors so much. During the 1960s, Joe enjoyed selling Buick automobiles in Fayetteville and spending time working on Mary Ellen's parents' farm. Joe continued as a Special Agent with the 113th Military Intelligence Group as a civilian capacity until 1970 when he began a new career as the Director of Public Safety at East Carolina University. With the support of Chancellor Leo Jenkins, Joe built the Office of Public Safety from a few-man security and traffic team to a two division public safety and traffic administration with numerous officers and staff. Joe served ECU throughout the turbulence of the 1970s and 80s during which he built relations with the Greenville Police Department convincing the Police Department to treat college students with flexibility. He also was called upon to protect innocent Arab students during the post-Iranian hostage crisis dealt with typical college campus concerns. Joe retired from his ECU career in 1989.

Joe trained and mentored a cadre of military intelligence agents and campus police officers in Greenville. He and Mary Ellen made the kind of friends whose doors you walk through without knocking. Over the years, Joe was sought after for everything from borrowing a wrench to citing a historical fact, from a careful listening ear to thoughtful advice, from the occasional loan to embracing comfort.



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Mary Ellen sadly developed ovarian cancer. Joe cared for her at home as much as possible and their marriage of over 50 years ended in 1997 when she passed away.

After Mary Ellen's death, Joe reacquainted with a good friend and classmate from Mt. Morris High School, Uldene "Deanie" Babcock Servan, now a widow herself. The spark grew into love and Deanie and Joe married in October, 1998. To share themselves with both families and enjoy both homes, the two traveled between Michigan and North Carolina for almost ten years. Deanie developed a kidney condition requiring dialysis which Joe learned to perform at home. She passed away in North Carolina with Joe and family in attendance in April 2008.

Joe continued traveling to Michigan where he was able to maintain close meaningful friendships as well as connection with Deanie's family. Joe sent many email messages describing the clear blue skies and water fowl flying over the lake on which he lived in Michigan. When Joe did decide it was time to stay put, he lived just a few minutes walk from Sandy and Penny in Wake County. Even as he began to slow down, he still loved cruises, most recently visiting Panama and Europe. He visited with life-long friends, continually met new ones, held his great-grandchildren, spoiled his children and grandchildren, cared for the birds he watched outside his front window, always had something new to learn, and doted on his dog, Ginger.

To his children, Joe was larger than life and an inspiration. They both followed his sense of "doing the right thing" and have had long careers as lawyers. Joseph Hardacre Calder was truly one of the Greatest Generation; his family sends him safe travels to a beautiful place and will miss him terribly.

Joe is survived by his two children, Joseph Alexander "Sandy" Calder of Raleigh, and Carole Lynn Calder of Chapel Hill; four grandchildren, Tay Calder Brewer of Garner, Cameron Calder Chandler of Wilmington, Alexander Kelly Calder of Raleigh, and Zoe Anna Johnsen of Chapel Hill; and four great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his wife of 51 years, Mary Ellen Carr Calder, and his wife of ten years, Uldene Babcock Calder, as well as his parents.

The family requests that in lieu of flowers, please consider contributing to the Wounded Warrior Project ([www.woundedwarriorproject.org](http://www.woundedwarriorproject.org)) or Wake County SPCA ([www.spcawake.org](http://www.spcawake.org)).

Condolences may be made to [bryan-leefuneralhome.com](http://bryan-leefuneralhome.com).

**Published in The Daily Reflector on Feb. 9, 2013**

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RE: Joe Calder

I searched the website, and see that **Joe Calder** communicated with my Dad many times back in 2004-2005. More importantly, he was with us in the visit to Fort Benning in 2011!

See <http://www.517prct.org/mailcall/2060.pdf> for a picture of him and some stories from him.

