



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2332

August 28, 2016

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

The 517th visits Belgium and Southern France

Greetings, Wanted to report that we are back safe and sound from a successful trip to Provence, where there were many commemorations and observances of the 15 August, 1944 invasion. I'd put some pics on Facebook, and I'll attach a few more.

The jump list: Just four this year - veterans Kaare Allan Johnson, 596, and Robert Webber, HQ Mortar Platoon, along with his son, Bruce, and me.

The schedule: Sospel, Trois Ponts in Belgium for Allan, Claire and Roland Orengo, and then the Draguinan area for celebrations in La Motte, Les Arcs and Le Muy.

The friends: The number of friends of the 517 is amazing, and I always risk leaving someone out, but here goes:

In Sospel, dear **Roland** and **Patou Orengo**. In Trois Ponts, ever-wonderful **Irma and Arnold Targnion**, and lovely **Maria Gaspar**, as well as the entire committee of the CADUSA. Longtime friends **Eddy Lamberty**, **Cedric Gregoire** and **Jean Marie Plusquin** met us there as well. In the Var, **Eric Renoux** and his amazing wife, **Laurence**. **Loic Jankowiak** and **Adrien Soldi**, who took **Bob and Bruce Webber** out in a Jeep and showed them important and relevant sites in the DZ area, as Roland had done for them in the Col de Braus/Hill 1098 area. Incredible **Jean Marc** and **Elisabeth Atlan**, who visited Leo so much last summer and **David Fouan**, who was also on Visiting Leo Duty. **Ian Patrick**, professional photographer whom I'm happy to call a friend. **Alison Libersa** is a constant presence at the Rhone American Cemetery and this year we welcomed new superintendent there, **Dwight "Andy" Anderson**. Can't forget **Felicia**, **Graham** and **Iona Thompson** of La Motte. These people and so many others have combined to make these visits ever richer, as we become closer with every visit.

This was our first trip to Belgium, and happily, Roland Orengo accompanied us the entire time. **Irma and Arnold Targnion** of Trois Ponts are incredible long-time friends to the 517, and in the past two years, since **Merle McMorro**, **Joanne Barrett**, **Nancey Armand** and **Mimsey Boyle** went, now Roland and the Targnions are friends. Don't you love it when your friends become friends? The CADUSA - the committee to welcome US Airborne veterans - gave us an incredible welcome, including memorials at the important sites and a beautiful and sumptuous luncheon. It was simply amazing. Allan, having missed nearly the entire Battle of the Bulge while in the hospital, was visiting to pay his respects and visit the places important to the 517. He rejoined the outfit at Stavelot right before moving out to Bergstein and we'd always wanted to visit Belgium. Thankfully, Roland knows his way around and



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saved us so much time, making sure we visited the museum that had a 517 display and helping find important markers. The number of markers is staggering and indicative of the battle that raged all across this peaceful, beautiful area. On our last day, Roland, Irma and Arnold helped us find the area of Bergstein, Germany, where Allan remembered their last major action.

In the Var region of France, August 15 events over three days included ceremonies at Le Mitan (site of the first field hospital - that's a picture of Josette, who remembers when the paratroopers arrived) and La Motte, as well as Le Muy, Les Arcs and at the Rhone Cemetery at Draguignan. Many events were scaled back in the wake of the Nice terrorist attack; remember that when we arrived, it was only about three weeks later. At that point, about a hundred people still remained in the hospital, many with devastating injuries. Saddest for me was the scaling back of the usual 16 August "informal" ceremony at the Rhone, in my heart always my favorite. We were able to proceed with smaller numbers, and it was relocated to the chapel this year, and therefore especially beautiful.

This was a year without **Leo Dean**, who'd traveled with us about nine times for these events, and also without longtime friend of the outfit, 551 veteran **Dick Field**. They were remembered at the ceremonies and events, and in fact large photos were held of them in La Motte. The young lady who held Leo's picture at Le Mitan in the morning was especially beautiful; Leo would have loved it! **Stephane Hadadje** and the Airborne Jump Team facilitated the placement of a memorial commemorating the Dick and the 551 arrival at Valbourges, where the annual luncheon has been held for a few years now, and where you can still see the remains of a glider in a tree.

