



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



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

### MailCall No. 2202

February 23, 2014

*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)

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### *World War II Airborne Demonstration Team*

I thought some of the kids of our Dad's might want to experience what our Dads went through!

This is really something!

**Chris Lindner**

From the Wall Street Journal Online:

[http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304434104579378871656758770?mod=trending\\_now\\_5](http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304434104579378871656758770?mod=trending_now_5)

### **World War II Buffs Gather in Oklahoma for Historic Parachute Jumps**



In Frederick, Okla., former soldiers and civilians honor the Greatest Generation by parachuting using the same techniques and nearly the same equipment as the paratroopers of WWII. WSJ's Ben Kesling joins them for a jump.



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

World War II Airborne Demonstration Team's Jump School Offers Rugged Authenticity

By Ben Kinsley Feb. 17, 2014 10:57 p.m. ET

FREDERICK, Okla.— Jim Yost has walked battlefields across Europe and driven through the French countryside in the vintage three-quarter-ton troop carrier he keeps at a friend's farm in Normandy.

On a recent chilly morning, the 68-year-old funeral director from Champaign, Ill., took his fascination with World War II to new heights, in the belly of a decades-old propeller plane 1,500 feet above southern Oklahoma cotton fields.

Dressed in WWII military fatigues and a beat-up steel helmet, he nervously pictured all that could go wrong as he waited to jump from the plane using a parachute based on an old-fashioned design that can drop a man on the ground with the same force as a fall from a second-floor window. Instructors had warned about a ripped ear from a bad exit, a severed finger from an errant line, or a snapped ankle or worse from a rough landing.



"We talked so much about handling malfunctions, on my first jump I was not confident," said Mr. Yost, whose prime jumping years in the Army ended more than three decades ago.

Weekend war buffs can drive Cold War-era tanks in Kasota, Minn., shoot .50-caliber machine guns in West Point, Ky., and re-enact Revolutionary War battles in Concord, Mass. But few experiences match the rugged authenticity and potential dangers of the World War II Airborne Demonstration Team's semiannual jump school.

The team, which travels to air shows around the world, formed in 1996 and has been holding the boot camp ever since to train new members and those who just want to test their mettle.

Participants—who have ranged in age from 18 to over 70—pony up \$1,250 for the nine-day training program based on the same curriculum used by the first U.S. paratroopers in the 1940s. They sleep in the team's dusty barracks at an old Army airfield built in 1942, spend hours jumping into a sand pit from a 3-foot-tall platform and march in formation from one activity to another.

And that is all before parachuting out of the smoke-belching "Boogie Baby," a propeller-driven 1942 Douglas C-47 Skytrain, which, as befitting an antique machine, had a few mechanical problems during the week.

"Tell me again why I'm paying to do this?" joked retired Army Lt. Col. Bill Jones, a 55-year-old intelligence analyst from Virginia Beach, Va., as he scraped leftovers into the trash one night after being assigned to KP, or kitchen police.

The days started at 0500 hours, which is to say 5 a.m. That is when 82-year-old retired Army Sgt. Maj. Dayton Herrington, the team's senior drill instructor, tromped into the barracks, flipped on the lights and awakened the trainees with a round of oaths.

After breakfast, the squad of about a dozen students marched in formation to a platform in the middle of a sand pit.



The World War II Airborne Demonstration Team in Frederick, Okla.

Ben Kesling/The Wall Street Journal



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

For hours, trainees jumped off the metal platform and crumpled to the ground. The eager students, whose age averaged in the mid-50s, fell on their left sides and right, from various angles, often landing like middle-aged sacks of mush until they had learned the proper technique, distributing the landing shock by touching feet, calf, thigh, butt and back to the ground in rapid succession.

"I kinda cranked my neck," said Mr. Jones, who felt lucky to have escaped without hurting a knee or ankle.

"I like the pit," said 18-year-old Kaitlin Harriott, the youngest trainee and daughter of a member of the team, who nimbly rolled away from each landing, to the envy or annoyance of her comrades.

Five days into the training, students prepared to climb aboard "Boogie Baby," for the first of their five jumps. The two-engine green troop transport sports a pinup girl on its nose and black and white "Invasion Stripes" on its fuselage and wings, just like the markings slapped onto Allied aircraft for D-Day in order to avoid friendly fire.

Students joked nervously and fiddled with their equipment, parachutes strapped to their backs as they waited.

But that first attempt was thwarted by high winds, and later on two mechanical problems delayed jumps, once when a hydraulic valve froze and again when a brake ruptured, oozing fluid onto the runway.

When the plane finally belched to life with flames from the exhaust and great clouds of blue smoke for the first jump, nerves had mostly subsided and students just wanted to get that first jump out of the way.