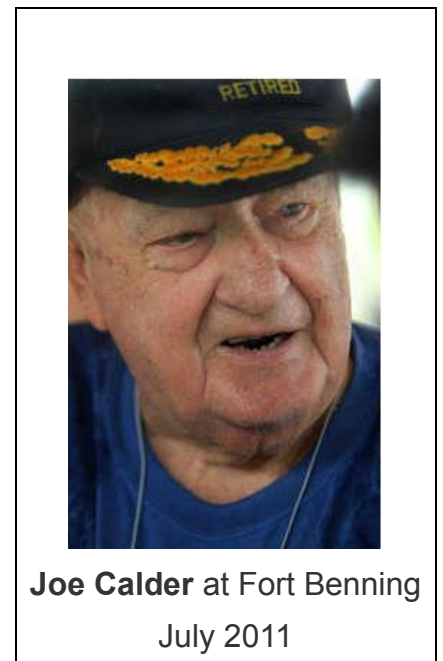
Sadly, I also did a quick internet search and found his obituary: <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/reflector/obituary.aspx?pid=162944247>

I will put the news in this week's mailcall. – BB

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Thank you Bob. Now that I see him I do remember him. So glad he made it to that reunion.

Claire



**Joe Calder** at Fort Benning  
July 2011



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

### MailCall News

Does anyone have an original or copy of the picture of **Dave Armstrong, Dick Seitz** and my father? I'd love to frame a copy for my father's 95th Birthday that is coming up this February. Dad is doing well, he doesn't get on the computer much but we often discuss his wonderful friends in the 517th.



I saw the description **Dave Armstrong** gave of the 2nd Battalion action in the Bulge. Dad was one of those wounded in the artillery strikes Dave described on the Battalion CP on January 1st. Dad was recovering in Paris from an injury sustained in the August 16th drop near La Motte when the Bulge broke out. He and a couple other troopers on limited duty got a jeep and made their way to Belgium. Dad first found the 18th Airborne Corps HQ and met his childhood friend Don Faith who was on Gen. Ridgeway's staff. Don asked if Dad would be interested staying on and taking a staff position on the Corp staff, but Dad thanked Don and told him he wanted to get back to the 517th. With directions from Major Faith, Dad found the 2nd Battalion at the farmhouse Dave Armstrong describes near Manhay. Dad checked in with General Seitz and General Seitz had some mail from my Mother that had not caught up with my Dad. Dad described having a brief chance to catch up on some of the personnel correspondence before being ordered to lead a patrol to scout the line of departure and terrain for an attack planned for the next day. Dad assembled the men assigned for this task in the courtyard of the Battalion HQ when they were hit by the Artillery strike described by Dave. The trooper who was killed in this attack was **Sgt. Archie Brown**. He was a fine man and an excellent soldier. He had just handed my father a map case when a shell hit very close to both men. It is a miracle that more men were not killed, it was a delayed fuse round that hit the roof of the CP, came out a wall and hit within yards of my father and Sgt. Brown. Everyone else in the Courtyard was wounded. My father had the helmet cut off his head and took shrapnel to the chest and legs. Dad told me in retrospect the Germans had probably bracketed the House earlier in the day as it was on a raised location and had smoke coming out of the chimney. He felt the Germans probably shut down and waited for enough activity to make it worth their while.

If you look at the casualty reports from late December to mid January 1945, the 517th lost a tremendous number of men, there were very few that were untouched. One of the most amazing statistics of the 517th is the number of casualties as a percent of those who served but also the number of those that returned after having been wounded, many multiple times. This attests to the loyalty and brotherhood of these men and why after all these years they remain so close.

Dad has so much admiration for General Seitz and Dave Armstrong. If anyone has a good quality version of this picture, it would mean a lot to Dad.

Thanks,

**Wayne Cross**



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Bob: Thank you for the link to the interview with **Lt. Armstrong** about the 2nd Battalion. It meant a lot to see the picture of Dad, Armstrong and **Tom Cross**. It was a special blessing to have had the opportunity to walk the Monte Fosse battlefield with Dad 61 years after the battle. To read the report underscores the valor of the men of the 517th. Their selfless acts in the Bulge continue to amaze and inspire gratitude that I cannot adequately express.

