



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2241

November 16, 2014

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

Website

www.517prct.org

Send MailCall news to

MailCall@517prct.org

MailCall Archives

www.517prct.org/archives

2013 Roster (updated!)

www.517prct.org/roster.pdf

Thunderbolt (Winter 2014)

www.517prct.org/archives

MailCall News

Dear Nancy, I am forwarding this MailCall because of its reference to the celebration of the liberation of Manhay, Belgium, which occurred in the early morning hours of December 27, 1944, the early days of the Battle of the Bulge. The celebration starts substantially earlier than that date. I do not know how long you plan to stay in Europe or the transportation problems of getting there from Paris. But, you would be well received as a representative of the 3rd Bn. 517 if it is possible for you to make it.

Manhay was liberated (for the last time) by the 3rd Bn. of which I was the S-2 Intelligence Officer. We did it without G Co. which was guarding **Lt. General Ridgway's** 18th Airborne Corps Command Post. By daylight of the 27th we had taken the town from fanatic SS armored troops who had previously turned back attacks from 2 US regiments. The town was virtually destroyed and only one civilian remained, an old lady who refused to evacuate. We held the town until January 1, 1945, against several counter attacks by the SS.

The 3rd Bn. did not receive a citation for this attack nor as far as I know recognition from Ridgway who ordered us to take and hold it at all costs. We did this in spite of the SS counter attacks, losing most of **Lt. Stott's** I Company platoon to "friendly artillery fire", including Stott, and being bombed by our own Army Air Corps.

Your attending I know is a long shot, but it would be worthwhile if you can make it.

Love, Dad (**Howard Hensleigh**)





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From <https://www.facebook.com/FirstAirborneTaskForceTheForgottenFront> on Veterans Day.

70 years ago, on November 11, 1944, Armistice Day of the world war one, several companies of the 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment are assigned to participate in a parade on the Place Massena in Nice. **General Robert Frederick** was also be there as a spectator



1st Lt. James Birder's I Company

Bob -- you certainly know how to treat us to an excellent Mail Call! What a thrill it was to see this last one with pictures of **Tom Cross'** Legion of Honor award ceremony and the picture of **Howard and Claire** (Howard -- how do you get more handsome with each passing day!)

Pat Seitz and Alan Greer



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Dear Bob, Noticed **Claire Giblin's** piece at the end of the newsletter about **Howard Hensleigh**. He mentioned 'Trois Ponts'. That was where the bunker was that I first wrote you about. Any possibility he might know about the von Hainstein bunker? I have a lot of data, but hearing it firsthand and their surrender would be awesome.

Thanks,

Anne Justice

Hi Anne,

I'm sure that Howard will read your note, but I am also pretty sure that the von Hainstein bunker was near Trois Ponts in France (<http://www.citizenside.com/fr/photos/grand-angle/1944-08-28/65553/liberation-de-marseille-lhistoire-du-bunker-oublie.html#f=0/533202>), while the 517th action was in Trois Ponts Belgium during the Battle of the Bulge. Two different places.

Bob B.

Bob, my confusion was that I didn't know there was also a 'trois ponts' in Belgium. I know the two words are French and there is a French part of Belgium.

I do know for sure after all of my research that the Von Hainstein bunker was in Marseille, France in the Trois Ponts district.

I just wasn't aware he was talking about Belgium, that clears it up.

Thanks, Anne

And the 517th did land in France about halfway between Marseilles and Nice during Operation Dragoon, so I understand the confusion.

Bob B.

Bob, as always thanks for that extra insight, take care, and a big thank you to all of those wonderful guys of the 517th. I was telling a neighbor about some of the stories. He's a guy in his 60's or so. He said his father had known some guys from the 517th, but couldn't give me details. Maybe he will look around one day and find something that he stashed away, like so many of us.

Happy Veterans day to our 'fighting' men. Without them, there would be no freedom. I send my love.

Anne

P.s. Almost finished with the book. Thanks to you for your help along the way and those that helped me with their input. What a nice family of friends.



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Dear Bob, You are correct about the Trois Ponts. I led a platoon patrol into was in the bulge turnaround in Belgium. It was not a usual 3rd Bn. patrol. I think the order for it came from the 82nd to which we were attached, because we ran into **Jim Gavin** on the way out of town. As Claire mentioned, there was a huge sign on the way into town stating that the town was off limits for Allied troops and laying out the heavy fines for any soldier caught violating the order.