Once aloft, the trainees stood, a bit off balance in the yawing plane, clipped lines from their chutes to a long steel cable, or static line, running down the center of the plane and crowded toward the rear exit.

At the drop zone the jump master screamed over the engines and wind. "Go! Get out of my plane," he yelled, as the half-dazed students shoved and shuffled out the door into the open sky.

Once out of the plane, the big, round parachutes deployed automatically, jerking the students to heel after about four seconds of falling in the wind.

"It's like jumping into a tornado!" said Peter Roberts, a 55-year-old security officer, from Melbourne, Australia. Then the chute opened and it was like "having a giant eagle grab you by the shoulders," he said.

The parachutes are steerable to some extent, but even old hands can have problems with unpredictable gusts as they try to land near a target spot in the middle of a field.

A couple of years ago, Sgt. Maj. Harrington came down in a tree and got hung up in the crook of a limb. After extracting him, the team sawed off the offending branch and mounted it as a trophy in the corner of the classroom in Frederick.

Mr. Yost, the funeral director, had a similar experience in 2004 when he talked some Dutch WWII re-enactors into letting him jump with them—his first jump in decades. Fickle winds blew him off the drop zone and he landed on the windshield of a car.

He said the training in Oklahoma was just what he wanted, and he fared well considering the decades since his time in the Army. The jump went well for everybody. All five jumps were into nearly breezeless skies, and nobody missed the drop zone.

Sgt. Maj. Harrington, meanwhile, who completed his 131st jump with the team, plans to jump again with the next batch of students next summer, after his 83rd birthday. Ms. Harriott, a high-school senior from Lake Arrowhead, Calif., successfully completed her first five jumps and is ready to return to do it again despite some reservations. "It's terrifying," she said of those first few seconds out of the plane. "It's the falling part. I don't like that."

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Also read **Dannie Perry's** story of training with the WW2 ADT in [MailCall 2173](#)  
Dannie is the Son of **Cpl. Floyd R. Perry**, HQ Co. 2<sup>nd</sup> BN



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

### *MailCall News*

Subject: coming for the 70th Anniverary

Hi Claire, wanted to let you know that myself (Melanie, daughter of **Gary Davis**, F-Co) husband Scott and daughter Megan, so total of 3. Look forward to seeing everyone again!

**Melanie Hanson**

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RE: I vote Yes to Approve the merger of the 517th Association and Auxiliary

I hope this works out to what you folks are trying to do. I still want someone get me in touch with a person or persons that can make a flag of the 517th logo. I'll pay whatever it takes. I know someone does it, because I've seen them. Thanks.

**Mel Trenary**

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Hi Bob,

Several years ago I questioned your Dad about the 13th Airborne and it caused a commotion in Mail Call.

Here was the bottom line as I remember It (I do have it in my binders and I could look for it if needed). If this is correct the 13th Airborne never saw combat. Apparently many men in the 517th were up for silver stars, bronze stars and I think promotions. It is my understanding that these orders were thrown away by the 13th. I was told there was no love lost between the 517th and 13th Airborne.

I think I am giving you correct information, You may already know about it!

**Chris Lindner**

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**Merle McMorro**w reported last week that **Mardy** was in the hospital. She had a stroke and a heart attack, but is recovering now. Here is an update form Merle:

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**Mardy** was moved out of ICU into another room today. She is starting to eat and carry on a conversation. I think she will continue to improve. We had -22 [degrees F] yesterday and when they asked her if she knew where she is she said Antarctica.

Best Wishes,

**Merle**

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

**Sent:** Sunday, January 12, 2014 8:31 AM

i,am john van der steen and i have adopted the grave of **henry a woehrer** 517th h company serial number 36827313 at henri chapelle in belgium.

you have a great site bud i can not find anything of henry a woehrer if jou have information please share it with me

with friendly regards,

**john van der steen**

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Charles, Are you still out there? Back in 2004, we received a note from you in the Guestbook for the 517<sup>th</sup> Parachute Regimental Combat Team (Below).

Recently, we received the following note from John Van der Steen in Belgium, who has adopted the gravesite of **Henry Woehrer**. Do you have any info on Pvt. Woehrer? If so, John VdS would like to know more.

Also, if you still have any photos or info that you could send me, I would love to be able to post them on our web site.

Bob Barrett

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I don't use this email address often - so I apologize for the delay in responding.

I know I have at least one photo of Uncle Henry, I'll get it scanned and send it early next week.

- Charlie Bronson

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Hello Bob, I'm researching the 100th Chemical Mortar Battalion in Italy and found this nifty Music from the WWII era. I remember more of these tunes than are playing on the radio today.

