



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2224

July 30, 2014

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

Website
Send MailCall news to
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2013 Roster (updated!)
Thunderbolt (Winter 2014)

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MailCall News

Dear friends,

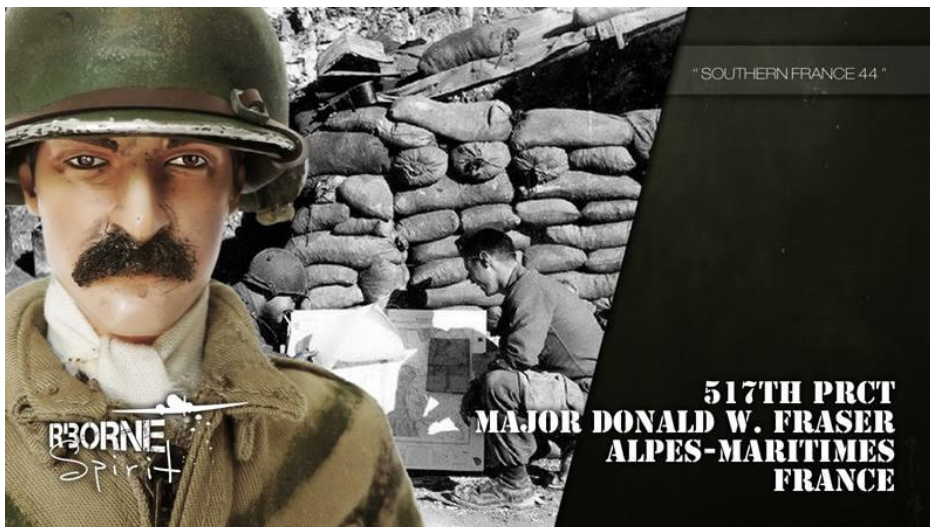
a good friend of mine who live at Lyon make several figurine about the american paratroopers who fought in ww2. Is last figurine is the **Major Donald A. Fraser** XO of the 1/517 in Southern France. I am sending you some pictures of this wonderful achievement !

My friend Gauthier will be in Southern France with us for the commemoration!

This is the link of they facebook "R'borne Spirit" (they are two in the group) :

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/RBorne-Spirit/204538279586870?ref=ts&fref=ts>

Loïc.





517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



Sorry for the lateness of this week's MailCall. I was out at my nephew Patrick's wedding, held in a redwood forest in Berkeley CA. Normally, I would just skip a week, but there is a lot to report and I don't want to get too backed up. – BB

From: Tim Eaton [mailto:tim.eaton@PANERABREAD.com]
Subject: **Richard J Eaton**

I just reviewed with interest your short history of the 517th. My father fought with the 517th yet his name is absent from your roll. How can we help?

Tim Eaton

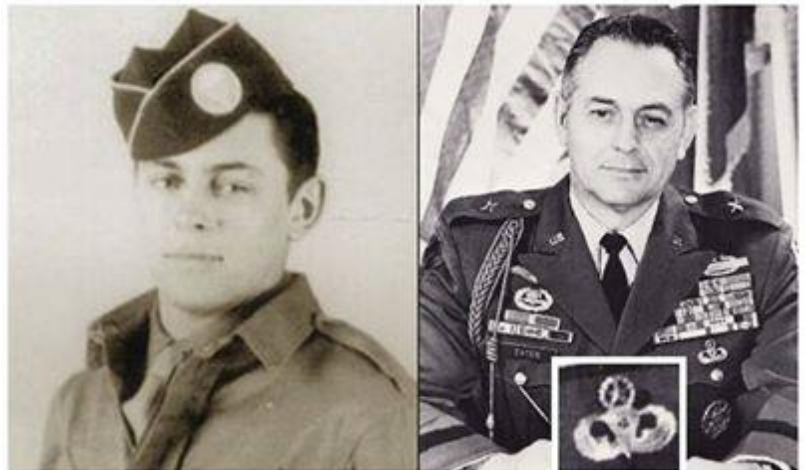
Hi Tim,

What roll is he absent on? If you mean the Christmas 1944 roster, I am not finding him there either. Wait... I found him. He was a corporal with A Company at the time:

<http://517prct.org/documents/xmas1944/xmas1944.htm>

But we do have lots about your Dad, General Richard J. Eaton, on the web site and in our newsletters, including his bio from the 1975 reunion booklet:

http://www.517prct.org/reunions/1975_fort_bragg_nc/1975_reunion_booklet.pdf



And not too long ago, we included some links to his interviews in the MailCall Newsletter:

<http://www.517prct.org/mailcall/2068.pdf>

We'd love to see more stories and photos of him especially his time with the 517th.