**Pat Seitz**

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Hello, I am Katherine Wheeler. **Richard Wheeler** was in 460th PFAB Battery B. He had a photo just like the one on Mail Call for D. I have that picture on computer. The original is now with his grandson.

Richard's photo was taken at Camp Mackall.

Happy Thanksgiving,

**Katherine Wheeler**

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Hello, Bob -

Truly, another great issue of Mail Call! I have loved seeing the last few weeks - it was especially great to see **Pat Seitz** and **Alan Greer** visiting **Howard Hensleigh**! All looking great!

It is that time, 517 Family! Make your plans and your reservations for the annual mini-reunions! First up is Kissimmee in only two months! We always have such a great time - please come join the party! And I hear that Palm Springs is also a wonderful gathering - shake it up a little and come to your first mini-reunion this year! We are friends waiting to meet you and your family!

Look for the brochure on the website and call the Ramada to make your reservations today! I know that **Allan Johnson** will be there, and **Babbie Boyle** and team, and **Leo Dean** often works us in around his skydives. Who else is coming?

Looking forward to it! Register today!

All the best –

**Claire Giblin**

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**Florida mini-reunion  
January 18-20, 2014  
Kissimmee, FL  
[Registration Form](#)**



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

I just called **Howard Hensleigh**. What a joy to speak with him on the phone. He told me he just recently celebrated another birthday, and he had a great visit with his sons and daughters. What a great memory he has, he still remembered things that I told him when I visited him two years ago. I hope my memory holds up as long as his has. I called him to ask him about our organization and what is in store for us in the future. Howard told me we the next generation are now in position to take over and keep the 517th PRCT Association going so the legacy of these great men will never die. He told me that the 517th was the largest paratrooper unit to be part of the 1st Allied Task Force that invaded Southern France, and that the French people then knew what unit the men of the 517th were from. He said the French in Southern France have never forgotten the 517th. That statement really impressed me. I think we, the next generation now take over the demands of keeping the 517th PRCT Association alive. I am committed to preserving this great legacy, how about you? Please let us know through mailcall what you are willing to do. Thanks so much for the Troopers, their sons and daughters and other relatives who sponsor the mini reunions and all other tasks to keep this organization going. Many many thanks to you Bob for keeping the website going and mailcall, and Joanne for serving as our treasurer. And to the great members of our board, and Morris who serves as 2nd Vice President, and Robin Frice Homedew as our Secretary. And especially to Allan Johnson, who has gone above and beyond the call of duty serving as our president since 2011. Thank you Allan for your great leadership.

May we have many more years of associations with you great people.

**Lory Curtis**, 1st Vice President, 517th PRCT Association

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**Loïc Jankowiak** continues to publish lots of materials about the 517<sup>th</sup> on his website, [First Airborne Task Force : the Forgotten Paratroopers](#)

I won't repeat all of it here (you can visit his website yourself), but will continue to share a few photos on MailCall that might be of interest.



**Albert J. Ernst** of A Company (KIA) boarding the C-47

*No it is not the hero of the American series "Band of Brothers" or the film "Saving Private Ryan".*

*Albert Ernst jumped on Provence since the No. 2 Serial 9 of the mission "Albatross" aircraft on the night of the 14 to 15 August 1944 to 4 hours 46, French hours. He will find death a day later at the battle of the Arcs in covering the withdrawal of his comrades.*

*Yes, Albert Ernst was a true hero... He was only 22 years old.*

*This photo is in the afternoon of August 14, entering the aircraft which flew into Provence a few hours later.*





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

Hi Bob...here is a poem written by Larry Phillips, a paratrooper and very active member of my World Wide Airborne Club here in The Villages, FL. Thought you might want to add it to your next Newsletter.

