



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2308

January 24, 2016

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

MailCall News



Carentan Historical Foundation - Airborne Wall Memorial

Une nouvelle pierre a été apposée ce matin même sur l'Airborne Memorial Wall, situé dans l'enceinte du Centre Historique des Parachutistes du Jour-J, à Saint-Côme-du-Mont.

One new stone was affixed this morning on the Airborne Memorial Wall, located at the D-Day Paratroopers Historical Center, at Saint-Côme-du-Mont.

Truly appreciated the inclusion of the Chapter 5 account from the biography of Terry Sanford. His accounts of dates and places brings better-into-focus what the 517th Troopers, as well as Replacements, experienced with training in the U. S., as well as battling in Italy, France, Belgium, and into Germany.

Always enjoy seeing that other family members of 517th Troopers are "finding" the 517th site and asking questions as well as placing information about their 517th relative on the site. Really enjoy reading messages from Trooper Trenary too!

517th Mail Call has to be one of the best-written of any of the U. S. service "reports" from WW II accounts.

Kenton "Kent" Floyd Immerfall
Nephew of **Floyd A. Stott**
1st Lt. Co. "I" 3rd Bat. 517th PRCT



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517th : Mothers Day Parade in Verviers

May 13, 1945

Verviers Bel.

Gary Davis
and F Company



I was in the library today and picked up an old issue of a WWII Magazine (February 2013). It had a pretty complete article on the invasion of Southern France. Many of the smaller units were specifically mentioned by name, which is unusual. I was surprised to see names such as **Leo Turco**. Leo died a number of years ago.

He and Joyce came to all the Palm Springs reunions for years. I am sending her a copy of the enclosed sheet.

Merle McMorrow

I got an HP 8600 printer and I upgraded to Windows 10. That is why you are getting material from me by snail mail. That will continue until I can figure out to scan.



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Near the French town of Le Mury, American paratroopers of the 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion hurry down Route D7 on the morning of August 15, 1944.

prepared to shoot it. Then the silhouette called out, "Who are you?" in English. Williams called back, "Who are you?" and the silhouette answered, "I'm Brigadier Pritchard." Williams lowered his gun and thus avoided killing the commander of 2nd Parachute Brigade.

The paratroopers' aerial armada stretched 100 miles and brought in 5,607 paratroopers and more than 150 artillery pieces. But the planes headed for the 509th Parachute Battalion's drop zone could not find it—the pathfinders had not set up their beacons, and the drop zone was covered with fog. The pilots dropped their paratroopers based on estimates of their flight position as suggested by the hilltops.

At 4:18 AM, the red light went on in Captain Ernest "Bud" Siegel's plane, and the former New York State Police officer leaped out, leading his men into the dark. Siegel's parachute caught on a tall tree, leaving him swinging 15 feet off the ground. He cut the harness strands with his trench knife and scrambled down the tree.

That fate befell many of the 509th. Pfc. Leon Mims's chute snagged on the top of a towering pine tree, and the 25-year-old Georgian was trapped, angling 40 feet in the air. A shell from a German gun exploded against the tree, shaking Mims loose and sending him tumbling down through the branches and to the ground. A buddy came up and gave Mims a shot of morphine. Mims told the paratrooper to leave him there. Mims would lie there, racked with pain, the morphine wearing off, for three days, until a Frenchman moved him by wheelbarrow to his house to await pickup.

Fortunately for all concerned, the paratroopers were dropped near their drop zones. Blue lights drew the men of the 509th together, and they set out on their way. A Frenchman invited his liberators to his house to celebrate with wine. "Hell, no," snapped Yarborough. "We're looking for Krauts."

The 517th Parachute Regiment, dropping 10 minutes later, was more scattered by the fog. Lieutenant James A. Reith, a platoon leader in the 517th Infantry Regiment, found himself standing new to a mysterious figure staring up at the sky. The stranger smelled of fish. Reith remembered an

intelligence briefing that said German troops smelled like fish from a salmon-heavy diet. and Reith did a double take on his companion. He was wearing a German helmet. Reith whipped out his .45 and shot the German in the stomach. Soon scattered groups of the 517th were banding together and fighting like their buddies in Normandy two months before, for unfamiliar objectives against an unknown enemy. At least they had a shorter wait for daylight. But it was difficult. Someone asked the 517th's commander, Colonel Rupert D. Graves, "Where are we?" Graves answered, "I feel reasonably certain that we're somewhere in France. Other than that, I haven't the faintest notion where we are." He led two privates.