Bob Barrett



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Subject: Morning Reports

Mike,

Thank you very much for the HQ 3rd reports for January 1945. I found my Dad on the January 14th report and that makes perfect sense, since he said he got hit on the 13th. His name is **Robert J. Reber**. and the code after his name is a little less than clear due to **Capt. Fastaia's** penmanship.

I see it could be either AGQ or A8Q. If all the codes are letters, then the "8" has to be a G, I guess.

Do you know what either of those codes mean?

Also, his best friend, Lt. Feeney, is listed right below him with the AGQ code.

Years after my Dad passed in Dec 1976, our family received my Dad's war time wallet in the mail from Feeney. He said he had forgotten he had it and sent it back to us. He took it for safe keeping after Dad was hit, and that theft from the wounded back then was unfortunately not uncommon, especially if the patient was not expected to survive (as was the case with Dad). It was very interesting, had some photos in it and is kind of like a time capsule.

Thank you so very much for your work scanning these historical documents. They are fantastic pieces of our heritage.

Best regards,

Tom Reber
Louisville, KY

Dear Tom,

All I can do is guess with you and agree with your supposition that the handwriting must have been intended as AGQ. Your father reached the aid station in Stavelot on the 13th. I would be sure that they got him out to a hospital the next day. Too bad we don't have Feeney around to find out what happened to him on the 14th. The A probably stands for assigned which would mean that he was assigned to a hospital unit. Since we really know that is the only thing that could have happened, in the absence of other clues, I would conclude that it meant assigned to the hospital, or at least no longer carried on the 517th roster.

Wish I could join you on your trip,

Howard H



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Dear Tom,

I have reread pages 138-143 of our official history, which may help you understand the big picture. This account including the maps is helpful, but a little confusing as to the part played by the 3rd Bn. It was written by **La Chaussee**, a first battalion officer who didn't accept much help from the 3rd Bn. men. It is worth reading, but I will try to give you an account and suggestions to make your 48 hours count, if you would like to see the area where your father was wounded.

You should go to Stavelot. It has a background that you may recognize and it is where our attack began. Stavelot is where Col. Peiper, the SS tank commander who was on his way to Antwerp, ran out of diesel fuel. There was a huge supply dump close to Stavelot, including plenty of gasoline. If he had gotten that far and his diesel burning tanks could have run on that he might have gone further. As it was he and his tankers went to the rear on foot and Stavelot was the turning point. As you may remember it was Peiper's troops who machine gunned the US POWs at Malmedy--the Malmedy Massacre.

Third Bn. was ordered, along with the 30th and 75th Divisions, by General Ridgeway to attack on a wide front at 0800 13 January 45. As stated in my previous message we began at 0400. **Col. Graves** made the change when he found we would be attacking over open ground for several hundred yards after we crossed the river which was our line of departure. He wanted us to do this in the dark. We sent out a patrol the day before with the objective of getting a prisoner from the defending Germans. After some persuading tactics (which fell short of the requirements of the Geneva Conventions but did not harm him physically), I got the prisoner to locate the machine gun nests on the ridge south of the river. The 460th and your dad's mortars hit these spots that night and the next morning.

There was snow on the ground a foot or two deep. It was going down the slope, from the ridge to the river, that your father was dumped into the snow because one of the four German POWs we had carrying him slipped. His scream of pain is with me yet. The enlisted man with me would have shot the German on the spot if I had not stopped him. I saw it happen and am convinced it was an unintentional accident.

We made it up to the ridge without many casualties. The terrain then flattened out and we kept on going against heavy resistance. We had advanced several hundred yards before your father was hit from the blast of an incoming German mortal shell. Our litter bearers and litters were all in use carrying wounded back to the aid station in Stavelot. So, I pulled a door off a building for a litter and had 4 German POWs act as litter bearers. I am not sure you can find the exact spot where all this happened, but if you get across the river and proceed south up the ridge and several hundred yards further, you will be as close as you can get.

