



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2272

May 24, 2015

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

Memorial Day 2015



37,000 flags have been placed on Boston Common, one for each Massachusetts military person who have died since the Revolutionary War. Enjoy the holiday and pause to remember those for whom Memorial Day is dedicated.



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

517th PRCT 2015 Annual Reunion



2015 National Reunion
New Orleans, LA June 25-28, 2015

[Program Info](#) [Hotel Information](#)

[Event Registration](#) [Hotel Reservation](#)

Registration Cut-off date: Now!

I just got off the phone with AFR and everything is in place for our reunion. The hospitality room will be set up just as we like it. AFR does not usually do a reunion for a group as small as ours, but Ted Dey the president is supporting us and we have used his organization for years so they really want to help us with our reunion. Right now there are only 34 people that are registered. With 25 signed up on the Bus for the World War II museum. There are only 18 signed up for the City Tour. AFR will make arrangements to get us a smaller bus for the City Tour. Tomorrow is the cut off for online registration, May 22nd, but AFR will keep it open over the weekend, and on Memorial Day. I would encourage everyone to call their 517th friends and have them sign up for the reunion. This could be the last one we ever have. Look forward to seeing you all in New Orleans June 25-29th!!!

Lory Curtis

Make that 35. I signed up last night. See you there! – Bob Barrett

MailCall News

Back when the movie Saints and Soldiers - Airborne Creed was available through a contact in the organization, I attempted to get a copy; however, apparently my request was lost somewhere along the time.

My question; Can one acquire a copy now and if so who is the contact so that I can order one?

My deceased father in law **Lawrence Ship** served with the 517th in the Service Company.
Thank you,

Harris Johnson
Greensboro NC 27406

Neither my father, **John Harte** or I can attend but I would like to donate if possible to keep the busses running at the reunion event. How much would this cost if you can't get the 35 attendees?

Don Harte, Son Of **SGT John Harte** 460th B battery



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RE: Photo of D Battery, 460th PFAB in Italy

Sorry about the delay in getting back to you. Been a bit engaged lately. We have been out of town in Chicago. We have to attend a memorial service next week in Tucson for my wife's brother.

Unfortunately, I only have a few copies of the HQ Battery morning reports that related to my father in some way. I looked through what I have, but did not see a "**Joe Richardson**." Did the son and the father have the same first name, Joe or Joseph? I have a copy of a Special Order awarding the Good Conduct Medal on 1 May 1944. It covers all the batteries. There is only one Richardson - **Chester A. Richardson**, Ssgt in HQ Battery. SN was 39331178. Did some further checking and this man was from Oregon, possibly in police work before he enlisted. There was not a Richardson in "D" Battery as of that May date. Was his father perhaps Chester? If not, maybe he did not meet the award criteria or possibly he was assigned to the 460th after they arrived in the combat theater- Italy or France.

Just a comment on the morning report. For anyone who has not studied one, it is essentially an aggregate strength report of a unit, but it is also something of an exception report for personnel. By that, I mean it lists out of the ordinary events such as gains, loses, promotions, leaves, AWOLs, KIA, WIA, MIA by only last name, rank, and service number. If an SM goes to the hospital, it lists him leaving the unit and then picks him up when he returns. It would list the medical unit where he is sent. Alternatively, that gaining unit's Morning Report would have showed him only by last name, rank and SN. Let's say a soldier was assigned and served without ever getting ill, becoming a casualty, being promoted, going AWOL, or going to another battery. The only thing that next happened was that he transferred out: basically, his last name would have appeared only the two times- the day in and the day out. Importantly the MR also lists unit location and a brief description of activity. In garrison, those latter two can be fairly routine and dull. In wartime, however, it might say something like "8 1/2 miles SE of Rome" or "1st engagement of 3 enemy tanks". That latter description is somewhat subjective on the part of the submitter, ultimately the unit commander. That was another one of the items I was searching when I got the HQ Battery reports. For the drop into France, I think the other batteries provided more detailed info as to what happened on that day for each.

The only instance the 460th did not generate a morning report seems to have been when they were seaborne to Italy from Virginia in May and June 1944. I did not find any reports for this period, but they started again in Italy upon arrival. I can only surmise that their presence fell under some Navy requirement and might be in a Navy report or log. Other than showing an aggregate loss by (2) of **SSgts de Grenier and Soto** from death due to alcohol poisoning, I could not find an entry for those two as the report started again once they disembarked in Italy. So for someone looking for a particular person, it would be best if one has the service number and is willing to study the microfilm reports day by day for each battery in the battalion. For example, in the case of an individual named Johnson who would have reported in to HQ Battery, but was transferred to B Battery a few days later, then shifted to D Battery the next month, your search would be extremely difficult and not conclusive without the service number. If my math is correct, I think the copy cost for about 3 pages of a single MR day would be around \$1.80 per battery. That's about \$660 for a year per unit and around \$2600 for all four batteries. Another reason why I have only a few.