Others landed far from their objectives. Lt. Col. Melvin Zais, a future four-star general, landed 25 miles from his objective. He assembled 105 paratroopers, and they headed off to their drop zone in the gathering dawn, in approach-march formation. As they hiked through the countryside, a flight of Lockheed P-38 Lightning fighter bombers swooped down on them. The Americans took cover from the bombs. Finally, a paratrooper was able to put out a yellow smoke pot, the recognition signal, and the P-38s zoomed upward. Zais was not through battling his own side. They spotted another file of armed men in different uniforms heading in the same direction as the Americans. Zais deployed his men to attack, then someone said, "Look! Some of them are wearing red berets!" They turned out to be some of Pritchard's 2nd Parachute Brigade, who had also been dropped off-target. The two Allied groups joined forces and kept moving. They ran into a German convoy and at last could start doing their job. The Anglo-American force chewed up the German convoy with bazookas and machine guns, and all enemy troops were killed or captured.

Paratroopers and Germans were slugging it out all over the drop zone area, playing cat-and-mouse in the dark. American troops hollered the password "Lafayette," expecting to hear the countersign, "Democracy." Sometimes they forgot. Sergeant Leo Turco of Rochester, New York, stumbled alone through the dark until he heard a dark figure call out, "Is that you, Sergeant Turco?"

Turco lowered his Thompson submachine gun and said to Private Dan Rotundo of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, "For God's sake, Rotundo, you're supposed to call out the password, not 'Is that you?'"

One plan fell apart quickly. Lieutenant Jim Reith of the 517th was assigned to kidnap General Ferdinand Neuling, who commanded the German 62nd Corps, from his residence, the Villa Gladys, in Draguignan, The French Underground had an agent living right next to the villa, and she provided the Allies with all kinds of details on the general's life and movements, even his breakfast routine—6 AM precisely, two fried eggs, bacon, and toast.

But at 5:35 AM, Reith and his crew were 20 miles from Villa Gladys, and the detailed plan came to nothing.

Still, the paratroops by and large did their job. All across the drop zones, paratrooper-5, individually or in groups,



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The pictures in this Mail Call were very timely as was the excerpt from Terry Sanford's bio which I enjoyed very much.

Pat Seitz

PS We will be out of the country from February 5 through March 4 and without great WiFi access so I'll check the Mail Calls when we get back.

I am wrapping up the last Thunderbolt. This makes me read all of your Mail Calls in quick (well, relatively) succession.

You are doing an amazing job. Thank you for being the glue that keeps us together. We report in to you, and you share with all of us. It's a real-life It's a Wonderful Life moment - one guy really does make a difference!

Troopers, as we move forward into the digital era, make sure you keep us up to date with your email addresses, your phone numbers and the snail mail addresses. We are still keeping track of you guys!

And a shout-out to Mel, who I greatly enjoyed seeing in New Orleans. Mel, hang in and know that your friends are keeping you in their hearts. Lots of guys have made their final jump, including your sweet bride, but lots more are still here and happy to hear from you!

Airborne all the way!

Claire Giblin

RE: sergeant **William H Delaney** - 517th PIR - KIA 12.24.1944

Hello from Belgium,

I'm in Belgium and collect ww2 items from 30 year ago, when I was a young guy. For me, an helmet, a bayonet, ... has few interest without its story : it like is thousand others.

I recently purchased on an e-stand in Belgium a garrison cap, blue piping, with a silvered unmarked parachute wing badge on the right side (no round blue parachute patch sewn). Inside the cap, there is a name and a number : 9292 Delaney. This 1943 dated cap, was found during of after the war in the Belgian Ardennes. This man is unfortunately passed away and his daughter sold now the cap. She didn't say anything about a name inside and the parachute wing and just posted a very bad pic on the e-stand.

I think this cap is the one of the sergeant **William H Delaney** (517th PIR, C Company), KIA on 24th december 1944 at Lamormenil or Freyneux. In the fact, if there was another **Delaney (James J)**, he was in the 596th engineer (A Company). Then, for him, the piping would must be red.