Thanks, phil [Phil McSpadden]

### **ODE TO WII PARATROOPER**

*By Larry Phillips, 90/5/2013*

*I see an old man, his face worn and crusty  
Starbucks cup in hand, arthritic and dusty  
His cap is lopsided with Army emblems and pins  
Campaign ribbons say what he's done and where he's been*

*WWII paratrooper is what I read'  
May I join you, sir, I feel the need  
Speak to me of what they don't teach in school  
Paratroopers, by many, were thought to be fools*

*Barely out of my tens, swift, brave and anxious to serve  
Special workout to build strength and nerve  
Designated "above the rest  
Airborne is America's best"*

*My muscles had muscles when I put on my boots  
I prayed for the guy packing my 'chute  
Stand in the door, Let's finish the chore  
Descending into darkness, Hitler's tyranny no more*

*Back to back, brave soldiers fought and bled  
Each day I remember the wounded and dead  
Hellacious nights, bloody fights  
Life and limb, risk them all when you answer the call*

*Boots are empty, my love of country the same  
Old now, weak, and walk with a cane  
But I still perk up when I hear the refrain  
Airborne, Airborne all the way.*



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

Our future plans for Breaux Bridge Veterans Park include a walk of honor with personalized commemorative brick pavers that are designed to honor and stand as a lasting tribute to the men and women who have served our country in the United States armed forces. Please visit our website [www.veteransparkbreauxbridge.com](http://www.veteransparkbreauxbridge.com) for additional information on how you can be involved with this next phase of our project.



Veteran's Park Breaux Bridge LA

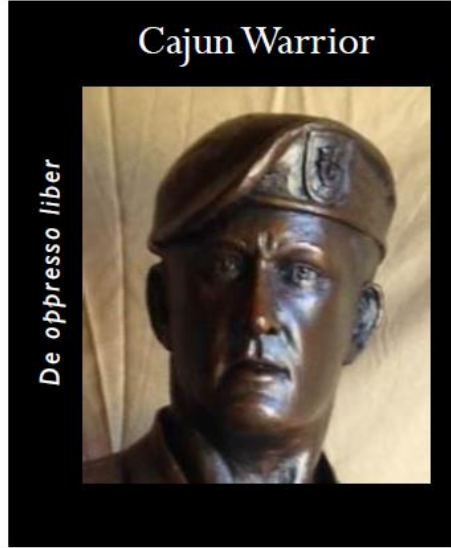
Veterans Walk of Honor

Special Thanks To...

Donation of the Sculpture  
**Weldon & Fran Granger**

Sculpture produced by  
**Bill McGlaun**

Special Thanks  
All the friends of Chapter 81 who have made a special effort to invest their time, talent and treasure on behalf of this worthy project! God Bless!



De oppresso liber



November 16, 2013  
10:00am  
Veterans Park  
Breaux Bridge, Louisiana

Greetings to all, hope everyone is well. This statue was dedicated to all men and women that have served in the United States Armed Forces- "Special Forces".

After completing his active duties with the Fighting 517, my father Ret Lt Col Thomas Fred Patin returned home to Breaux Bridge, LA.



The Colonel rejoined Company F as an executive officer and later was promoted to commanding officer of that until. Patin also served as an intelligence officer of the regimental staff of Co. B 121<sup>st</sup> special forces group of the Louisiana National Guard, the colonel became commander of this unit. The drawing of my father is a free hand drawing of himself in a paratrooper outfit with other paratroopers coming out of the sky in the background. The picture drawn by PFC John Gaudet of the unit and signed by all the men of the unit.



Thanks and have a great day,  
**Tony Patin**



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

RE: 460<sup>th</sup>, Battery D photo and MacKall and Tennessee posters (in [MailCall 2186](#))



I think it (group photo above) was taken 9-18-43 at Fort Benning, a Grad pic after Jump School.... The huts behind them don't say D-460 like the photo I'm sending of Byron at Camp MacKall???? I also found (online) a postcard for Camp MacKall (below), which is the middle of the Poster.... I need to play with the photos (Photoshop), they came out darker than I thought.... I was looking at the posters close up and you can see the cuts to the all the different photos to makeup the one big one poster... One thing I'm doing is going back through old reunion book online to found names, address and stories of trooper or their descendants. I've found some info, but sending out this letter I'm hoping to hit the jackpot. There's someone out there with a box full of great information just sitting on their shelf's in their garage whiting for me....Wishful Thinking!!!!!!