Perhaps my second attachment may help Mr. Richardson if the D Battery you provided in MailCall 2271 did not. (By the way, a great shot of that battery) I took my pano photo of the battalion and just shot the "D" Battery portion using a macro lens on a tripod with remote. On the left-hand side, D Battery guidon is barely visible. If Richardson's father is closer to the camera, he might be able to find him. Farther back, not so good.



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The lieutenant (second from the viewer's left) appears to be the same officer leading the formation originally misidentified as **1LT Weinstein** (HQ Battery)

Steve Armbruster's input in MailCall 2269 was persuasive that the battery photo was D Battery and the officer was **Lt Schnebli**. **Merle McMorrow** in MailCall 2269 also confirmed the location with firsthand testimony. The lieutenant in my attachment photo was labeled as "Schnebli" and he resembles the tall officer in the original questioned photo. The Lt to his left is labeled as **LT Polk**. Fourth to the right of Polk is **LT Souder(s)**. Of the six LTs in front of formation, LT Schnebli is the only one wearing crossed cannon, branch insignia topped by "460". He had that in common with 1LT Weinstein. (I would venture to say that a pair of insignia like today that would be quite rare and valuable)

D Battery's First Sergeant is directly behind the last LT on the view's right in the second row in my attachment photo. This is the same NCO who wears that rank in your D Battery shot in MailCall 2271 (received from **Jim Miller**.) He is seated in the center (viewer's left). LT Schnebli is separated by one LT to the right. I think the 1st Sergeant may be **Donald J. Mounts**, SN 35289769. Additional note: many of the men, but not all, appear to wear an oval flash of solid color behind their jump wings. This was possibly a solid red artillery flash. Wonder if this was authorized? Do any the 517th Infantry members wear flashes in these 1943 or 44 photos?

I think we have enough data now to fire for effect. Alibi fires? The two photos are both copyrighted, but feel free to use them in MailCall.





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From: <http://www.bookmyreunion.com/may-2015/#MeetTheVeteran>



MEET OUR FEATURED VETERAN: Bud Curtis

Harland “Bud” Curtis was with the battle-tested 517th U.S. Army Parachute Regimental Combat Team over Europe, but rarely talked about his World War II experiences. Only when son Lory joined the Marines and was getting ready to serve in Vietnam did dad share a bit of wartime perspective: “Keep your head down son.”

Years later Lory and his brother Tim were watching the acclaimed HBO Series *Band of Brothers* and suspected the show featured stories of the 517th and asked their father. It did, and he soon began to share some of his memories.

“Dad was on a combat jump into southern France and was coming down over what he thought was water,” recalled Lory, age 66. “He was trying to cut off his chute when he realized it was a thick fog bank and in almost an instant hit the ground. He got out of the chute, said aloud the password and was immediately under German fire, a bullet whizzing right by his ear. He stayed put on the ground until he saw sunlight break the horizon and then took off like hell through the bullets. He slipped down a deep ravine and thought he was a goner until he found himself in a group of American soldiers taking cover under a ledge. The gunfire soon stopped and they moved on.”

The 517th PRCT saw heavy fighting in Southern France, Italy, Belgium, Germany and at the Battle of the Bulge. They spent 94 consecutive days in direct combat on the front lines in France, more than any other unit of the war. Known as the Battling Buzzards, they were the only parachute regimental combat team in the European theater and its ranks received a Medal of Honor, six Distinguished Service Crosses, five Legions of Merit and scores of Silver Stars, Bronze Stars and Purple hearts. More than 250 paratroopers were lost. President Truman presented the Medal of Honor to Melvin Biddle of the 517th for bravery at the Battle of the Bulge.



In 2004 Curtis, who retired from the war as a Private First Class, was one of 100 American soldiers to receive an all expenses trip paid by the French government to receive the Legion of Honor, the French equivalent of the U.S. Medal of Honor. He was with one other member of the 517th, Dr. Walter Golforth.

“These men of the 517th and World War II in general were truly of the Greatest Generation,” said Lory, who served 27 years in the U.S. Marines, active duty and reserves, and in the Army National Guard, where he retired as a Major. “I’m so thankful to each one for the sacrifices they made. One of the last things my father said before he passed away was to “never let the 517th die.”

Their story lives on not only in memories, but in print and film. Published in 2012, *Letters Home: A Paratrooper’s Story*, is an account written by Lory of his father’s wartime experiences, taken largely from letters he sent home from the front to his mother. The book was made into a movie, *Saints and Soldiers: Airborne Creed*, <http://www.airbornecreed.com>, in which Bud Curtis is played by actor Jasen Wade. Lory also serves as the 517th PRCT Association’s First Vice President and is joined by many members of the extended family in never letting the 517th die. They are among a growing number of families nationwide that are ensuring the wartime legacies of those who went before continue to live on.



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“The book and movie were written and made to honor not only our father and the 517th, but to honor all our veterans, and all men and women serving in the military,” said Lory, who lives in Salt Lake City. “We remember and recognize the huge sacrifices they made and are making now to defend and keep our country free.”

