



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



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

## MailCall No. 2277

June 28, 2015

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

## 517th PRCT 2015 Annual Reunion

The troops have arrived in New Orleans. Here are a few photos from our trip to the WWII museum.



Tim Curtis, Nancy Armand, and Paul Abbene



Phil McSpadden, Joanne Barrett, Merle McMorrow, Bob Barrett



At the WWII Museum



We found a video of Melvin Biddle, A Co. (MOH)



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



M1 Carbine and other weapons



"Rupert", the dummy paratrooper



On the New Orleans City tour...

Leo is always making new friends.



Nancy Armand and Phil McSpadden



at a local New Orleans cemetery



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

### *Mail Call News*

Last week, we published a short list of 517/460/596 troopers who we have heard from recently to know that that are still "alive and kicking". As I hoped, we got a quick response from many of you who are keeping track of each other. Here are some emails that responded:

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Rick put up a list of troopers still with us in the last mail call. He asked if there were any more out there. Please let him know that my grandfather, Trooper **Norman Ross Jr.** is still with us from Washington state.

Thanks.

#### **Scott Ross**

Hi Bob....as always, enjoy looking in my e-mails a listing that I have a 517th Mail Call!! Ask whoever made up the list of living members of our unit, add:

**John L Garvey**, Hq Btry, 460th PFA  
18760 Park Tree Lane  
Sonoma, CA 95476

Thanks....can't afford to see my old buddy missing in action.

#### **Phil McSpadden**

And, while I'm at it, I remember seeing a note in Mail Call within the last few months from **Willard Berdit**, Hq Btry, 460th PFA, in North Carolina....don't have any address for him.

-- phil

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Hello Bob Barrett and Mail Call,

My father, **John Bradovich**, who served under '**Boom Boom**' **Alicki** in H company's demolition squad is still living in northern Minnesota with my mother, his wife of 68 years. Do add him to your list of troopers.

Thank you for the work you do.  
Best regards,

#### **Lea Bradovich**

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I still like getting the Mail Call. I still find something to run off for the G Grandkids or my Nieces/Nephews, also items that need a response.

I am in contact with **James Frank Morris (Martha)** and **Richard Kachalsky (Lillian)**. I send mail to Morris, but they do not respond. I haven't gotten back any returned mail either. Both Vets are 460 B.

#### **Katherine Kramer Wheeler**



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Just realized that **Tom Cross** is not on the list in the last Mail Call. He's in Jacksonville,. FL

**Pat Seitz**

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Hello Bob, Checking in with one live trooper, **Lucky Hiers and wife Billie**. Please add them to your MailCall list.

V/R **Don Gentry**

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I am coming to the reunion, because it is closer than most of them. My son is driving me in his pickup. we will leave early in the morning. im an original 517th rct. i heard from **Bill Brannan** last year. He lives in Calif. My wife Erma ( Jay) passed away so she won't be coming, she enjoyed it when we had reunions or I should say when we could go to them. O Yes I'm still kicking. I'm trying to hang on like **Baird and Lawrence**.

**Mel Trenary**

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**John strojan** is still alive and kicking name not on the list. Thanks

**Laurie Strojan**

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I did not see Walt's name on the list. He is still living but in a facility for dementia. Broke my heart to do it but he was requiring more care than I was able to give him. He is at Sunrise in Worthington, Ohio. Getting good safe care. The VA is helping some. I want to stay in our home as long as I can. Walt will be 92 in Sept. and I will be in Dec. I do enjoy reading Mail Call and do miss going to the reunions over the years. Great friends and memories were made. Thanks for all you do to keep us a part of the 517th.

**Peanie Smith** wife of **Walter W. Smith** 1st Bat.

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Dear Bob ,  
Our friends **Nolan Powell** and his friend **Les Perkins** ( C company) are still alive.

Hugs from Sospel  
**Roland**

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Please add **Keith C. Hobson**, Ca

Don Hobson

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I AM STILL KICKING. **DICK MILLER**  
BATTERY A 460  
TRINITY FLORIDA



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

The following troopers from the 460th, D-Btry are still alive, although not kicking to hard as of today 23 July. These are the only ones that i keep in contact with. There may others that i am not aware of.

**Steve Armbruster**

**Jack Cason KY**  
**Geo. Kennedy MD**  
**Mike Schlacter MI**

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Thanks, Steve. The others are already signed up, but do you think I should add Mike Schlacter to the Thunderbolt mailing list? Would he care to read it?

Bob B

Hi Bob, Yes i am sure he would and i will tell him that i requested it and if he should change his mind i will inform you so he won't have to worry about notifying you. I remember talking to him about something in the "Mail Call " and said i would send it to his Daughter he was delighted. Thanks for getting back to me so fast.

