



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2228

August 17, 2014

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

Website
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2013 Roster (updated!)
Thunderbolt (Winter 2014)

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MailCall News



1944



2014: Jean-Michel, Eric, and Adrien



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

My heartfelt condolences go out the Frice family. I knew Gene very well, in fact he called me a week after I retired to wish me a happy retirement. We talked on the phone for about a 1/2 hour. It was so good to hear his voice, and to know he cared about people. We talked about his upcoming trip back to France with his family for the 70th anniversary of the combat jump of the 517th. He was very excited about returning to France. We then discussed having a National reunion next year in New Orleans to visit the World War II museum. I then told him I would like the following year in 2016 to have a reunion in Portland, Oregon. I told him the first reunion I attended with my Dad and brother back in 2006 was his reunion in Portland. It was such a wonderful place to visit and we had so much fun. Gene was very excited about the prospect of holding another reunion and said he would alert his daughters. Karen and Robin have been such a big support of the 517th. We are so grateful for you dedication to this organization. Finally, I am deeply sadden by Gene's departure, but know he is in a better place with family planning for eternity. I hope he has some time to talk with my Dad (the Curtis family also grew up in Long Beach, CA) and the other 517th troopers on that side of the veil of life. May God Bless the Frice family. Here are some pictures I took of **Colonel Gene Sir Frice**.



Lory Curtis, son of Bud Curtis, HQ, 1st Bn





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From the bottom of my heart I must say "God bless **Gene Frice**". I had the good fortune of making his acquaintance at the Salt Lake City Reunion. He was tinkering with the video machine there that was needed for a presentation and had it up and going in short order. He was like so many of the 517th guys that I met there, in being helpful with answering questions and making everyone feel welcome. To me he seemed so spry and full of energy. Bless his family also as I'm sure the unexpected nature of the illness also caught them off guard. I'm sure he is back with the boys of F Co. answering roll call.

Love, **Jerry Wofford**, Nephew Of A Buzzard

Thank you for the great pictures and articles on **Gene Frice**. What a man! What a joy, gift and privilege to have known him and his family. We thank the Good Lord for him and all that he did not only in WWII but thereafter. As already said, what a man! We hope the Frice family knows that they are in our thoughts and prayers. We wish there was more that we could do for them at this moment. Although Gene may be having a great time reunited with his Band of Brothers, we will miss him here. All our love.

Sincerely,

Pat Seitz and Alan Greer

Gene's unexpected death on almost the eve of the 70th Anniversary is most poignant. Tonight Alan and I were thinking of those members of the 517th and their families who are presently in France to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the Southern Invasion of France tomorrow at 3 a.m. We remember all the extraordinary members of the 517th who have gone on to their heavenly reward and we salute and cherish those whom we are so blessed to have with us -- Howard, Merle, Darrell, Tom to name just a few. God bless you and keep you close to His heart always.

Pat and Alan

So sorry to hear about the passing of **Colonel Gene Frice**. It was always such a highlight for me to spend time with Gene at reunions, and hear stories about his lifetime of adventure. Gene always made me feel so welcome and a part of the 517th family. Gene was a true American hero from the greatest generation. I'm sure he has gone home to family, friends, fresh powdered slopes and the best waves in heaven. Thoughts and prayers to Gene's family.

Tim Curtis son of Harland "Bud" Curtis

Sorry to hear of Col. Frice's passing. He was a good man who served his Country well in times of war and peace. I join my Father and the Cross family in sending our heart felt condolences to Gene's family.

Wayne Cross



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I was contacted by the movie producers of Saints and Soldiers and was invited to the premier of the new movie Saints and Soldiers the Void. I know you have been posting the movie trailer on mailcall so perhaps many have seen it. I asked for four tickets and **Mike Wells** and our wives attended the premier last night. The movie comes out in theaters this Friday August 15th. Which is ironic in the fact that it is the day we celebrate our 517th troopers making their combat jump into southern France. Although the movie is about a tank unit, it starts out with airborne paratroopers jumping into France, so it set a good tone. The movie is good, and (of course I still think "Airborne Creed" is the best!!!) you will enjoy it. Attached is a picture of Mike and I at the premier wearing our 517th shirts. We had our own little mini reunion last night to celebrate the 517th as many of our folks are in France attending ceremonies commemorating the combat jump.
Airborne All the Way!



Lory Curtis

When I saw the newsletter and watched the video with the young man holding the flag until he collapsed in his father's arms, it brought back an old memory. ([MailCall 2226](#))

Many years ago when I saw the movie Camelot there was a scene that I was reminded of as I watched the video in your newsletter. In the movie King Arthur is getting ready for battle. His knights are now in war against him. He sees that the freedoms and the justice he worked so hard to establish that brought everything to a greater ideal, and many years of peace, might now be destroyed. He knows how important the battle is and what losing it will mean.

At the end of the movie they show a young boy who has basically stowed away to fight on King Arthur's side. King Arthur sees him and brings him out of the place he is hiding in. He ends up asking him why he wants to be involved in the fight, and he says, basically, to ensure that the ideals that they built will not be lost.

