



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2232

September 14, 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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www.517prct.org/archives

Darrell C. Egner, 2nd Battalion HQ

There will be a smile on my face, laughter in my heart, and warmth in my soul because **Darrell Egner** was my friend. We will miss you Darrell. I can only imagine the ruckus you and your buddies are causing on the other side.

Tim Curtis

I am so saddened to hear of the passing of **Darrell Egner**. He was a very good friend and I will miss him dearly. Darrell served on our board and as President of the 517th PRCT Association. I can remember seeking guidance and counsel from him many times about 517th issues. He will be deeply missed.

I have attached a few pictures of Darrell and his 517th friends from the most recent mini reunions in Florida. My prayers and condolences go out to the Egner family. May the Lord bless you in your time of grief.

Sincerely,

Lory V. Curtis, son of **Bud Curtis** Hq, 1st Bn



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MailCall News

Sent from my iPad **Homer B. Leonard** age 89 a native Houstonian passed away on August.21,2014. I didn't know him. He was in the 517th prct. Maybe you can find what co. He was in. I always check the obit. To see if I'm in it. Thanks!

Mel Trenary

Homer B. Leonard was with D Company.



Homer B. Leonard age 89, a native Houstonian, & Spicewood, Tx resident passed peacefully on August 21, 2014. . He was preceded in death by his wife, Renate, who was the love of his life for 50 years. He was a '43 graduate of Culver Military Academy Co.C and served in WWII in the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team. He went on to graduate from Rice University.

He was very adventurous in life and left a huge footprint on many people's hearts. Homer is survived by his two sons, Leslie and Larry Leonard, his daughter, Renee Leonard White, four grandchildren, Erin O'Neill Garcia, Matthew O'Neill, Alexander Leonard and Nicholas Leonard, and one great grandchild Claire Garcia.

Memorial services to be held on October 24 at 3pm at Bee Creek United Methodist Church, 3000 Bee Creek Rd., Spicewood, Tx

Condolences may be sent to: www.harrellfuneralhomes.com.

Pvt. Homer B. Leonard was with D Company.

Dear Bob,

Enclosed is the report of a trip **Phil DiStanislao** and **Charlie Keen**, A and B Companies, took in 1985.

It should bring back memories for **Maria Gaspar**, **Arnold** and **Irma Tragnion**.

It probably will awaken many forgotten memories for members of the above two companies.

Merle McMorrow

This is a long (67 pages) but wonderful account of Phil and Charlie's 1985. Along the way they visited many towns and places in Belgium, and met lots of Belgian friends. Phil wrote in great detail, and included many of his war-time experiences mixed in from the places he visited. -- BB

[Paths of December by Dr. Phillip T. DiStanislao \(1985\)](#)



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Can I confirm I have been added to the mail call list?

Kind Regards

Darren Bond (from the UK)

ATTACK!!

Hello Darren,

I just added you to the MailCall list. We send out the 517th MailCalls weekly. You can unsubscribe yourself at any time.

Can I ask what is your connection to the 517th?

Bob Barrett

Great! Many thanks.. I am a living historian, and researcher from the UK. Have had an interest in the 517th and Op Dragoon for many years. This year in August was the 5th year in a row I have been in Provence around Le Motte to celebrate and remember Op Dragoon. Was again honoured to meet **Leo Dean, Allan Johnson, Joe Bail** and **Merle McMorrow**.

In October myself and my group in honour of **Gene Frice** who passed in Aug and his good friend **Gary Davis**, who I am in regular contact with his Granddaughter Megan. We plan to do a display here in the UK to remember the fight for hill 1098 and F Company.

If it's of interest to yourself and your readers we would love to be able to write up a report and or send some pictures over to you for the website or the mail call.

For my research I am very keen to correspond with members of 517th if you think this is possible?

Kind regards

Darren

I have only been to Provence once in 2009 with my dad, Ben Barrett, the year before he died. I hope to get back there again for the celebrations. Maybe next year.

Yes, please send me a report about the F Company remembrance if you can.

If you want to correspond with anyone in the 517th, you are more than welcome. One way to ask questions would be to send me an email and I can post it in the weekly MailCall if you like.