Airborne All The Way  
Steve

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Received list of 517 troopers and would like to add a few. **Roger Goodsell** and wife Gloria, in nursing home, Tyler, Texas. Can call at 1-903-504-5612. Next, **Joe Molina**, call at 1-626-333-4767. Myself, **Bob Hart** and Kathleen Hart, 1-360-432-9524-Tacoma, Wash. You should have my name as I send in dues, get static line, and get weekly news.

**Bob Hart**

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Hi, I'm **Lucky & Billie Hiers** daughter, and just saw the Mail Call newsletter. Lucky LOVES getting it!

He is definitely still alive and kicking!! He will be 93 in August. He is not strong enough to travel, but wishes so much he could be at the reunion.

And they are still in Florida.

If someone wanted to try and Skype or FaceTime he and mom, I'm sure they'd love it.

Thanks so much,

**Robin Oda**



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Bob, regarding the list of troopers who are alive today, I'm not sure but **Jim McWilliams** (D Company Christmas Roster) is still listed on the University of Oregon's Emeriti Professors in German and Scandinavian Studies. Jim was a close friend of my dad's during and after the war.

here's the link: <http://gerscan.uoregon.edu/people/emeriti/>

## Mike Kane

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We have increased the number of troopers who have “checked-in” up to 52 so far. There are 232 other people who currently receive either the Thunderbolt or MailCall whom are mostly troopers, but some might be just family and friends. I know there are lots more out there – there are 659 other troopers who used to receive the T-Bolt in 2008 -- so let us know if you’ve had recent contact with anyone else from the 517/460/596. Here is the current list of recently “verified” troopers:

Stephen J.	Armbruster	Robert W.	Kennedy
Marshall W.	Baird	Harold G. (Sug)	Lawrence
Willard	Berdit	R.G. (Bob) "Doc"	Lecklider
John	Bradovich	Anthony A.	Mandio
William	Brannan	John T.	Marsinko
Fred	Brown	Hunter	McDonald
Jack J.	Cason	Merle	McMorrow
Jay	Castello	Philip P.	McSpadden
Joseph L.	Clark	Jim	McWilliams
Thomas R.	Cross (USA Ret.)	George E.	Meline
Melvin J.	Dahlberg	Dick	Miller
Robert (Bob) W.	Dalrymple	Joe	Molina
Leo P.	Dean	James Frank	Morris
Gabriel	Delesio	John M.	Pastalenic
Erle E.	Ehly	Leslie E.	Perkins
John L.	Garvey	Nolan L.	Powell
Roger W.	Goodsell	Norman & Betty	Ross
Robert D.	Hart	Mike H.	Schlacter
Ray R.	Hess	Walter W. & Pauline (Peanie)	Smith
Ludwick (Lucky)	Hiers	Gene J. (Zoot)	Snyder
Keith	Hobson	John J.	Strojan
William S.	Hudson	Myrle E.	Traver
Kaare Allan	Johnson	Melvin C.	Trenary
John G.	Jonientz	Robert L.	Vaught
Richard	Kachalsky	Manuel	Ventoza
George W.	Kennedy	Earl	Whisenhunt

Let me know if you are in contact with any other troopers. Next week I'll publish the list of the possible MIAs.



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

Bob,  
Just returned from Great Britain last evening and began sorting through 500 emails. Hope this makes it to the list for Claire and Lori before the Reunion starts.  
Mailcall 2276 lists living 517th members. Please add **Fred Brown**, Texas. He was in the 460th PFAB. Would hate to see him omitted. He was Association President in 1996. He is still on top of his game. He does not use the internet.

**Tom Finley**  
St. Louis, MO

A few photos from **Lt. George M. Roseberry's** album, which **Carol (Roseberry) Dressen** brought to New Orleans.



my Jeep, the boys  
Note the fancy skirts  
over the rear wheels  
those peaces come  
from an English Spitfire  
the man at my right  
with an X over his head  
is a buissness man  
of Rome, an Italian.





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



boys and a German  
vehicle they have  
stripped down and  
worked over, put seats  
on to run around it







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

John Johnitz gave us this article about the record-breaking physical fitness tests at Camp Mackall in 1943. As far as we know, the record still stands.

**517 Sets New Army Record**

**3 Companies Crack Mark In One Day.**

In the Army Ground Forces physical fitness tests conducted here by Airborne Command last week, the Men of Five Seventeen again proved themselves by a series of record-shattering events, establishing three of the highest scores yet made by any outfit and chalking up the best overall average of any unit tested.

Early events included burpees, push-ups, 300 yard dash, a 75 yard pig-a-back, and the circuitous creep-crawl-and-run course, all of which was followed by a four mile full pack march. Capt. Dickerson's Regimental Headquarters Co. selected for this competition, took all events in stride to chalk up an aggregate rating of 95.02, the highest headquarters score ever made. "B" company next went into action and when the tallying was done the figures showed its score of 97.59 to be the highest on record!