King Arthur is so moved that he 'knights him' with his Excalibur. He tells him that his mission is to tell everyone how good it was and not to let them forget, and to run behind the lines to ensure he is safe to tell it. here is the link if you want to see it, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ziTgoseyWoU>

That is what came to mind when I saw this young boy, so proud and determined. With so much around us in these times and with so much at stake, it gave my heart tremendous solace to know that there are still those who will not let what our country has been be forgotten or lost.

He is a very special young man. Best Regards, **Anne Justice**



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Dear Sir/Madam,

Recently I received the IDPF of a soldier who served with the 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment. He was killed in action and buried at Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery in Belgium. Are you interested in the file?

Sincerely,
Max Poorthuis
President

16th Infantry Regiment Historical Society
Kroezehorst 5 | 7531KJ Enschede | The Netherlands

13 October 1948

Cpl Ray L. Boyce, ASN 37 566 639
Plot E, Row 8, Grave 3
Headstone: Cross
Henri-Chapelle U. S. Military Cemetery

Mrs. Alice E. B. Gess
423 East 16th Street
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Dear Mrs. Gess:

This is to inform you that the remains of your loved one have been permanently interred, as recorded above, side by side with comrades who also gave their lives for their country.

Customary military funeral services were conducted over the grave at the time of burial.

After the Department of the Army has completed all final interments, the cemetery will be transferred, as authorized by the Congress, to the care and supervision of the American Battle Monuments Commission. The Commission also will have the responsibility for permanent construction and beautification of the cemetery, including erection of the permanent headstone. The headstone will be inscribed with the name exactly as recorded above, the rank or rating where appropriate, organization, State, and date of death. Any inquiries relative to the type of headstone or the spelling of the name to be inscribed thereon, should be addressed to the American Battle Monuments Commission, the central address of which is Room 713, 1712 "G" Street, N. W., Washington 25, D. C.

While interment and beautification activities are in progress, the cemetery will not be open to visitors. However, upon completion thereof, due notice will be carried by the press.

You may rest assured that this final interment was conducted with fitting dignity and solemnity and that the grave-site will be carefully and conscientiously maintained in perpetuity by the United States Government.

Sincerely yours,

THOMAS B. LARKIN
Major General
The Quartermaster General

Oct 14 11 17 AM '48
O. O. W. O.
U. S. ARMY
HEADQUARTERS
WASHINGTON, D. C.

erf



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

HI WOULD YOU ENROLL ME IN MAILCALL? I WOULD LIKE TO HEAR THE NEWS. I WAS IN A CO. 1ST BAT. UNDER COL. BOYLE

JUST WROTE A LETTER TO THE THUNDERBOLT TO ASK ABOUT MEDALS AWARDED TO OUR UNIT. PERHAPS THOSE ON MAILCALL WOULD HAVE INFORM.--- THE FRENCH CROIX DE GUERRE, THE BELGAIN (BELGUIM) CROIX DE GUERRE, THE PRESIDENTIAL DISTINGUISHED UNIT CITATION. MY CAPTAIN, DON FRASIER, DECEASED, SAID WE HAD THESE AWARDED TO US. DOES ANYONE KNOW HOW TO GET THEM?

GOOD TO READ THE NEWS.

CHET KOCHERSPERGER @ RURUK8@VERIZON.NET

Just want to publicly thank 517th Trooper **Earl Whisenhunt** for his very generous donation to keeping the Thunderbolt alive. Earl stated in his letter to me:

Lory, just wanted to thank you and Claire and all for putting out the Thunderbolt. You all are a great asset to the 517th. I thank all of you very much.

Signed Earl Whisenhunt.

Bob his very generous donation will sure help in keeping the Thunderbolt going. Hope to have a issue out at the end of this month or the first part of September. Just as soon as we can get the stories and pictures of our folks attending the 70th anniversary and celebrations of the 517th in France.

Thanks again Earl! Airborne all the Way!

Lory

Please add me to the Mail Call emails. I am **George Meline**'s daughter, Diane Speelman. My email address is dspeelman@msn.com.

Thank you,

Diane



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

70eme Anniversaire du Debarquement de Provence

Now in progress:

70^{ème} Anniversaire DU DEBARQUEMENT DE PROVENCE		
13 Aout 2014		17 Aout 2014
15h30 : Départ Dagoon Historical March La Motte stadium		16h30 : Défilé Salernes 17h-18h30 : Expo statique place de Salernes
14 Aout 2014		18 Aout 2014
11h00 : Cérémonie au Mitan 17h00 : Cérémonie officielle La Motte 20h00 : Défilé dans La Motte 22h00 : Grand bal de la libération		18h00 : Cérémonie officielle de Varages
15 Aout 2014		19 Aout 2014
10h30 : Cérémonie 13 Lorguais et stèle Thoronet 11h00 : Cérémonie officielle Lorgues 18h00 : Cérémonie officielle Les Arcs		10h00 : Inauguration plaque 45th Div à Barjols 10h30 : Inauguration plaque Robert Jackson à Barjols 11h00 : Cérémonie officielle Barjols 16h00 : Recueillement stèle du Bessillon
16 Aout 2014		20 Aout 2014
9h30 : Cérémonie cimetière américain Draguignan 11h00 : Messe et repas Valbourgès 18h00 : Cérémonie Trans en Dce		18h00 : Cérémonie Sillans la cascade 11h00 : Cérémonie officielle 18h00 : Cérémonie Moissac 22h00 : Grand bal de Régusse



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Merle McMorrow and Joanne Barrett in Sospel



Merle McMorrow, Leo Dean and Allan Johnson at Patricia and Roland's house in Sospel, with the 517th memorial.