Thanks,
Bob Barrett



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It has been 2 weeks now - just want to share some highlights/thoughts about the 70th anniversary trip to Provence

- **Patou and Roland** - their hospitality and devotion during our stay in Sospel was unbelievable!! Yummy meals (for all 17 of us -!!) nite after nite, day after day; very touching service at their memorial; chauffeur services; tour of Col de Bras and Hill 1098; playing water polo against and losing to Patou's Team "The Destroyers"; sipping Rose on their veranda under a beautiful Sospel full moon - an awesome, delightful stay at "Chateau Orengo" as well as at Jean-Marie and Michele's quaint Inn.
- Leo re-liberating Chateau Sainte Rosaline and it's vineyards for the umpteenth time
- **Merle McMorrow** auditioning for the Tonite Show including sharing "fitness" tips; Merle also captivating Elisabeth and the young lady Biker at Col Des Bras
- The continuing devotion and worship of the French re-enactors, townspeople, and families shown to our guys
- Very, very touching ceremonies at The Rhone Cemetery at Drauginan including our own private one - thanks to our President, Alan for "arranging" for this and Claire for coordinating the details with Alison.
- **Eric and Jean-Michel** - merci beaucoup for all the hard work, friendship, and support in the Var Region
- Alan, Leo, Joe and Merle - French media celebrities all
- Outdoor dining at La Motte (great dancing!), Les Arcs (courtesy of **Wade Gilbert** - thanks for the pizza and beers Wade!), and Drauginan - Helen - save me another dance!
- Assisting in folding one of the lowered flags at the Rhone Cemetery and sharing a very emotional moment upon Alison's handing the flag to **Dick Field** of the 551st
- On my last day in Nice - giving my last two 517th pins to a shopkeeper, (who started to weep) and a young lady singing Edith Piaf and other French 1940's era songs (she was damn good) in Garibaldi Plaza

Airborne!

Tom Copsy





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http://517prct.org/photos/3rd_battalion_I_Co/i_co_mackall.htm

Regarding the I company photo, Marvin Moles is standing 8th from the left, first row.

Captain Fastia is 14th from the left, 1st row.

Marvin Moles identified **Woodrow McQuaid** as being the second man from the left, 1st row. I contacted some of Woodrow's distant relatives and asked them if they saw Woodrow anywhere on this photo, and they also concluded he was 2nd from left. This is therefore the photo of Woodrow I used in my book.

Jean-Loup Gassend

I remember someone saying that many these photos were taken as panoramas, with the camera slowly panning from one side to the other while everyone tried to stay still. That allowed the flag-bearer, once the camera was past him, to run around behind the cameraman and set up on the other side. Apparently there was only one flag? I may be mistaken, but the trooper holding the flag on the left does appear to be a twin of the flag-bearer on the right. – BB

http://517prct.org/photos/3rd_battalion_I_Co/i_co_mackall.htm

Found on the internet:

Stephens County Sun (Breckenridge, Tex.), Vol. 11, No. 5, Ed. 1 Thursday, October 3, 1940





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This is a copy of the article he [Loïc 'Jack' Jankowiak] wrote about the 517th. It is in French. I am trying to get a translation. But it is 12 pages about the 517th!

Chris Walters, grandson of Cpl. Virgil Dunlevy

Read the French version here:
http://www.517prct.org/mailcall/2232/MG325-517_PIR.pdf

Does anyone have the skill and time to translate this into English for us hackers? - BB

In last week's MailCall, there was some discussion about the number of weapons that Dunlevy was carrying in the magazine cover photo, including the M3 "grease gun" over chest. I found this website which describes some of the weapons used in WW2 by Rangers and paratroopers:
<http://www.2ndrangerbattalion.org/weaponry.html>

M3A1 SUBMACHINE GUN

The M3 "Grease Gun" (more formally United States Submachine Gun, Cal. .45, M3/M3A1) was a submachine gun developed by the United States during World War II as a cheap substitute for the Thompson. It was nicknamed the Grease Gun because of its resemblance to an automotive grease gun, and because it contained an oil reservoir in the grip.



When World War II began, the Thompson submachine gun was the standard U.S. submachine gun. However, the Thompson was comparatively expensive in terms of machining and time to manufacture. The .45 caliber M3 was adopted in 1942, designed specifically for simplified production using pressed and stamped metal parts. The gun was made by welding two pressed-metal shells together to form the exterior of the weapon. Far easier to manufacture than the Thompson, the M3 incorporated several updated design features, including a barrel that detached without tools, and a bolt that rode on two wire guide springs. A low cyclic rate of fire and straight-line recoil thrust made it easier to control than many other submachine guns, especially during automatic fire, though the spindly wire-frame stock fit few users and was rather too short.