It was probably a probe patrol to see what if anything the Germans were doing in the town. They gave me a platoon from one of the rifle companies to go in and find out. The platoon sergeant was in charge of the platoon and none of my S-2 men accompanied us. Since I had only a platoon, I considered it an intelligence gathering patrol, rather than a combat patrol. As we came into the town, we heard the motors of their transports and soon saw them leave. Not a shot was fired. We checked and found none were left behind. I don't think any civilians were there either. We had the town to ourselves for the night. After reporting to 3rd Bn. HQ, I had the platoon sergeant post guard and told him to keep track of his men so we could assemble fast if we had visitors. The houses were nice and nicely furnished. I told the sergeant where I would be and hit the sack between clean sheets and warm comforters, a rare occasion in the Bulge since **Hooper** had borrowed and abandoned my bedroll early in the Bulge.

As we were on our way out of town up a steep hill **Major Gen. Jim Gavin** and a lone rifleman approached us cross country. He spoke with the platoon sergeant and apparently was satisfied we had completed our mission and that Trois Ponts was free of the enemy.

In looking back on it, we were fortunate with perfect timing to accomplish our mission without casualties.

Highest airborne regards,

Howard H.

I wish to thank every veteran from WWII for all of their sacrifices made to make our world a better place. I truly honor and respect every veteran of every war in which our county fought.

Margo Grbinich-Hunt

Daughter of **Frank Grbinich**, A Company, 517th

I think the map drawn was from a book my dad **Dick Spencer III** put together for one of the reunions of the 517th.

BJ McCauley





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From **Gilles G**:

Liberation of Paris then and now

Samples:

PLACE ST MICHEL. La barricade de la rue de la Huchette devant la librairie **Gibert Jeune** d'aujourd'hui.



PLACE DE LA CONCORDE. 26 août 1944. Alors que le défilé de la victoire s'achève sur les Champs-Élysées, quelques coups de feu claquent, venant des toits. La foule s'abrite comme elle peut d'un ennemi invisible.



See more at: <http://golem13.fr/70-ans-liberation-de-paris/>



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From: Leslie Fenton
Sent: Nov 11, 2014 8:17 AM
To: "E HENSLEIGH, Attorney at Law Howard"
Subject: Happy Veterans Day

Good Morning, Happy & Healthy Veterans Day; thank you so much for your continuing service. Also happy belated birthday. I added pictures of a beautiful Sunset on the barn and Dad on his gun cabinet & library. Battling Buzzards; BAR Manual & Weather Radio all still working.
Best
Les

*Note: **Frank E. Fenton** was a leader in the heavy machine gun/bazooka platoon of Headquarters Co., 3rd Battalion, 517th*

Dear Les,

Thanks for the Veterans Day message and the pictures of your father's accomplishments and memorabilia.

In the days of my youth, it was Armistice Day in honor of the end of WWI when the Germans signed the Armistice in a railcar at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month.

When Hitler had defeated France in WWII, he made them sign a surrender agreement in the same railcar. The cowardly SOB wasn't around to sign anything when his big gamble to rule the world ended in defeat. Fortunately we treated the German people much better this time around and they have been friends ever since, contributing to the world economy and peace.

Time to get off the soap box.

Highest regards to you and your family,

Howard Hensleigh

Could you send me info on how to order the coins?
Tom Rea

The 517th challenge coins are still available. The cost for the coins is \$10, plus \$2.32 for shipping for each coin, Send your request and a check to our Treasurer:

517 PRCT Association, Inc.
c/o Miriam Boyle Kelly
19 Oriole Court
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866





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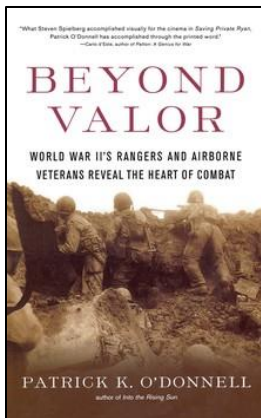
In response to the email of **Mimsey Boyle** re: "Doc" and Nancy Lecklider

I just spoke on the telephone to Nancy telling her about your email and she wants you to know that they are "Kickin 'n doing well." She would love to hear from you and the phone number is 541-330-1853 - email is leckone@bendcable.com Their home is in Bend, Oregon

The "Thunderbolt" continues to be my favorite and you all are doing a fantastic job in reporting all the news to us.

