



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



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

## MailCall No. 2253

January 11, 2015

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

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

[www.517prct.org](http://www.517prct.org)  
[MailCall@517prct.org](mailto:MailCall@517prct.org)  
[www.517prct.org/archives](http://www.517prct.org/archives)  
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[www.517prct.org/archives](http://www.517prct.org/archives)

## MailCall News



I wish for you, dreams which never end,  
and the furious desire to achieve some of them.  
I wish for you to love what must be loved  
and forget what must be forgotten.  
I wish for you birdsong upon awakening  
and the laughter of children.  
I wish you silences.  
I wish for you to resist to the downtroddeness,  
to the indifference,  
the negative virtues of our times.  
Above all I wish for you, is to be you.

*Je vous souhaite  
I wish for you  
(Jacques BREL)*

Je vous souhaite des rêves à n'en plus finir,  
Et l'envie furieuse d'en réaliser quelques-uns,  
Je vous souhaite d'aimer ce qu'il faut aimer,  
Je vous souhaite d'oublier ce qu'il faut oublier,  
Je vous souhaite des chants d'oiseaux au réveil,  
Je vous souhaite des rires d'enfants,  
Je vous souhaite des silences,  
Je vous souhaite de résister à l'enlissement,  
À l'indifférence,  
aux vertus négatives de notre époque.  
Je vous souhaite surtout d'être vous.

Photo : © Dominique Guillaume

We wish to  
all our US  
friends a  
wonderful  
year and  
we hope to  
meet you  
again in  
June in  
New  
Orleans !!

**Patricia et  
Roland  
Orengo**





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

### Remembering Howard Hensleigh

Dear Bob, what a loss to our world, losing **Howard Hensleigh**. You may recall when I first made contact with him through you it was to help in some details in the France invasion. I still have those emails where he helped me in my quest. Such an eloquent man!

I have a lot of people to thank for the research of my book that I am writing, and Howard's part is high on that list. I will honor him through acknowledgment along with so many others like you, Bob. One thing, we will not forget him and his insight and so much that he brought to our world.

#### Anne Justice

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So sorry to hear the news about Howard's passing. **General Seitz** referred me to Howard when I was researching information on my uncle **Thomas L. Rea** and Howard was incredible. He remembered my Uncle and shared information with me about his generosity and how he died.

May he rest in Peace.

#### Thomas Rea

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From <https://www.facebook.com/FirstAirborneTaskForceTheForgottenFront>

1st Lt. Howard E. Hensleigh died today ...

Howard Hensleigh had participated in all the campaigns of the 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment, from Italy to the Hurtgen forest, through the fighting of Southern France. He is part of the heavy weapons section of the 3rd Battalion, 517th PIR, before joining the battalion S-2 (Intelligence) for his great deeds on D-Day.

He was president of the 517th PRCT association from 2004 to 2005 and participated for more than 10 years in the 517th Mail Call delivering testimonials with high accuracy, especially for taking Les Arcs, Callian/Montauroux and the battles of the Col de Braus where his battalion fought.

We will miss his stories...



[www.1stabtf.com](http://www.1stabtf.com)



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

I was shocked to hear the news of Howard Hensleigh's passing. If I ever thought someone would live forever it was Howard. I feel so blessed to be able to say that just before our 2012 National Reunion in Kansas City, I went to Menlo Park, California and visited with Howard. I gave him a 517th shirt and hat which he was very grateful to receive. He did so much for the 517th, and I would speak with him on the phone concerning the matters of our Association regularly. He was a great man and I will truly miss him. Each room at the VA care facility had a door window box to display an item. Of course Howard had his 517th Plaque displayed. See the attached photos. All my heart felt love and appreciation to the Hensleigh family. May God bless you in your time of need. I take solace in the words of the Apostle Paul in First Corinthians, chapter 15, "even in Adam all shall die, even in Christ all shall be made alive."