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Merle, Patricia, Leo, Roland, and Allan



Merle and Joanne

August 9: On the ground at Dusseldorf International Airport with Allan and Leo.

Leo: Where are we going?

Me: Through passport control.

Leo: Why? I didn't need a passport the last time I was here.

Claire G.



Le retour de Leo Dean, « libérateur » de La Motte

Engagé dans le 517^e Régiment d'infanterie parachutiste, ce vétéran américain assistait hier à la cérémonie mottoise en l'honneur des alliés. De cette journée historique, il n'a rien oublié

À 90 ans, Leo Dean a bon pied, bon œil. À tel point qu'il devait sauter hier en soirée dans le ciel varois. À quelques kilomètres à peine de l'endroit où, il y a 70 ans, il atterrit avec ses frères d'armes du 517^e Régiment d'infanterie parachutiste. Une folle à son âge? « J'ai encore sauté il y a quinze jours. Quand mon docteur me fait des remontrances, je lui réponds que c'est meilleur que les pilules qu'il me donne », rétorque le vétéran américain, un brin espiègle. Cloué au sol par la faute d'un mistral trop violent, Leo Dean s'est donc retrouvé à la cérémonie de la Ferme du Mitan, assis parmi les siens, à écouter les discours des hommes politiques venus leur rendre hommage. À la question « comment vous sentez-vous aujourd'hui? », l'intéressé répond : « Très bien, mais un petit peu triste en même temps. J'ai laissé tellement d'amis ici. »

Ses amis, enterrés pour la plupart au cimetière américain de Draguignan, Leo Dean a pris l'habitude de leur rendre visite. « Cela fait dix ans, depuis le 60^e anniversaire du Débarquement de Provence, que je viens ici chaque année. J'ai besoin de me rapprocher d'eux d'une cer-

Seconde Guerre mondiale sans une égratignure. Un miracle! « Je suis petit », glisse-t-il pour simple explication. Avant de reprendre, plus sérieusement : « J'ai surtout eu de la chance. »

À l'épreuve des balles

À l'évocation des batailles auxquelles il a participé, on n'en doute pas. « Je me souviens de tout, ou presque », assure Leo Dean. Et d'enchaîner : « Avant de sauter sur La Motte, j'avais suivi quinze jours d'entraînement au combat au nord de Rome. Mais vous pouvez vous entraîner autant que vous voulez, quand on vous tire dessus, ça rend nerveux. (...) Neuf jours après La Motte, on libérait Cannes, puis Sospel. » Leo n'en avait pas fini pour autant avec la guerre. « Après Sospel, on a été envoyé dans le nord de la France, à Soissons plus exactement. On a alors combattu les troupes allemandes le long de la frontière belge huit semaines durant. » Et toujours pas de blessure...

La chance, Leo Dean l'a encore connue quand, coup sur coup, l'ennemi a capitulé avant que son régiment ne soit encore envoyé en première ligne. « En avril 1945, mon régiment était pressenti pour être parachuté en Allemagne. Mais cette opération a été annulée en mai. Après, en



Leo Dean ne se considère surtout pas comme un héros. À l'évocation de son parachutage au-dessus de La Motte en août 1944, il déclare simplement : « J'étais jeune ». (Photo Laurent Maïsal)

cifique combattre les soldats japonais. Mais le Japon a finalement capitulé en septembre. » La paix retrouvée, Leo Dean n'a pas déposé les armes immédiatement. « J'ai d'abord fait deux ans de réserve, puis cinq ans dans la Garde natio-

nale. Au total, j'ai passé dix ans de ma vie dans l'armée. C'est largement suffisant. » De ce passage sous les drapeaux, Leo Dean aura gardé le goût des sauts en parachute. « Dans l'armée, on ne sautait pas de très haut. Au-

jourd'hui, je saute à 13 000 pieds d'altitude et j'ai entre 40 et 50 secondes de chute libre avant d'ouvrir mon parachute. C'est génial! » Sa santé est quand même.

PIERRE-LOUIS PAGLI
pplpages@nicematin.fr





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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

Operation Dragoon Anniversary – August 15, 1944

This week was the 70th anniversary of Operation Dragoon. It is a good time of year to remember to pay your annual membership donation (only if you can afford it).
 Suggested donation: \$30

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

Name: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

Make checks payable to: **517 PRCT Association, Inc.**
 c/o Miriam Boyle Kelly
 19 Oriole Court
 Saratoga Springs, NY 12866