The M3 was designed to be a disposable firearm once damaged or disabled, and no spare parts were provided to Army ordnance commands. This decision proved to be a minor catastrophe after inevitable supply bottlenecks caused reserve stocks of the M3 to run out in certain commands, forcing ordnance technicians to make emergency repairs and fabricate pawl springs in order to provide frontline units with operating weapons.

The M3 used the blowback method of operation. It could be fired only in fully-automatic mode, but experienced soldiers could usually fire single shots with it due to its very low rate of fire (400–450 rounds per minute).

Not surprising, this website does not have anything listed about the "M-1918 knuckle knife strapped to his right leg". With some quick Wikipedia research, I'm thinking that Dunlevy's knife is actually a Mark 1 "knuckleduster" trench knife: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trench_knife



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Also found this in the Cumberland Evening News, March 23 , 1943:

This has to be a typo. The 517th didn't really have a band did it? -- BB

With the Men in Armed Services

Sgt. John P. Vandegrift, son of Mr. and Mrs. John I. Vandegrift, The Dingle, and the entire personnel of the 228th Field Artillery Band. Warrant Officer Leon G. Dandoy, Jr., director, Fort Bragg, N. C., have been transferred to the 517th Parachute Infantry Band, 17th Airborne Division, Camp MacKall, Hoffman, N. C. The 228th F. A. Band was formerly the 60 piece Army War Show Band that toured the United States last year and was one of the outstanding attractions of the show.

I noticed that the 517th Treasurer lives in Saratoga Springs NY. So does my Aunt Charlotte who is **Albert M. Robinson's** sister. it is, indeed, a small world.

Kind Regards,

Cindy Karst

Submitted by

Name: **Bekki Filipczak**

From: Northfield, NJ

E-mail: bekkipilipczak@gmail.com

Comments:

Thanks in part to this website I was finally able to track down the family of Allen Douglas; the man who saved his life on September 9, 1944. My grandfather, Henry Filipczak, is now 90 and this was a great blessing for all of us.

Added: September 8, 2014



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Hi Steve [Gomez],

This is a real longshot, but I have to ask. By chance, I ran across an old newspaper article that mentions a **Sgt. Joe Sanford** of Texas, who fought in the Army Airborne. It doesn't say which unit. Then I found in an old MailCall that you mentioned years ago that your father married the sister of a Sgt. Joe Sanford of the 460th.

This clipping (attached) couldn't be about the same Joe Sanford could it?

Bob Barrett

Port Arthur TX News, June 9, 1946

THE PORT ARTHUR NEWS

Belgian Bride at Orange Has Wedding Gown Made From Husband's Parachute

By VERA PRICE BROWNING
News Orange Correspondent

ORANGE, June 8.—The latest Orange acquisition is a 19-year-old bit of brunet loveliness from Belgium, who arrived this week to reign over an apartment at 318 Knox avenue and try "very hard to become an American just like Joe."

"Joe" is Ex-Sgt. Joseph Sanford, son of Mr. and Mrs. James F. Sanford of 26 Eighth street, who collected a wife along with a Purple Heart and two Oak Leaf clusters during his overseas service with an Army Airborne division. She is Anna Elsen Sanford, daughter of the late Eduard Elsen, member of the Belgian Underground, and Mrs. Elsen of Antwerp, Belgium.

She arrived at New York aboard the Santa Paula, and was chosen from several hundred war brides "the prettiest girl aboard ship."

Gown From Parachute

One of the limited number of items Anna was able to bring across is an exquisite wedding gown she fashioned from Joe's parachute and in which she was married to him on Dec. 18, 1945, at Antwerp. They were married first by a Belgian official after they had hurdled much governmental and U. S. Army red tape and later in a cathedral of the Protestant churches of the U. S. armed forces.

The couple became acquainted in a little dress shop in Brussels, Belgium, where Anna was employed and where Joe had gone to get a rip sewn up in his blouse. Began a romance which survived the horrors of the Battle of the Bulge and thrived through a long period when Anna thought the boy dead while he lay in an English hospital fighting for his life after receiving his fifth wound of the war.

After Joe was sent back to the States, Anna completed her course in English, self-taught from a French-English dictionary, and also coached her mother and brother to learn the language so that she could practice conversation. In the meantime, Joe rented and furnished their apartment in Orange.

Anna likes America "very much" and is overjoyed at conveniences at the disposal of the American housewife. True to the tradition of Belgian women, this pretty five-foot, two-inch, 100-pound bride is expert at cooking and sewing.