Congrats Howard on your final jump

Airborne All the Way!

**Lory Curtis**





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

I am so sorry to hear of the passing of Howard Hensleigh. He was my dad's Lt in H Company. I thanked him for getting my dad home safely. What a great man he was. When I emailed him he always took the time to answer my questions and have a conversation with me. He told me that he was disabled due to a chainsaw accident. It got away from him and injured his spine. I am also disabled due to a back injury. Howard was an inspiration to me. What a tough man he was. I will treasure the emails from him. Thank you Mr. Hensleigh for treating me with respect and taking the time to talk with me. God bless you!

**Rick Sweet**

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Bob I talked to my father tonight and told him the sad new of Howard Hensleigh's passing. Dad asked that I pass along his deepest sympathy to the Hensleigh family. Dad offered that Howard was one of the finest, smartest, and most enthusiastic Officers he had the pleasure to serve with in the 517th and that he greatly enjoyed their relationship over the many years. He said that Howard was one of the people that made things go in the 517th. On a personal note I too enjoyed Howard's engaging spirit. He had a brilliant mind and an amazing recall of people and wartime operations. He was always gracious and a real gentleman in the truest sense of the word. We will all miss him. Best wishes,

**Wayne Cross**

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Sad news on Howard. I had communicated with him on line. My dad Mike Sura served in H Company 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion and I was surprised to know Howard knew who my father was. I straightened me out on many things I remembered my father talking about his time in the 517<sup>th</sup>. Howard gave me the right words to the Airborne Song and details missing when dad got taken off the field in Bergstein, Germany.

God bless Howard and the men that stood with him from Italy to Germany.

**Dennis Sura** son of **Cpl. Michael A. Sura** Chicago, IL

### *MailCall News*

This year, the Dragoon Historical March will take place Thursday, August 13, 2015.



We will be on the track of the 3rd Platoon, 596th Parachute Combat Engineer Company, 3/517th Parachute Infantry Regiment and British paratroopers dropped by mistake between Fayence and Montauroux, 25 kilometers from their Drop Zone!

From <https://www.facebook.com/FirstAirborneTaskForceTheForgottenFront>



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

### *Kissimmee FL Reunion - Cancelled*

Hello all -

After checking around with our usual suspects for the Kissimmee reunion, it became clear this week that we have to cancel. Unfortunately, we had only a few hotel rooms taken. While I'm sorry not to see my usual January crowd, and will certainly miss my troopers especially, we must set our sights on March in Palm Springs and New Orleans in June.

**Phil McSpadden** assured me that he'll be there in June, and we will be, too.

And so apologies to **Ray Hess, Phil, Allan Johnson, Leo Dean** and **Steve Armbruster**. We are really sorry not to see everyone next weekend. Let's all make the commitment to New Orleans, and definitely hit Palm Springs in March if you are able.!

If you know someone planning to come to Kissimmee, please make sure that s/he is aware of the cancellation!

Thank you all - and see you in March and June!

Airborne! All the way!

**Claire Giblin**

### *More MailCall News*

RE; **David H. Vane** (KIA) HQ/2

I got good news, I have just received a mail from **David H VANE**'s niece, They got my letters and were very surprised and happy to know that we'll take care of the grave.

Regards,  
Véronique GREINER alias Ingrid Steiner – writer

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That is good news. Please let me know if they are able to give you any information on David Vane, especially any photographs. Thank you for your tribute.

Regards,

Bob Barrett

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I asked them for that, picture(s), date of birth, what means the H (David H Vane, so Henry or Hallister ?). I'll tell you, don't worry for that!

Really incredible that I could succeed, not really easy to find the family of a "just private".