I could go on about how we crossed all thirteen phase lines, Ridgeway set up for the entire attacking forces, on time and the others didn't make it, but that is another story well documented in other parts of the website.

When we saw your father and Reed Terrill at the Chicago reunion in 1949, that was a cause of 3rd Bn. rejoicing.

Highest regards, **Howard H.**

If you have questions after your preparations, I will do my best to answer them.



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Dear Howard,

Once again, you amaze and astound me with your notes and your recall. You beat me to the blue 517th book and with what you have told me and what **Jack Walbridge** (I Co) has told me, I think the ridge you describe may very well be the Hill 575 area (or short of it) where my Dad was hit.

I have checked the area out with Google maps and the satellite photos, but have been unable to get a good contour map online yet. From the satellite photos, I see what appears to be a lot of agricultural areas with a few structures today.

The post wounding incident you describe with my Dad being dropped off of the door; I spoke with **Nacho Vasquez** shortly before his passing, and he advised me that he was the enlisted man that you stopped from seeking vengeance for the drop.

He also related a story to me that he was on the walkie-talkie when he was a sergeant, speaking with my Dad, and in frustration he blurted out the daily password over the radio. My Dad replied over the radio to NOT use the radio for passwords, and ended the transmission by addressing **Nacho** as "Private Vacho". My Dad had a hard time pronouncing Vasquez and referred to Nacho as "Vacho". Nacho laughed upon his retelling of that story.

I also want to let you and everyone on MaiCall what a great job Mike Wells did with getting me the Morning Reports of the January 12-14 time frames. I think that from the time of the request to the time of my receipt, it took well less than 12 hours to get them. Amazing! Seventy year old documents, in less than 12 hours!

The Morning Reports were of little benefit for showing location, but they were extremely interesting. I noticed **Capt. Fastaia's** name on the reports. I recall that name from the **Capt. McGeever** incident when he was killed and Lt. Terrill was wounded. Both of those men were good friends of my Dad.

I also noticed an entry on the January 14th Morning Report listing **Lt. Feeney**, directly under my Dad's entry and I think it showed he was wounded also. I know Feeney and my Dad were thick as thieves and you, Howard, related to me a funny story about my Dad in NYC with "his fat friend Feeney" in tow.

So I am assembling my information and will make my plans to leave the Hannover, Germany area, right after our meetings end on August 20th and take a train to the Stavelot area to spend the next two days exploring the 517th's paths. I leave for the US on the 23rd, out of Brussels, in the AM, so I hope to make good use of the short time I have there.

One of my colleagues with a Belgian heritage and who was also formerly stationed in Germany when he was in the Army (80's), was kind enough to join me on my personal quest. I am copying him in on this string of emails, he has a unique name, Ed Oe. One pronounces his last name exactly as one spells it.

Again, Howard, I cannot possibly thank you enough. I hope you are doing well and I hope you enjoy the impending football season.

Best regards to a great American and a treasure of the 517th,

Tom Reber

son of **Lt. Robt. J. Reber**, HQ 3rd



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

I recently read from "The National WWII Museum" web-site that approximately 555 WWII veterans are dying each day. On Saturday, July 19, 2014, I attended the funeral, with **Lory Curtis**, of one of those veterans: **Hoyt Frank Kelley**. The funeral was well attended and the speakers were able to convey information about a life well lived. I came away wishing I had met Hoyt much earlier than I did. Lory did a very good job of representing the Military, in general, and the 517 specifically, in his remarks to the family attending the funeral. I know he was quite honored to be asked to present the flag to the family.

On the back of the funeral program was printed "The Commodores Prayer." The last two sentences were emphasized by one of the speakers as being very applicable to Hoyt Kelley: "Give me the ability to see good things in unexpected places and talents in unexpected people. And give me, Lord, the grace to tell them so. Amen." It really seems that Hoyt Frank Kelley came from a great family, learned at an early age to work hard, served his country with honor in a unit that he was very proud of, returned home to accomplish a great heritage in his work, and raised a great family. One of the family speakers related that they once asked Hoyt what he learned most in the Army. He replied, "How to MARCH!" And to quote that speaker, "He continued to MARCH the rest of his life!"

I have attached photos that I took at the funeral and the cemetery. The hearse was escorted to the cemetery by 3 members of the Cache County Sheriff's Office. I spoke to them and they were all very honored to escort Hoyt's mortal remains to his final resting place.