Anna was glad to learn that she does not have to scrub floors down on her hands and knees with a brush as they do it in Belgium.

When asked if soap is still rationed in her country, she answered that it is and that their linens and all white clothing are spread out on the grass for bleaching in the sun.

British Bomb Killed Sister

The greatest tragedy in Anna's life occurred when her 12-year-old sister was killed in April, 1945, along with 750 other children and around 2000 adults of occupied Antwerp. They were bombed by the British who were attempting to hit a German munition factory. Anna does not feel kindly toward the British.

She is confident that her marriage will be a success and says she will devote her full time "to making Joe happy." When asked what she thought of America's going in for small families, she produced a Belgian booklet, which is given all newly-married couples and which contains columns for registering 14 offsprings.

"Some couples I know had to go back for another book," she stated in that delightfully accented English of hers, "but I think two or maybe four children will do."





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Bob,

Your long shot has paid off, it is the same **Joe Sanford** of B Battery.

His marriage to Anna was very short lived however. They divorced soon after her arrival in Texas. Joe and my dad were best buddies from Camp Toccoa thru the war till they parted ways during the Bulge. Attached are some notes that Joe wrote down in the 1980's. I have no idea how he got separated from the 460th and wound up with the 101st near Bastogne, he may have been wounded and left with them.

The irony is that Joe carried a photo of my dad's baby sister with him and insisted that he was going to marry her when the war was over while dad let him know he wasn't going to allow it. They did go on a date after he divorced Anna but nothing developed. Dad re-enlisted in 1948 in the 82nd Airborne artillery and after his hitch was over married Joe's sister Ann (my mom) in 1953. Joe was best man and during the ceremony whispered to my dad that he wasn't going to allow him to marry *his* sister. They both had a good laugh during what would have been a solemn moment. Attachment is from the same newspaper "The Port Arthur News".

Leah and I returned to Southern France last month to observe the 70th anniversary of Dragoon but our jump on Le Muy got weathered out. As a consolation I did get to fire the 75 Pack Howitzer at the Valbournes Estate!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=99IWD12MqLM>

Also **Merle McMorrow** and **Joe Bale** pulling the lanyard together...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7zAu2iu8bx4>

Thanks for the email Bob and the excellent job on the Mail Call!

Airborne!

Steve

Steve Gomez is the son of **Benito Gomez**, 460th PFAB, B Battery





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PAGE NO. 1

JOSEPH CHENEY SANFORD #460-22-3416
S/Sgt BATTERY 460th PRCT. FABN 517th PRCT

PREPARED BY
DATE

ACTIVE RESERVE

1 BORN IN GREENVILLE, TX. AUG. 17, 1923 GRADUATED WOODROW
 2 WILSON HI. DALLAS JAN 1942. WAS YOUNGEST BOILERMAKER
 3 FOREMAN IN ORANGE TX SHIPYARD. 1942. VOLUNTEERED FOR PARA-
 4 TROOPERS APRIL 16, 1943. TO COP, GA, CAMP McKAWNE, Ft. BENNING GA
 5 GOT WINGS & BOOTS SEPT. 18, 1943. WAS CHOSEN FOR PRCT F.P. AND
 6 PICKED FOR GUNNER 2ND SGT. B BATTERY. THE KEY REGISTERING
 7 SECTION FOR BN, BECAUSE OF NO MISTAKES ON SITE COMP-
 8 VATION. WAS KNOWN A "ZERO MILS" WHEN ASK
 9 FOR SIGHT CHECK "BY FIRE DIRECTION. BECAME CHIEF OF
 10 SECTION SGT. TO TENNESSEE MANUVETS WITH THE
 11 19TH AIR DIV. PULLED OUT 5 MAY 1944 TO JOIN THE
 12 517th PRCT AND TO ITALY. COMBAT THERE.
 13 JUMPED SOUTHERN FRANCE 15 AUG 1944 AS
 14 OPERATION DRAGON - TO NORTHERN FRANCE
 15 BELGIUM, GERMANY. IN BATTLE OF BULGE FOUGHT
 16 AS RIFLEMAN AT A S NAFN ROAD BLOCK ON
 17 SOUTH SIDE OF BASTOGNE (I WAS A CAPTAIN IN ^{INFANTRY}
 18 JUNIOR RESERVED OFFICER TRAINING CORPS DALLAS, TEX. HI SCHOOL)
 19 TWENTY FOUR KILLED BY GERMAN ARMOUR - SIX OF US
 20 WOUNDED WAS RESCUED BY ANNA FRANCESCA LSON AND ^{5TH US}
 21 BACK TO HOSPITAL IN AMERICAN LINES ^{WENT ON TO ENGLAND.}
 22 UNFIT FOR COMBAT, RETURNED TO CONTINENT & MARRIED HER
 23 STAYED ANOTHER YEAR IN GERMAN OCCUPATION IN
 24 FRANKFURT, MULTIPLE WOUNDS, TWO PURPLE HEARTS
 25 FIVE BATTLE STARS, INVASION STAR, BRONZE STAR
 26 PRCT WINGS & CBI RETURNED USA 1946
 27 GOT DIVORCE FROM ANNA. - SHE MARRIED
 28 THREE DAYS LATER. I MARRIED