Thank you,

Lee Hekkala



Many of you will remember **Patrick O'Donnell**. He interviewed many members of the 517th for his first book in 2002, *Beyond Valor*. In 2007, he was our keynote speaker at the 517th reunion in Washington DC (until he was interrupted by the arrival of Vice President Dick Cheney). *Beyond Valor* contains first-hand accounts of many WW2 battles, and includes stories from **Bill Boyle** and **Dick Seitz**. Some of those interviews are captured on Patrick's website "*The Drop Zone*", which he created then evolved into the *Beyond Valor* book.



See:

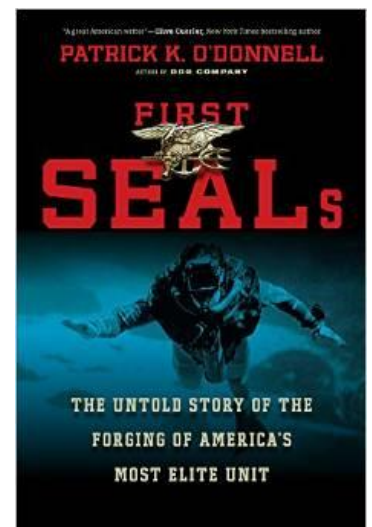
<http://www.thedropzone.org/europe/Bulge/bulgedefault.html>

Patrick has since written many other award-winning books about soldiers and wars in WW2, Korea, Vietnam and Afghanistan. He actually joined the marines in Afghanistan out on the front lines in Fallujah. <http://www.patrickodonnell.com/>

Patrick recently released his newest book out about the creation of the Navy SEALs.

First SEALs: The Untold Story of the Forging of America's Most Elite Unit Hardcover – October 28, 2014 by **Patrick K. O'Donnell**

Beginning in the summer of 1942, an extraordinary group of men—among them a dentist, a Hollywood movie star, an archaeologist, California surfers, and even former enemies of the Allies—united to form an exceptional unit that would forge the capabilities of the Navy's Sea, Air, and Land (SEAL) Teams. Known as the Maritime Unit, it comprised America's first swimmer-commandos, an elite breed of warrior-spies who were decades ahead of their time when they created the tactics, technology, and philosophy that inspire today's Navy SEALs.





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1st Lt. Michael Fisher, B Company

Submitted by

Name: **Gene Basara II**
From: Bethlehem, PA
E-mail:
GenenLaura@msn.com

Comments:

Sadly, **1st LT Michael Fisher**, Company B, 1st Bat., HH&C, 517th PIR passed away just after midnight on 13 November 2014. He was on the Army's championship pistol team and held a record for rifle at Fort Benning for many years. He is and will be greatly missed by his family and friends. He was a fighter until the end. He was a veteran of Pearl Harbor, The Bulge and Korea.

Added: November 14,
2014

Lt. Michael Fisher was the Jumpmaster in for Plane #17 during Operation Dragoon.

Thank you for the notice, Gene. I am sorry to hear that another great man has passed. I will share the news with the 517th family. -- BB

Hi Bob,

I always thought of Mike as my "adopted" grandfather. He was living history to me. He always told me the most amazing stories. I believe that Gerald Astor had called him to interview him for the book but Mike declined. He was done with war.

He gave me his Elgin watch, his P38 can opener which he carried since Pearl Harbor, his original escape kit with maps and his original set of orders marked "Top Secret" for when the 517th did their combat jump. He was supposed to destroy them but never got the chance. He kept them all these years.

You might want to send a few kind words to his family. His daughter Donna's email address is dmthurs@gmail.com but it is up to you. He will be cremated. Next Saturday, 22 November 2014 will be a mass with an honor guard, flag folding, taps and a gun salute. The church is in Rutland, Vermont.

Regards,

Gene



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More MailCall News



This was posted by my friend on Facebook...it is **Jack "Rusty" Junior Larson**, her father in law. I might be mistaken, but I believe he was in D Company.

[Larson is listed with HQ/1 in the Christmas 1944 roster. – BB]

Didn't know if this was the 517th site or not, but thought I would send along to you in any case.