[Click here: VI Corps Proudly Presents the Music of WWII](#)

**Don Gentry**

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Submitted by	Comments:
Name: <b>Earl D Gill</b> From: New Orleans, La E-mail: <a href="mailto:earldgill37076@yahoo.com">earldgill37076@yahoo.com</a>	<b>Murphy Haley Gill</b> , of Natchez, MS, was a member of Company E in the 517th. I believe he arrived in Europe in December of 1944. If you have any info on him, please contact me at my email addr.
	Added: February 22, 2014



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

## 517<sup>th</sup> History - 1943

From the Thunderbolt 1943:

### MEN OF 517

Success in the battle goes to the troops who can "take one more step and fire one more shot" than the enemy.

The physical proficiency tests just completed give us an insight on our chances. Each unit in the Army undergoes the same tests and a company per battalion is selected by the testing headquarters to represent that battalion, as well as a Hq. or Ser. Co. per regiment. Selection of Rgt. Hq. Co., Co. B, Co. C, and Hq. Co. Third Bn. Was made two days prior to the tests.

Three times in one day the U.S. Army Record was broken and we now hold not only the first place, but also second and third as well. "D" Co. leading with 97.65 per cent, "B" Co. a close second with 97.59 per cent and Hq. 3rd next with 96.53 per cent. Regt. Hq. Co. is close behind with 95.02 per cent. (The previous record 96.37 per cent was set just the day previous by our Parachute Engineer Co.)

Men, it took more than just physical strength to set those records – it took determination and the will to carry through – THAT wins battles – it took team work and that WINS battles – it took leadership – and that wins BATTLES.

I saw one man fall over near the end of the 300-yard run. He struggled up and fell again. He couldn't rise so he crawled across the line. That's determination.

I saw another man just back from furlough and too ill to go on – too exhausted – so his company carried him and his equipment the full four miles – That's teamwork!

I saw each company as I neared the finish line of the speed march – they looked better than when they started – they're a rugged bunch, even if they can't sing – which they tried. That's Airborne.

You stack up pretty well!

L. A. Walsh

Commanding Officer 517th



The New York Times - June 25, 2000, Sunday, Late Edition – Final

## The Old Army, It Turns Out, Was the Fitter One, By STEVEN LEE MYERS

DATELINE: FORT BENNING, Ga.

In the last couple of years, officials here have put to the test the never-ending claim that soldiers in today's Army are not as physically fit as soldiers once were.

They have been administering a fitness test drawn from the Army's 1946 training manual, a document honed during World War II to prepare soldiers for the physical requirements of battle, and the results have confirmed what old-timers have been saying for years. "I can't say we were surprised," said Dr. Edward Thomas, a specialist at the Army's Physical Fitness School who created, or more precisely rediscovered, the test. **"But we were intrigued by how poorly our soldiers did compared to the soldiers of World War II."**

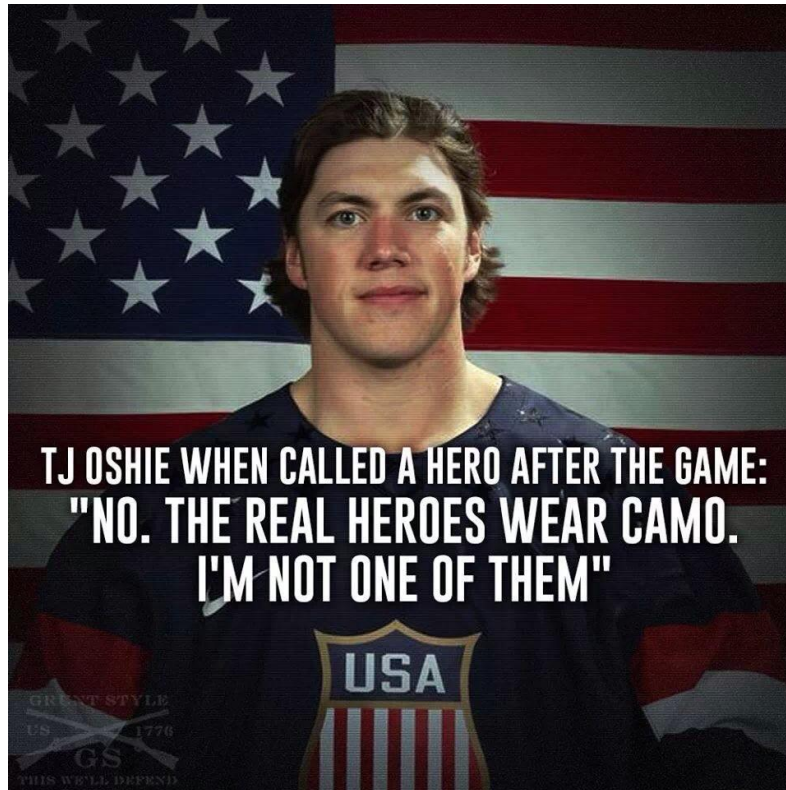
For the full article, read:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2000/06/25/health/the-old-army-it-turns-out-was-the-fitter-one.html>