**Jim Miller**, grandson of **Byron Carroll**



No. 1673 Airborne Artillery in Action at Camp Mackall, N. C. (Photo by U. S. Signal Corps)



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

To; **Russell F. Miller**  
Cc: MailCall

Dear Russ,

In the latest Mail Call there is a picture of a 517th company on parade in Nice on 11 Nov 44, Armistice Day. The caption calls it B Company of which you were a member commanded by **Charles La Chaussee** who actually commanded C Company. My guess is that the picture is of C Co. but I know you could tell whether it was B Co. and if the CO at the head of the column is La Chaussee or **Dean Robbins** who commanded B Co.

My son Jonathan was here for a couple of days and we had our first one on one adult conversations in 30 years. He asked if you were still alive and I told him you were but sometimes carried a cane. He said he had fond remembrances of you.

BEST THANKSGIVING REGARDS FROM THE HENSLEIGHS TO THE MILLERS, Howard H.

**Howard E Hensleigh**

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Hello Russell,

In Howard's note to you (above), he mentions that you were part of B Company. In our current Thunderbolt roster, we have you listed as with HQ Co, 3rd division. Howard is never wrong, but I thought I would check with you, just to make sure. There is another **Russell T. Miller** also listed as HQ/3, so that could be the confusion.

Regards,

Bob Barrett

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When Russ and I reported in to the 517 we were assigned to the 3rd Bn. He went to I Co. and I to G Co. I'm going to say it bluntly as Russ who is more diplomatic might not do. Russ could not stand the I Co. commander, **Lt. Fastia**, (who was also his roommate in the shanties they called the BOQ) so he requested a transfer shortly after our arrival at Camp MacKall and ended up in B Co., commanded by **Dean Robbins** with **Whitey Hillsdale** as executive officer. He did all the combat with B Co. and the first Bn. When we joined the 13th Division, Russ got the assignment to command its recon. company, an assignment he held until separated from the service.

This may not solve all the roster problems, but it may help.

**Howard H.**

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Howard is accurate, as usual. I did all the combat with B company.

**Russell F. Miller**



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

Guestbook entry:

## Submitted by

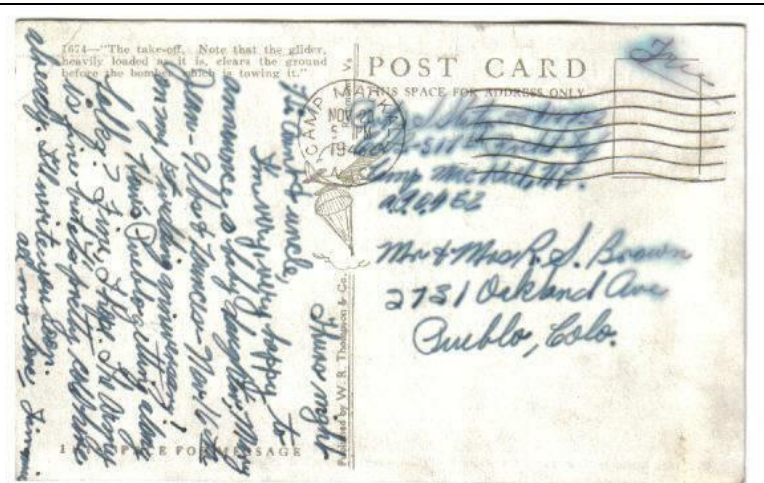
Name: **william Duff**  
From: Hazard, Ky  
E-mail: [wjduff@live.com](mailto:wjduff@live.com)

## Comments:

I came across this site researching my grandfather. His name was **William Goldsmith**. I came across a booklet 517 parachute combat team. It has a few signatures in it, one I found interesting. **Jay Robertson**, he was mentioned in a post from a book along with my grandfather. Does anyone on here have any stories they could share with me or possibly some links to others sites. Unfortunately he passed away when he was 44 and I never had the chance to meet him or talk with him.