Yours,  
Véronique GREINER alias Ingrid Steiner – writer



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

RE: **Vernon E Carroll**, 460th PFAB, Battery A

Hello,

Thank you so much for your website. My family has never really known with whom my uncle (**Vernon E Carroll**) fought during the war. I did some research over the weekend with a photo of my uncle's unit, his silver jump wings and a few loose stories handed down over the last 60 years. Thanks to your website, I have been able to track him down and confirm some of my hunches. He was with A Battery, 460th PFAB.

My uncle refused to talk about his experiences in the war. It affected him greatly. Sadly he passed away in 1986 and I just wasn't old enough yet to have an interest in what he did for our country and my freedom.

I noticed on your website that you are in contact still with some of the members of the 517th. I'm not sure if anyone remembers my uncle, but I would appreciate any information that anyone might have regarding my uncle's experiences. What he may have been like on the battlefield and did he show any signs during the war of being so impacted by what he must have witnessed.

He did tell my mom that he had to hide in a barn for up to two weeks because he got separated from his unit. That is the extent of the story and pretty much all he said.

Thank you so much.

David Sturzenegger

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Hi David,

Thank you for your note. I will include it in the next 517th newsletter this week. There are only a few men left from A Battery that we have managed keep in touch with, but I will let you know if I get any responses.

I expect that when he was separated from his unit was probably during Operation Dragoon, when they parachuted into southern France but were dropped many miles from the intended drop zones.

I have not found a specific record of Vernon Carroll in my very incomplete records, other than his listing in the Christmas 1944 roster: [http://517prct.org/documents/xmas1944/xmas\\_1944\\_battery\\_a.jpg](http://517prct.org/documents/xmas1944/xmas_1944_battery_a.jpg)  
But there are several books that tell the story of the 517th/460th/596th (not to mention a fictional movie with 460th, starring Frank Sinatra). Here is one short history of the 460th PFAB to start:  
[http://517prct.org/documents/short\\_history/460\\_short\\_history.htm](http://517prct.org/documents/short_history/460_short_history.htm)

PS: I would love to get a copy of that unit photo or any other photos for the website.

Bob Barrett



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

Bob, this is **Peanie Smith** wife of **Walter W. Smith** Hqs Co. 1st Bat. doing his exercise with his P. T. three times a week. The sad part is his Dementia is so bad his memory is about five minutes long. I am also 91 years young and his caretaker. Want to stay in our own home as long as I can care for him. He is such a gentle gentleman that it is easy so far to keep him happy.

I read Mail Call to him but it doesn't mean anything now but I do enjoy reading all the news and thankful for all you do to keep it going.

Thanks again. **Peanie Smith**

Peanie also sent in this article from a blog for the elderly. **Walt Smith** volunteered to be the demonstration model "as long as the photos are used to help someone else".

See: [Get on the Ground! Ground Mobility for the Elderly](#)



Go Pats!



I needed something to fill up the blank space on this page.  
My apologies to Melanie Hanson and others in Seattle  
who shouldn't get their hopes up too high.



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



I occasionally get a copy of the newsletter "Baseball in Wartime" by Gary Bedingfield. In the current issue, he highlights Major League ballplayers who served in ETO during WW2. Included in that list is Merv Connors of the 517<sup>th</sup>. **Pvt. Mervin J. "Merv" Connors** was in HQ Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion.