Lyn Vickers (spouse, **David Vickers**, G Company)

THE WIDDAH LYN, THE GOOD DR RUTH, the delightful ABBE VON DACHSHUND, & the tempermental, tho elderly, MISS DAISY the CHIHUAHUA

Here is a picture of PFC Larson on D-Day from *First Airborne Task Force*:

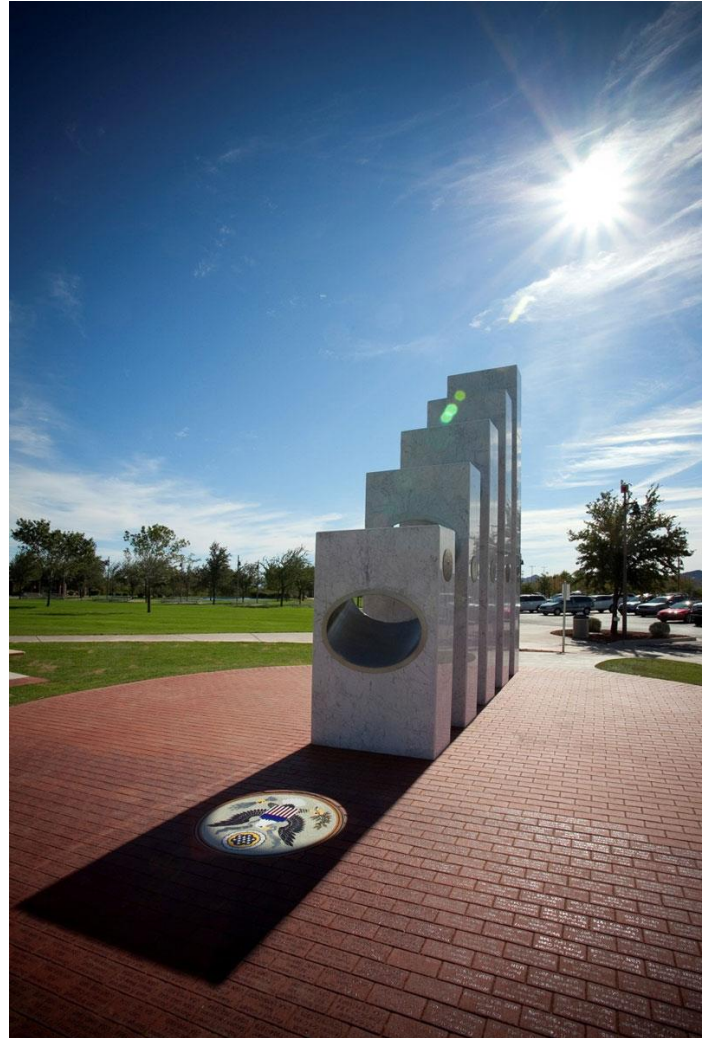


August 15, 1944, early afternoon.
Members of Mortar Platoon, Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, at D-Day objective.
Left to right: "Slim" Ford, PFC Jack J. Larson, Thomas Hunter, Merle Connors



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Once a Year at 11:11 am the Sun Shines Perfectly on this Memorial



At precisely 11:11 a.m. each Veterans Day (Nov. 11), the sun's rays pass through the ellipses of the five Armed Services pillars to form a perfect solar spotlight over a mosaic of The Great Seal of the United States.

The Anthem Veterans Memorial, located in Anthem, Arizona, is a monument dedicated to honoring the service and sacrifice of the United States armed forces. The pillar provides a place of honor and reflection for veterans, their family and friends, and those who want to show their respects to those service men and women who have and continue to courageously serve the United States.

The memorial was designed by Anthem resident Renee Palmer-Jones. The five marble pillars represent the five branches of the United States military. They are staggered in size (from 17 ft to 6 ft) and ordered in accordance with the Department of Defense prescribed precedence, ranging from the United States Army, the United States Marine Corps, the United States Navy, the United States Air Force and the United States Coast Guard.

<http://twistedifter.com/2014/11/anthem-arizona-veterans-memorial/>



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Name Those Troopers

Here are a couple more pictures from *First Airborne Task Force*. Who can name these troopers?





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Jim and I went to sunny California last week, where we got to see past president **Howard Hensleigh** not once but twice - on the way out of the airport and on the way back to it. He looks great, as you can see from the pictures. I was off on his age, though - I'd thought he is now 95, but he is just a toddler at 94!

Kissimmee is only two months away! make your flight reservations or your driving plans now! Your friends are waiting for you on Martin Luther King weekend!

Airborne! All the way!

Claire Giblin



RE: Father was a member- **Burton Lindahl jr.**

I have pictures of training and a couple overseas. If interested I could forward. I always have been confused. I wore his 101st uniform as kid many times. I never saw any other unit patches. I believe he was with the 82nd as well if possible. He talked of a couple catastrophic jumps were the unit was divided and each time the other half was wiped out. Maybe reassigned? If confirmed as unit member can he be added to the roll.

Paul J. Lindahl
952-292-0443
Minneapolis, MN



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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