Added: November 11, 2013

## On This Day - 1944



Nov 23, 1943

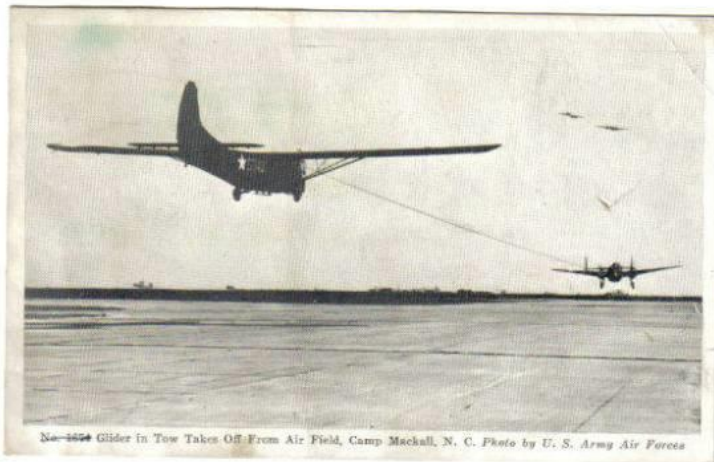
From Pvt. James S. Slaten  
517<sup>th</sup> Prcht Inf.  
Camp MacKall, NC

Hi Aunt and Uncle,

I'm very, very happy to announce a baby daughter, Mary Jean - 9 lbs & 7 ounces - Nov 16<sup>th</sup> on my 1<sup>st</sup> wedding anniversary!

How's Pueblo getting along folks? Fine, I hope. The army is fine but it's pretty cold here already. I'll write you soon.

All my love,  
Jimmie



**PFC James S. Slaten** of B Company was the second 517<sup>th</sup> casualty of the war, KIA in Italy on June 18, 1944



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

On the 22 of November 1944, **General Robert T Frederick** announced his departure by sending a letter to all his officers of the 1st ABTF. Tomorrow, the unit is disbanded.

R E S T R I C T E D  
HEADQUARTERS 1ST AIRBORNE TASK FORCE  
Office of the Commanding General  
APO U. S. Army

22 November 1944

To the Officers and \_\_\_\_\_ of the First Airborne Task Force:

As I am leaving the First Airborne Task Force for another assignment I want to say good-bye and congratulate each of you on your fine performance of combat duties.

The Task Force came into being with many handicaps. There was little time to prepare for the operation for which it was formed. Few of the units knew the other units with whom they would work. Some units had to be converted for an entirely new manner of employment, and others had to be formed, trained and equipped. That the Task Force was ready on time for its difficult mission is evidence that the officers and men of the force worked well and hard.

Your accomplishments in the initial phases of the invasion of Southern France are well known. While the airborne units were landing in the rear of the enemy and disrupting his defense, the First Special Service Force was capturing Levant and Port Cros Islands. Each of these operations was accomplished with outstanding success and materially assisted the main invasion operations.

After the beachhead had been secured the Task Force was assigned the mission of protecting the right flank of the advancing Army. It was the accomplishment of this mission that you showed your versatility, aggressiveness, and superior combat ability. You were at a disadvantage from the start. We had barely any motor transport; our weapons were light and we did not have the supporting arms normally furnished; and the terrain over which you fought was of the most difficult type. The enemy had the advantages of adequate supply, prepared fortifications, and superior terrain. In spite of your disadvantages, the enemy's advantages, and the hardships you endured, you attacked with vigor and determination day after day until you destroyed an enemy division and forced back other enemy forces that were superior in numbers and specially trained and equipped for the terrain.