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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13, 1953

Ann Sanford Becomes Bride of Benito V. Gomez in Ceremony Taking Place in Orange Church

Ann Sanford, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James F. Sanford of Orange, married Benito V. Gomez in a ceremony solemnized in the First Methodist church of Orange. The bridegroom is the son of Mrs. Mattie Gomez of 509 Thomas boulevard and Ben Gomez of 123 10th street.

The Rev. Herman T. Morgan read the nuptials before an altar flanked with tall baskets of white mums and gladioli entwined with fern. Candelabra holding white tapers were on either side of the baskets. Dorothy Compton sang the bridal solos and was accompanied by Mrs. Jean Watts at the organ.

Father Gives Bride

Given in marriage by her father, the bride was gowned in a creation of pale pink Chantilly lace and net over bridal satin. The sculptured bodice was styled with short sleeves and a sweetheart neckline. Her full length Chantilly lace mitts ended in points at the wrists. The bouffant skirt was fashioned of rows of tiny ruffles from the waistline to the floorskimming hem and was covered with a tunic effect of petal leaves made of Chantilly lace. Her fingertip veil of illusion was attached to a tiara encrusted with rhinestones and seed pearls. She carried a cascade of pink carnations centered with an orchid.

Mrs. Joseph C. Sanford of Aiken,

S. C., was matron of honor with Mrs. James R. Sanford of San Juan, Fae Jon Cheney of Houston and Mrs. Walter Resch, Jr., of Nederland as bridesmaids. They were all attired in frocks of different shades of blue featuring ruffled skirts and fitted bodices. They wore tiny pill box hats and shoulder capes of the same shade as the gowns. Each carried a tiny muff from which cascaded pink roses and velvet ribbons. Judith Girouard and Gay Bergeron, flower girls, were dressed alike in pale blue net dresses with ruffled capes.

Bridegroom's Attendants

Joseph C. Sanford of Aiken, S. C., was best man. Groomsmen were James R. Sanford of San Juan, Tony A Crutchfield of Ellington Field and Walter Resch, Jr., of Nederland. Carl L. Whitfield of Houston, Charles Spraddling of Orange and E. R. Singletary of Silsbee were ushers. Marvin and Sandra Girouard lit the candles preceding the ceremony. Little Thomas Gothia was ringbearer.

A reception was held in the Women's club building immediately after the rites. The bride's table

Little C. J. Gallo is the nine-month-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Carlo Gallo of New Orleans. The lad's grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. Walter Dwyer of 921 15th Street and Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Gallo of New Orleans.



was laid with an embroidered cut work linen cloth centered with an arrangement of pink mums and roses. Mrs. C. T. Henderson of Orange served the cake and Mrs. Dorothy Dalche of Dallas presided at the punchbowl. Mrs. Louis Burchard of Houston was in charge of the guest book. Assisting in serving was Mrs. Wilton Girouard of Groves.

Wedding Trip

The young couple left for a wedding trip during the evening. On their return they will make their home at 4009 Third street in Port Arthur. The bride chose a grey wool suit with black accessories for traveling.

The number of trailer parks in the United States is increasing at the rate of about 1,000 a year.

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Hello Bob, **Ray Estrella** here. Please add me to the 517 email list.

My connection to the 517 is as follows: 1. My Father-in-Law was **Bert Duran** - A Co -517 2. My former CO in 12th Special Forces was the late **Col Gene Frice** , a good friend, mentor, and confidant. May he rest in peace ! 3. I was the founding President of Chapter 78 - US Army Special Forces Association, which we named after a 517 member, **Lt Col Frank J. Dallas**.

Thank you,

J.R."Ray" Estrella



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