While perusing the memorabilia from Hoyt's life, there was a business card that made me chuckle. It said -->

Seems appropriate from a 517th Trooper!

Hoyt Kelly was born in a small American town, Thatcher, Utah. He MARCHED through life, inspired many people to do their best, and raised a family that will long be a tribute to a great man.



Hoyt Frank Kelley will be missed.
Mike Wells



#3 - Poster directing funeral attendees to the services



#2- Hoyt during his return to France



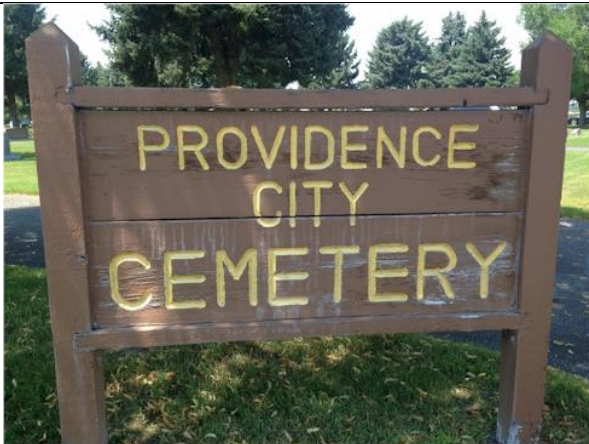
517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



#1 - Memorabilia; Includes the maps he was issued during the war, his return to France and the honors received there, and a poster from "Saints and Soldiers, Airborne Creed," which I watched with him at a theater in Ogden, Utah



#5 - Cache County Sheriff's Office Escort



#6 - Providence City Cemetery, Utah. Cemetery where Hoyt is buried.



#9 - Hearse at the cemetery



#8 - Graveside



#7 - Members of Honor Guard awaiting the arrival Hoyt's casket.



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

I just finished watching the Two DVD of the 1999 517th National Reunion held in Columbus, GA. It is well done and contains faces of so many who are no longer with us. Total length is approximate five hours. Attendance appeared to be 350-400 with many of the men interview by the photographer. As has always been the case, most were bashful and shy about discussing their experiences in service. Ben Barrett almost forgot to mention he was wounded until someone prodded him.

As was the case in all earlier reunions the final evening was spent with a sit-down dinner, awarding plaques to individuals for various accomplishments during the preceding two years, passing the torch to a new slate of officers and a dance that concluded at 1:00 AM. Today that same group would have had 5 hours of sleep when song "Good Night Irene" was sung.

Merle Mc Morrow



Please let everyone know we have 517th coins available for purchase (see attached photo of the front and back side of the coin). These are great keepsakes and make wonderful gifts for family and friends. The coins are a \$10 donation per coin to the 517th, plus postage. Mail your donation to Mimsey Kelly our treasurer. If you would like a coin please email me at drivc@comcast.net with your name and address and how many coins you would like to have.

Lory Curtis

Dear Bob, I leave this up to you to put in newsletter or not. I thought it was humorous, but I'll leave it up to you.

I was having coffee recently at Dunkin' Donuts and a retired couple sat one table away. We begin having a conversation and they said they were from Montana.

They told me that there is a steakhouse where they live that is well known and due to their 'great steaks' gets a lot of locals and others who go in. On the weekend, they said, it is packed and you have to wait, almost always. This particular night Jane Fonda came in and it was packed. Her and her husband waited for a while, and then she went up to the owner and said to him, "Do you know who I am"? He replied that he did. She continued and asked him if they could just move ahead of everyone (obviously because of who she was) He told her no.

Turned out that the owner who is the person who said no to her was a Vietnam Vet.

We got a chuckle about that.

I shared the Airborne story from your newsletter, and it was thoroughly enjoyed.

Best Wishes, Anne



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Subject:
Libération de
Sospel - 70th
anniversary

Here we are
my friends !

It is officially
launched!!!