The 517th PRCT Association will hold a reunion in June 25-29 in New Orleans, where they will visit the National World War II Museum. BookMyReunion.com’s parent company, Armed Forces Reunions, Inc., has managed many previous reunions for the 517th and will direct the upcoming event. “Most of the veterans of the 517th are now 91, 92 or more, with maybe a couple youngsters at 89,” Lory said. “So it’s going to be a special one. The museum has a C-47 hanging from the ceiling and some exhibits dedicated to our paratroopers. The trip should bring back some memories and keep more alive for the future.”

Scott McCaskey is a contributing writer for BMR.com; Account Director at Goldman & Associates Public Relations and former staff writer for the Virginian-Pilot newspaper

The Future of the 517th Association

As I read through the legal issues for the organization moving forward, I am wondering if there might be an organization such as a college or university that specializes in WWII or perhaps the WWII Museum itself that might be interested in partnering in particular to preserve the website and all of the information that has been so painstakingly gathered over the years. I know how very valuable that has been along with the connections I have made through the Mail Call to gather information about my father's (Ray Bunce) role in this amazing group during WWII. Can't help but believe there will be other children, grandchildren and so on who will seek this info out in the future. Of course the key to all of that info are you folks who know it inside and out who can find the connections that people request. That is why I think it needs to be a partnership and not just turning it over to someone.

As to reunions, I don't have any great ideas. I will say that the connections I have made have been much more important to me than any personal tax benefits. And I thank all of you who have made that possible!

Christine Bunce

Read the legal analysis of “The Future of the 517th Association” in [MailCall 2271](#). It is long and complicated. The question is how we can re-register with the IRS in a different, non-veteran-run organization – which could be a long and huge effort – or do we dissolve the official 517th Association? If we do the latter, how do we best maintain the 517th's legacy and manage mini-reunions going forward? I’m sure there will be discussion by our Board members at the NOLA reunion. -- BB



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From: <http://www.americanrifleman.org/articles/2015/5/21/throwback-thursday-the-quick-draw-from-sling-carry/>



Throwback Thursday: The Quick Draw from Sling Carry

by Rex Applegate - Thursday, May 21, 2015

Here is a lesson still relevant today from the “connoisseur of close combat” Lt. Col. Rex Applegate on how to get a rifle or carbine into action quickly from our April 1945 issue. When not going on commando raids or writing for Rifleman during the war, Lt. Col. Applegate was instructing Office of Strategic Services agents in close combat and gunfighting.



From the April 1945 issue of American Rifleman
“Quick Draw” from the Sling Carry for Soldiers ... and Hunters
By Lt. Col. Rex Applegate

Many times a soldier or hunter has been unable to get a shot at a target of opportunity because he was unable to get his weapon into action in time from the sling-carry position on his shoulder.

The method shown here is a simple, easily learned sling carry for use in combat and hunting. It has the following advantages:

- (1) The muzzle of the piece is down, consequently rain, snow, and other types of foreign matter are prevented from entering the bore.
- (2) The muzzle of the piece does not stick above shoulder and it is easier for the carrier to make his way through dense undergrowth without having the rifle barrel catch on branches, etc.
- (3) The rifle carried in this manner conforms to the shape of the body and can be carried with more comfort than in the usual sling-carry position.
- (4) After a short period of practice the average individual can take a slung weapon from this position and bring it into action for a shot faster and more accurately than the ordinary man can draw a pistol or revolver from his holster and fire it.
- (5) It provides an alternate to the customary sling-carrying position when the shoulder tires. **All Clear**



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After Live Grenade Found At Currahee Military Museum

May 18, 2015



The grenade was located by the above parking spaces when the GBI arrived on scene.

All is clear now in downtown Toccoa after a live grenade was found Friday at the Currahee Military Museum.

Stephens County Sheriff's Office Chief Deputy Andy Myers said sheriff's deputies responded during the 11 a.m. hour Friday and began cordoning off an area in the parking lot of the museum on Alexander Street in downtown Toccoa.

Soon after, Toccoa Police officers were on the scene as well to assist with clearing an area around the live grenade, which was sitting in the parking lot.

Myers said the Georgia Bureau of Investigation was contacted about the grenade.

Toccoa Police Detective Jimmy Mize said an agent from the GBI arrived to handle the device.

"The GBI bomb squad sent a tech down to retrieve the grenade," said Mize. "It was determined that it was a live grenade and it is possibly a phosphorous grenade from back during the World War II area that was used for bunkers and armored car carriers and things."

The GBI agent removed the device just after 1 p.m. and the area was cleared as the device was taken away to be disposed of properly. Myers said that the live canister was in among a bunch of empty canisters that had been given to the museum.

Mize said that nobody was aware that there was a live canister in among the empty ones.

"During the investigation, it was determined that it was in some items that were in the museum from another museum collector in North Carolina," said Mize.

Nobody was hurt in the incident. –





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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



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