### Merv Connors (Chicago White Sox)

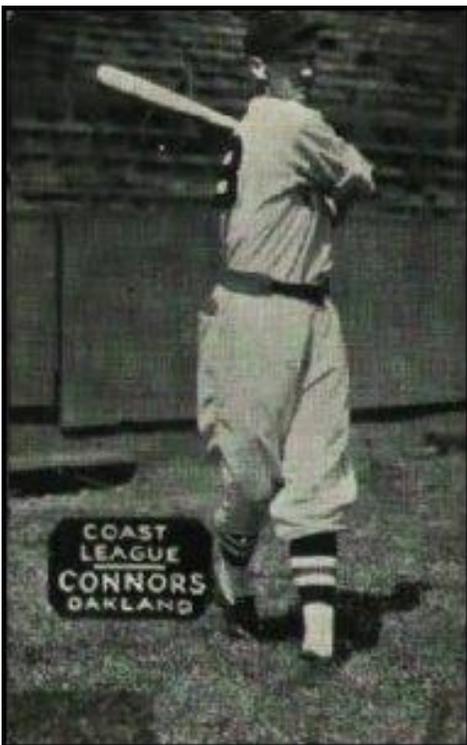
Connors served as a private with the 517<sup>th</sup> Parachute Regimental Combat Team and saw action during the Battle of the Bulge, receiving a Bronze Arrowhead for participating in an airborne combat assault. Following the German surrender, he played first base with the 13th Airborne Division Black Cats during 1945 and provided the offensive punch behind the pitching of Dave Koslo that led the team to a remarkable 33-4 record.



Here is the full bio for Merv Connors on Gary's website:

[http://www.baseballinwartime.com/player\\_biographies/connors\\_merv.htm](http://www.baseballinwartime.com/player_biographies/connors_merv.htm)

PS: According [www.BaseballRefernce.com](http://www.BaseballRefernce.com) Merv played for the White Sox in 1937 and 1938. In 1938 he played in 24 games, hit 6 Home Runs and batted .355. He got paid \$2400 that year.



"Merv Connors was a star of the minor leagues. From 1934 to 1953, he played eighteen seasons and over 2100 games in the minor leagues. He appeared for 18 different clubs in 14 different leagues. He is one of three American players to hit 400 career home runs in the minors (Buzz Arlett had 432 and Nick Cullop 420). Connors finished his minor league career with 400 homers exactly and 1629 RBI.

In the majors, Connors hit 8 career home runs in 52 major league games. In 1938, he had a three-home run game for the Chicago White Sox. He has the fewest home runs of any player who had three in a single major league game. Rafael Palmeiro, in contrast, hit 569 HR without a three-homer game. "



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An article in the magazine Nice - January 2015

“This is a story of passion between ordinary people and lovers of good local products ... This meeting took place on a sunny morning, high in the mountains of Menton. It is 10 o'clock, Ronan Kervarrec, chef of the famous restaurant Chevre d'Or, has arrived at the home of **Patricia and Roland Orengo**, owners of a small plot of land drinking in the sun. It is time to harvest. The Orengo family grows *crocus sativus*, a little violet flower, rare and fragile, which produces red gold: Saffron.

Flowering crocus lasts only a month, from October 15 to November 15. With its 2,200 bulbs, production is not huge but of high quality. In the end, only 70 to 80 grams of this precious treasure will be harvested this year.”

## LE PRODUIT DU MOIS Le safran

On a cueilli pour vous !

Textes et photos :  
François Baille

**Épice** Rencontre entre Ronan Kervarrec, chef deux étoiles, et la famille Orengo. Patricia et Roland produisent du safran, l'or rouge de Sospel, sur les hauteurs des Alpes-Maritimes

C'est une histoire de passion entre des gens simples et amoureux des bons produits locaux... Rendez-vous a été pris par un petit matin ensoleillé. Direction la campagne du haut pays mentonnais. Il est 10 heures. Ronan Kervarrec, chef du célèbre hôtel-restaurant de la *Chevre d'Or*, à Èze, arrive chez Patricia et Roland Orengo propriétaire d'une petite parcelle de terre gorgée de soleil. C'est l'heure de la récolte. La famille Orengo cultive le *crocus sativus*. Une petite fleur violette, rare et fragile, qui produit l'or rouge. Le safran. La floraison du crocus ne dure qu'un mois, du 15 octobre au 15 novembre. Avec ses 2 200 bulbes, la production n'est pas énorme mais de grande qualité. Au final, ce sont 70 à 80 grammes de ce précieux trésor qui seront récoltés cette année.