But while all this was going on, "D" Company, representing the Second Battalion, was warming up for its turn at the record smashing. First of all, the men did their 34 push-ups with no trouble. Then came the 300-yard dash, which is to be done in 45 seconds. Pvt. Travis D. MacDonald took

Continued on page 8

*517<sup>th</sup> Sets P  
Endurance Record t  
Army ground force*

*Toccoa, Ga*

*Fort Benning - Ga*

*Camp Mackall*

*Tennessee Marvers*

*Fort Bragg N.C.  
& then  
Camp Patrick Henry  
in Virginia - & across*

a few individual honors at this point by cracking the old record of 43 seconds when he ran the three century in 42 flat. Then came the 12 burpees in 20 seconds; a burpee being a push-up starting and ending at the position of attention. To do 12 in 20 seconds takes both speed and concentration. Next, the 75-yard pig-a-back ride, each man carrying one of his own weight 75 yards in 20 seconds. And just before the four mile march came the creeping and crawling course which had to be completed in 30 seconds. It consisted of crawling 10 yards, creeping 10 and hopping over barrels for 10 more before sprinting the last 10.

After a short break came the hardest test of all, a four mile march with full field equipment plus weapon in 50 minutes. A 50 minute march ordinarily isn't so hard for the parachutists, but when their breath is still in the gasping stage from dashes which come in quick succession, it is tough.

However, "D" company went through the four miles in less than 50 minutes and thereby hung up a new Army record; the third one hung up by a 517 company during the day.

Of the 99 men who started out on the test for Lt. David Armstrong's company, not one dropped out. Lt. Loren James and Lt. Maurice Miley led the men through the hike, Lt. Armstrong having been hospitalized by an injury.

When asked if he was proud of the company that represented the Second Battalion, so well, Major Seitz grinned, "Damn right, but let me say without taking any-

The only serious thing Pvt. Cliff Siebert's life is a certain Miss Betty McNeil of Indianola, Iowa. Lining away from D Company, any company that would have represented us, would have done as well."

The most amazing thing about the whole competition of the 517 was the aggregate score of 96.70 which is better than any one company ever did before. When compared with the Army average of around 50 per cent, the figures become nothing short of fantastic.



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Carol Dressen, daughter of Lt. George Roseberry, found this article from The Currier of Montgomery County TX April 2011 about Bob Rust. Bob passed away in 2014.

## Area veteran served on elite Army paratrooper company

By CATHERINE DOMINGUEZ  
cdominguez@hcnonline.com

When Bob Rust was drafted by the U.S. Army in March 1943, the young soldier was worried he would get stuck behind a desk. Little did he know he would soon be part of an elite group of men that would make history.

"An officer came in and said they were accepting volunteers for the paratroops; it was \$50 a month extra," he said. "I looked at (my friend) and said let's do that because I'll do anything to keep from being put behind a desk."

Rust volunteered for the 517th Regimental Parachute Team and was accepted. The men of the 517th

were tested for physical and mental toughness, Rust said. Following the rigorous testing, Rust was selected to be a part of the team.

"We were handpicked," he said. "Then we had to jump five times, packing our own chutes to win our wings."

Rust said they went through so much training that by the time they made their first real jump, he said they were more than ready.

"People would ask, 'How was that first jump?' And I would say it wasn't so bad because we didn't know what to expect," Rust said. "But that second jump was a booger."



Courtesy photo  
Bob Rust, drafted into the U.S. Army in 1943, served for the 517th Regiment Parachute Team.



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Bob Rust, drafted into the U.S. Army in 1943, served for the 517th Regiment Parachute Team.

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### VETERAN

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Before war's end, the men would fight their way from the south of France through Italy, Belgium and finally into Germany. In all, they would see 94 straight days under fire and many of Rust's friends would never return. His unit is officially credited with five campaigns, but one event especially stands out in his memory.

In the winter of 1944, German troops made a surprise attack with every available man, tank and plane. That massive assault formed a huge bulge into Europe, later

known as the Battle of the Bulge.

"That was our biggest accomplishment," Rust said. "Our organization was created with having stopped the German's advance."

Wounded twice during the Second World War, Rust now is considered technically disabled. However, a year ago, he moved to The Village at Gleannloch Farms on a bed but now "gets around" without any assistance and lives in the independent living part of the community.

Although the men from the 517th no longer hold reunions, Rust said he enjoys talking to other veterans

there at his new home where "we're all like one big family."

Anyone who comes to his apartment can see his Bronze Star, Purple Heart with Oak Clusters — and many other medals. But only Rust still can see the faces of his young friends — frozen in time more than 65 years ago, because they never lived to age.

"They were very brave men, any of whom would have died for each other without hesitation," Rust said. "They moved forward with dedication and unflinching courage. I was very fortunate to serve with them."

## Future of the 517<sup>th</sup> Association

Stay tuned...



# 517<sup>th</sup> 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](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



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