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

### Olympic Recap



### Just for Laughs



Texting codes for seniors:

ATD - At the Doctor's  
BFF - Best Friends Funeral  
BTW - Bring the Wheelchair  
BYOT - Bring Your Own Teeth  
CBM - Covered by Medicare  
CUATSC - See You at the Senior Center  
DWI - Driving While Incontinent  
FWIW - Forgot Where I Was

GGPBL- Gotta Go, Pacemaker Battery Low  
GHA - Got Heartburn Again  
HGBM - Had Good Bowel Movement  
LMDO- Laughing My Dentures Out  
LOL- Living on Lipitor  
OMSG - Oh My! Sorry, Gas  
TOT- Texting on Toilet  
WAITT - Who Am I Talking To?

GGLKI (Gotta Go, Laxative Kicking in!)



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

## *West Coast Mini-Reunion*

Palm Springs, CA mini-reunion

**March 10-14, 2014**

[Registration Form](#)

Please Register by March 1

## *Current Association Members: Remember to Vote*

All 517<sup>th</sup> Association active members (all troopers who served with the 517<sup>th</sup>/460<sup>th</sup>/596<sup>th</sup> in WWII):

Please remember to vote regarding the future of the Association, using either the form attached to the end of this MailCall (Page 9) or print out and use this one-page version:

[http://www.517prct.org/association\\_business/Solicitation for Votes of Active Members of the 517th PRCT.pdf](http://www.517prct.org/association_business/Solicitation_for_Votes_of_Active_Members_of_the_517th_PRCT.pdf)

Or you may also vote by sending an email to MailCall by clicking one of the links below. Please read the voting documentation carefully. Please include your name and unit in the email.

[I vote YES: Merge the 517th Association and Auxiliary](#)

[I vote NO: Do Not Merge the 517th Association and Auxiliary](#)

## *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, or just click on the unsubscribe link on the email.
- 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





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

## Vote to Merge the 517<sup>th</sup> Association and Auxiliary

### Solicitation for Votes of Active Members of the 517<sup>th</sup> Parachute Regimental Combat Team Association, Inc. to Merge the 517<sup>th</sup> PRCT Association and Auxiliary

**Background:** At the annual 517<sup>th</sup> PRCT Reunion in Atlanta in 2011, the members voted to merge the 517<sup>th</sup> PRCT Association (troopers and veterans only) with the 517<sup>th</sup> PRCT Auxiliary Association (family). The purpose of this action was to ensure that the next generation is included and can officially participate in various committees and be voted in as officers of the Association, in order for the heritage of the 517<sup>th</sup> to continue even after all the troopers are gone. This merger was approved on the condition that it did not affect our ability to deduct donations to the Association on our individual income tax returns.

It turns out that the IRS does require us to lose the ability to deduct donations once we admit non-veterans; therefore that merger never took place. The officers and board members of the 517<sup>th</sup> PRCT Association now recommend that we remove the condition enabling a merger of the two memberships.

Current members of the 517<sup>th</sup> Association are asked to complete this form and send it to us.

**Note: In order for your vote to be effective, it must be received no later than April 1, 2014. The vote and merger will take effect on May 30, 2014.**

Please vote by placing an "X" in one of the boxes below:

I vote that 517<sup>th</sup> PRCT Auxiliary members will become Active Members of the 517<sup>th</sup> PRCT Association, Inc. with all the attending obligations and privileges, including the right to vote and hold office. This will allow wives, widows, descendants, brothers, sisters, nieces and nephews of Members to continue to fulfill the objectives of the Association. Donors to the Association will be able to deduct their donations on their 2014 tax returns if the donation is made on or before May 30, 2014, but will not be able to do so thereafter.

I vote that the 517 PRCT Association and Auxiliary group memberships will NOT merge and donations to the Association will continue to be deductible after May 30, 2014.

Note: Only current Active Members of the 517<sup>th</sup> PRCT Association (i.e. troopers who served with the 517/596/460 in WW2) are eligible to vote on this matter.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Which Battalion, Battery or Company were you with during WW2? \_\_\_\_\_

Please send you completed form to: 517<sup>th</sup> Association  
c/o Bob Barrett  
27 Fuller Meadow Road  
North Andover, MA 01845

You can also vote by sending an email to MailCall by clicking one of the links below. Please include your name and unit.

[I vote YES: Merge the 517th Association and Auxiliary](#)

[I vote NO: Do Not Merge the 517th Association and Auxiliary](#)