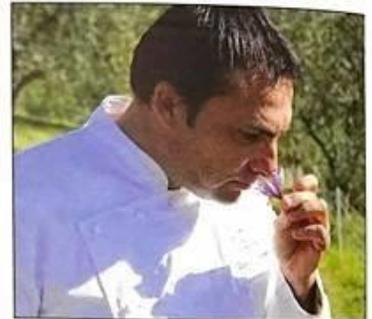
- C'est en 2009 que l'idée est venue de planter du safran sur nos terres. Un pari un peu fou mais qui va s'avérer payant. De la patience, du savoir-faire et beaucoup de soins apportés à cette petite fleur ont donné des résultats très encourageants. Et tous les quatre ans, il faut tout arracher et replanter », raconte Patricia. Après le ramassage, les fleurs sont émondées. On retire le pistil pour le faire sécher au four. Les opérations sont manuelles. Les

pistils sont conservés dans des bocaux de verre.

- C'est en passant au *Mirazur* que j'ai découvert ce fameux safran, explique Ronan. La qualité du produit m'a tout de suite enchanté ». Les premiers tests seront réalisés avec de la poutargue... Le mariage est réussi ! Depuis, le pistil est tout l'année à la carte du restaurant avec une autre recette. La polenta au safran. « Un délice dont mes clients raffolent ». Tout est dit pour cette fleur d'exception ! Vous l'aurez compris, on ne plaisante pas avec le safran, mais on le partage dans l'assiette avec précision. D'une parcelle de terre, plantée en restanque sur les hauteurs de Sospel, à la cuisine du chef Ronan, cette fleur voyage à travers le temps, sans bruit, mais avec beaucoup de respect et d'amour. Une saveur inoubliable après dégustation !



Ronan Kervarrec et Patricia Orengo entre les plants de crocus, à Sospel.





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

Hello friends,

pics from our monument with the plaque of **Ben Barrett**, now close to the **Major Fraser** plaque....

We are so happy to take care of them by this way.

Kisses and hugs

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**Patricia et Roland Orengo**





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

### *MailCall List Readership and Cleanup*

As some of you know, I switched MailCall over to a new and improved email sending service called "MailChimp" about a year ago. In addition to having better results in getting emails delivered without being rejected, I am also able to analyze the results of MailCall and see how many people are actually reading the MailCalls that are sent. FYI, on the average, of the 366 people who are currently subscribed to MailCall, only about half actually "open" the MailCall, although that sometimes means only that it was delivered to their email inbox. In most weeks, about a third (35%) of the subscribers actually click on the link and open the actual newsletter. That doesn't sound like much of a response rate, but that 35% is actually higher than the industry standard – only about 20% of people open most email list mailings. (I'm not sure which "industry" they are comparing us to, probably non-profit or alumni organizations. For business and retail emails, the Click rate is actually as low as 2-3%.)

I have recently found that I can also get some reports to analyze the readership in more detail, including a list of people who have never read (Clicked) any of the emails in the past year. Sadly (to me), there are 92 people who have never opened an actual MailCall in the past year. I suspect that rather than letting me know or unsubscribing, they either do not use that email address any more or the MailCall is automatically being sent into a junk or spam folder. Either way, they do not seem to miss it. Therefore I will probably drop them from the list shortly, and the resulting MailCall list will be down to 274 active MailCall subscribers. Most of the remaining (including you!) are fairly active readers and contributors.

#### Lessons learned:

- If you do not want to receive MailCall, just let me know so I can clean up the list. I won't feel bad.
- If you do want to continue to receive MailCall, you don't have to do anything.
- But... We would like to hear from you. Send us a quick note about yourself, your trooper, your family, your war stories and photos – Most of us still like to know and keep track of each other.

Thank you to all who have helped to remember the 517<sup>th</sup>, 596<sup>th</sup>, and 460<sup>th</sup> and FATF troopers.

### *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 Miriam Boyle Kelly  
19 Oriole Court  
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866