**Frédéric
Brega**



LIBERATION DE SOSPEL

70^e ANNIVERSAIRE - 1944 - 2014



**SAMEDI 25
OCTOBRE 2014**

9h à 17h : *Bourse Militaria*
(Gymnase - Entrée 3 €)
Camp américain (Pré Tardivo)

15h : *Témoignages et débats*
(Salle Multimédias)

15h à 17h : *Visite des Forts Maginot*
Agaïsen, St Roch, Barbonnet

21h : *Bal d'époque « Glenn Miller »*

**DIMANCHE 26
OCTOBRE 2014**

10h : *Messe à la cathédrale.*
*Bénédiction des véhicules Place
Cabraïa*

11h : *Dépôt de Gerbe Pont de
la Libération et Défilé*

11h30 : *Cérémonie au Monument
aux Morts*

12h : *Cocktail Place des Platanes*

Informations et réservations bourse :
sospel1944@hotmail.com ou 06 11 57 21 75 (le soir).





517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Greetings, all -

First of all, I spoke with **Darrell Egner** yesterday. Although he's had some surgery on his mouth, and says that being 90 is rough, he sounded in great form to me and is planning on joining us in Kissimmee in January. We talked about how at the end of the war, all the privates who weren't in jail were promoted to PFC, or Private First Class. Of course, I had to wonder how Darrell managed the "not in jail" part, to which he pointed out he was smart enough to stay ahead of trouble.

Everyone should be planning on this Florida mini-reunion, now less than 6 months away.

We are closing in on August, and with it annual events in Provence. Things are falling into place for the upcoming 70th anniversary of the 15 August invasion of Provence. I just today heard from my counterpart in Britain, and they expect that they will have about 50 in attendance, including 5 veterans. I am pleased to report that our contingent of about 40 will also include 5 veterans, and we will be nearly 50 if we include Dick Field of the 551, whom we have gotten to know over the years, and his party.

So far, the jump list includes:

Merle McMorrow

Leo Dean

Gene Frice

Allan Johnson

Ignatius "Joe" Bail

The Frice, Johnson and Bail contingents are attending, as well as

Marty Donahoo

Nancy Fraser Armand

Joanne Barrett

Helen Beddow

Mimsey Boyle

Wade Gilbert

Craig Stahlke

Tom Copsey

Bruce and Liz Broudy

and mercy am I forgetting anyone?

If you know anyone else who plans or hopes to come? Let us know today!

Highlights will include events in Sospel, Draguinan, Fayence and Ste. Cezaire, as well as Leo jumping tandem!

We are continuing to fine-tune our plans -

All the best to my favorite vets -

Claire G.



Hi friends,
Included the
article of
Newspaper
about your
visit in
Sospel. A
beautiful
encounter and
a new
friendship.

Kisses and
hugs

Patou and
Roland
Orengo

Pays mentonnais

nice-matin
Mercredi 23 juillet 2014

9

SOSPEL

Hommage aux « Hawaïens »

Un peu d'Histoire. 28 octobre 1944, Sospel est libéré. Larry Mivra et Senti Sugawara, de la 442^e RCT⁽¹⁾, y précèdent leur unité, accompagnant les paras américains. L'ennemi retranché alors au mont Colombin lance ses obus sur le village. L'un d'eux tue les deux soldats dans la cour de l'école. Peu après, la 442^e arrive à Sospel pour prendre la relève des paras. Cette célèbre unité d'infanterie des USA, composée de Nippo-Américains, s'installe sur les lignes extérieures, puis sera relevée à son tour plusieurs mois après par la 1^{re} DFL⁽²⁾ avant de repartir sur le front italien et y remporter la victoire. La compagnie sera la plus décorée de toute l'histoire militaire américaine jusqu'à recevoir la Médaille d'Honneur, la plus haute distinc-



Familles des « Hawaïens », soldats nippo-américains appelés également « Nisei », et la municipalité ont rendu hommage aux deux soldats de la 442^e RCT tombés sous le feu de l'ennemi lors de la Libération de Sospel.

(Photos Julien Avinent)

tion. La Municipalité a ainsi rendu hommage à ces « Hawaïens », en référence à l'île

d'origine de la majorité de ces soldats. Le 1^{er} adjoint Jean-Pierre Pégliion et l'adjointe à la culture Isabelle Osché étaient entourés d'une quarantaine de membres des familles des vétérans. Après un apéritif dînatoire organisé par « Sospel en fêtes », tous se sont rendus à l'école pour les discours, le dépôt des gerbes et les hymnes nationaux américains et français. De nombreuses personnalités étaient présentes : M. et M^{me} Orengo et leurs amis en tenues et sur des jeeps de 1942-1943, les présidents des associations des

forts Agaisen et Saint-Roch, les présidents du comité Secours Français, des porte-drapeaux du Mentonnais et de l'ULAC du Mentonnais, ainsi que le conseiller général Jean-Mario Lorenzi représentant Eric Ciotti. L'ambiance aux tables comme dans la cour de l'école a reflété l'amitié franco-américaine qui a alors pris tout son sens à l'occasion de cette cérémonie, 70 ans après la tragédie.