Do you have an idea about the number 9292 ? I don't find any number like that in the NARA database. Do you have the number or a pic of the sergeant William H Delaney ?

Of course, I can send you some pics of this garrison cap badge if you want.

Best regards.

Christophe



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St JACQUES (Trois-Ponts)
2016 jan 9 th - Holy Mass
of Souvenir to pray for the
US soldiers who fought and
died for our Liberty. Father
Michel CAPE and Father
RADERMECKER
celebrated the Mass.
Authorities, patriotic
associations and members
of CADUSA attended the
ceremonie. Later, flowers,
homage; flags and US +
belgian anthems at the US
monuments in St Jacques,
Rochelival, Spineux,
Logbiermé. (DSCN2266 =
St Jacques monument). We
think of you with gratitude.

Love from Belgium.

Irma and Arnold TARNION
and members of CADUSA (US Airborne Reception Committee)





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Hi John,

I have not found any specific records mentioning Dale Norton yet, but my records are very incomplete. I will post your note in our next newsletter.

Do you have any other information about Dale Norton? Anything that mentions which company he was in or where he fought?

Bob Barrett

Hi
thanks for checking, full name **Dale L. Norton**, his uniform has the allied airborne on left shoulder, right has 7th army and airborne task force patch. Artillery collar brass. 5 or 6 battle stars on eto ribbon

John Grindahl



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In a recent email you asked about a "Jump Boot Story" I had related to **Gen. Jim Gavin's** daughter Barbara. I told her I had a complete jump outfit without the boots until my wife surprised me on my birthday one year.

Stephen Ambrose wrote the book *Band of Brothers*. In the early 1990s it was to be produced as a TV mini-series for HBO with Stephen Spielberg and Tom Hanks as executive producers. They had a \$125 million budget. Equipment and clothing was to be as authentic as possible. Joe Hobbs was costume designer and he got the Corcoran Boot Co. to making boots based on the 1942 design. They were made in Martinsburg, PA.

My wife had a friend in Bismarck who had a daughter as a Major in the Airborne at Ft. Bragg. By corresponding with her it established that Joe Hobbs had new excess items and would sell Corcoran jump boots for \$150. It was a wonderful birthday present and the joy and excitement of receiving them was just as great as it had been back on September 18, 1943.

Merle Mc Morrow

After reading **Teresa Pugh's** account of her father's Pastoral duties in Italy, another activity dreamed up to keep 20 year old kids entertained came to mind. The war had ended when we were outside of Munich but we continued on down the Autobahn to get to the Eagles Nest (Hitler's Home). We were moving so fast our supply lines could not keep up with us. We had to pull off the Autobahn periodically to wait for fuel and food. Five or six would see a house they liked and then tell those residing there they would have to move somewhere for a day or two. We would then move in. We had a 2-story house in one of the towns. The bedrooms were on second level as were the clothes closets. One of the fellows dressed up in a woman's clothes. We pulled all the shades so the second floor was fairly dark. Some of the men hid in the closet in the room where the "woman" would be sitting on the edge of the bed. One or two men would be downstairs by the front entrance. When everyone was in place, the "woman" would go to the window and wave or blow kisses to a fellow passing by on the street. It wasn't long until he was at the front entrance.. We would deny we had a woman in the house but finally said he could go see her if he would keep quiet about it. We told him to treat her nicely because she was starving for male companionship.

After trying to woo her 3 different languages it soon became apparent to him that there was something terribly wrong about the whole setting. That is when the men in the closet jumped out and turned on the lights. This was repeated over and over all day long and by evening our stomach muscles ached from laughter.

War had its' brighter and enjoyable moments.

Merle Mc Morrow

I posted a draft of **Lt. David P. Taylor's biography** on our *Meet The Troopers* page:
<http://517prct.org/bios.htm>



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From **Nila Gott**:

Those who attended the game said it was extremely emotional to see the entire bowl of the stadium turn red, white and blue. It took 90 workers two weeks to get all of the colored card boards mounted under each seat. Each piece of card board had eye slits in them so the fans could hold up the colored sheet and still see through the eye slits. Every seat had to have the proper card, with no mistakes, to make this happen.

Lambeau Field

This is what ESPN failed to show you Monday night. Apparently, they thought their commercials were more important than showing this scene for about 5 seconds.





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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.
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Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

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