You may take pride in your accomplishments knowing that you performed difficult missions well. I am proud of having commanded a force of superior combat soldiers whose aggressive, offensive spirit brought defeat to the enemy throughout a long series of engagements.

I wish each of you good luck and hope that in all of your future assignments you achieve the same success that has marked your operations in Southern France.

ROBERT T. FREDERICK,  
Major General, U. S. Army.

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:

MORTON N. KATZ, *MNK*  
1st Lt., Infantry,  
Adjutant.

R E S T R I C T E D



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

### *Thanksgiving 1944*

We're not sure if this story actually happened with parts of the 517<sup>th</sup> or maybe another unit (see notes below), but it's an interesting story of Thanksgiving in 1944.

If you were there in 1944, how did you celebrate Thanksgiving? – BB

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The story of **John Carter**'s turkey dinner, 1944

**John Carter**, veteran of Operation Dragoon (invasion of southern France in August of 1944) relates his experience cooking turkey for members of the 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment along the Italian border for Thanksgiving 1944.



<http://www.ovguide.com/517th-parachute-infantry-regiment-9202a8c04000641f80000000006d13ea>

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From MailCall 2025, last year:

That is a great story about John Carter cooking the Eisenhower turkey on the front lines on Thanksgiving 1944, but it just didn't happen. The entire combat team was released from the lines ten days before Thanksgiving and the whole outfit (except **Red Meline**, **Lt. Peche**, some from the first Bn. and me, who remained up in the mountains to orient the outfits that relieved us) were down near Nice in the Riviera living it up. We got down to our outfits on Thanksgiving Day ready to enjoy the turkey dinner and found the camp sites deserted--everyone in Nice. There was not a turkey in sight, cooked or uncooked. I think supply dug up some K rations for us.

**Howard Hensleigh**

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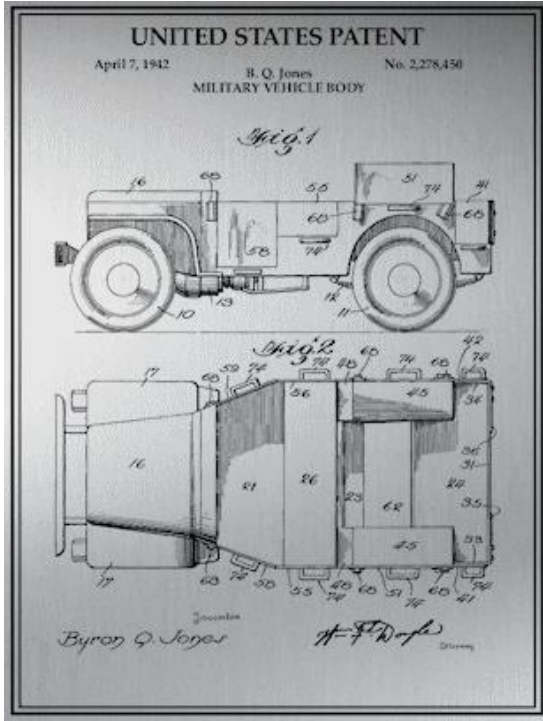
[In Carter's defense, he never exactly says he was a soldier in the 517. "After I had gotten out of the Airborne Engineers, I was with an Airborne Signal company, and they sent me to be with the 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment and, for Thanksgiving 1944, situated along the Italian border, protecting the right flank of the 6th Army Group as it marched north". – BB]

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

## Military History



### Patent Information:

The "Jeep" was initially designed at the request of the U.S. Army by the American Bantam Car Company, but manufactured by Willys and Ford. Although employed by neither company, Colonel Byron Q. Jones of the US Army filed an application as 'inventor' with the US Patent Office in October 1941 for various aspects of the design and construction of the Jeep body.



## 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 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  
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