JULIEN AVINENT

⁽¹⁾ Regimental Combat Team
⁽²⁾ Division Française Libre.



Dans la cour de l'école, le dépôt des gerbes des familles des « Hawaïens » au nom de la municipalité et du conseil général.



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Bob: was very saddened to read about the unexpected passing of **S/Sgt Kelley**. Words can't express our sense of loss and sorrow for his family. He was a remarkable human being. He is back with those in his band of brothers who preceded him. He and his family are in our prayers. Thank you for sharing the beautiful write ups.

On a more positive note -- we love to read every word. The new format and font is very readable and elegant. Our compliments -- you have an artistic eye. And God bless **Howard Hensleigh** and **Merle McMorrow**. We love to read their epistles. What memories they have and what great raconteur they are. Thank you on behalf of all of us for saving and sharing the unique stories about the men of the 517th.

Finally, am so pleased to read that **Tom Cross** will receive the French Legion of Honor. Hope they take pictures. Very much enjoyed the pictures that Wayne posted. His Dad was like my Dad's brother, including being the best man at Dad and Mama's wedding in Joigny, France after the war.

Pat Seitz and Alan Greer

Sometimes the little things we take for granted.

Here is a soldier stationed in Iraq, stationed in a big sand box he asked his wife to send him dirt, fertilizer and some grass seeds so he can have the sweet aroma and feel the grass grow beneath his feet. If you notice, he is even cutting the grass with a pair of scissors. Sometimes we are in such a hurry that we don't stop and think about the little things that we take for granted. Upon receiving this, please say a prayer for our soldiers that give (and give up) so unselfishly for us.

The photograph displayed above is genuine and shows Warrant Officer 1 Brook Turner tending a plot of grass with a pair of scissors at a military post north of Baghdad. The picture was taken by Staff Sgt. Mark Grimshaw in mid-July 2004

According to the Salem *Statesman Journal*:

[Turner] asked his wife to send him some grass seed because he missed the green he was accustomed to in Hawaii and before that in Oregon.

Kim Turner was happy to send her husband a little slice of home. She bought a packet of grass seed and a small hoe and mailed them with other goodies in a care box.

Brook prepared a spot behind the single-wide trailer he shares with a few other soldiers, lining the 3-foot-by-7-foot area with large rocks and adding some dirt.





517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

As soon as the seed arrived, he planted it. He knew keeping the seed moist would be a challenge in the 125-degree heat.

His fellow soldiers teased him about his failed project, but he was determined to grow a patch of grass. He talked with some Iraqis civilians authorized to be on post, and arranged to buy some sod. He purchased seven 1-foot-by-3-foot patches.

Turner watered his lawn three times a day. He used a 5-gallon jug he filled in the bathroom, where the camp has running water.

From Snopes.com:

Planting plots of grass are just one of many ways soldiers decorate their tents at other arid U.S. military outposts in the Middle East, including this example of a similar grass plot grown alongside a tent at Al Udeid Air Base in Doha, Qatar.

A former staff sergeant with the United States Air Force wrote to tell us:

The grass patch [next page] is located at the recently declassified Air Force base in Qatar, known as Al Udeid. I lived three months of my life (fall of 2002) two tent rows from that grass. It was the only grass on the whole base, and though I don't know who planted it originally I do know that the soldiers who rotated through that tent each became caretakers of it. They watered it from their water bottles, trimmed the grass with scissors (as seen in the photo) and kept it shaded in the summer with a tarp awning over the front of the tent (many of the tents had such awnings, but this tent had a more elaborate one while I was there) to protect it from the 135+ degree summer sun.



The grass is real, and really is a comment on how we (US soldiers) work to make the best of things when we deploy in defense of our country and your freedom.



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, or just click on the unsubscribe link on the email.
- 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 Miriam Boyle Kelly
19 Oriole Court
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866