I am thrilled that **Bob Webber** and his son, Bruce, were able to come for his first trip. It was an amazing journey for them, and people were so excited to meet a first-time veteran! They left with connections and promises to follow up - and especially to scan the photo album from the war that was so interesting to all they met.

Another great trip in the books, I am happy to report.

Claire Giblin



Allan with Eddy Lamberty



Irma, Allan, and Arnold



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At Maria Gaspar's house (with 517th plaque)



Dear friend Eric Renoux, standing still.

L-R: Bob Webber, Eric Renoux, Claire G, Bruce Webber, Allan Johnson



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Um, how many 92-year-olds help with a Jeep push start? The Continuing Adventures of PFC Johnson.

After a successful foray. Thank you, Loic and Adrian!

— with **Adrien Soldi** and **Loïc Jankowiak**.





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Ceremonies at
Draguignan

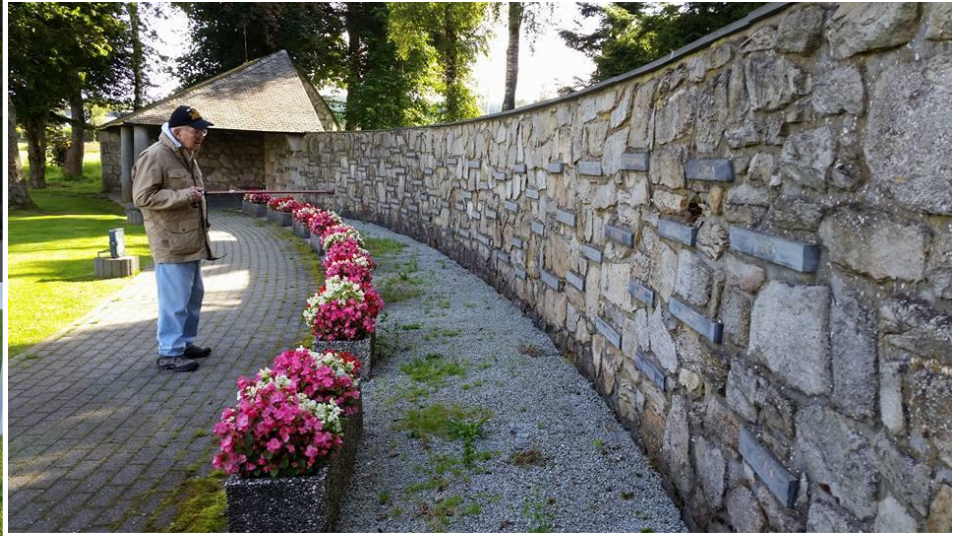


With **Ginni Fields**





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Malmedy





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Claire Giblin and Allan Johnson in Belgium, with Roland Orengo:

Dear friends of America, I presume Claire sent some pictures with his father Allan JOHNSON during his visite in our area in august. We had a wonderful time (too short) Allan is a very special and wonderful man. We all have a deep respect and gratitude to express to him and his comrades in combats. Some pictures at City Hall of Trois-Ponts during the reception to honour him, pictures in Wanne, Logbiermé and Stavelot.

Lots of Love to all of you. From the CADUSA, **Irma and Arnold TRGANION**



Logbierme



Wanne



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Trois-Ponts



Stavelot



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TROIS-PONTS - Claire and Allan with the present from the Community - photo in Stavelot with Victorine Gustin, Président of CADUSA near the plaque 596th on the brigade on the river AMBLEVE. During his visit, Allan met **Maria GASPAR**, went to Werbomont, Neufmoulin, Manhay, Grand-Menil, Bra, St Jacques, Rochelival, Baugnez (Malmedy) and of course, to Bergstein (Germany) with Claire and his faithful friend **Roland Orengo**



Allan JOHNSON in St Jacques CHURCH - on the altar, the candelabras dedicated to the soldiers MITCHEL and BLOOMS killed near the church in 1945; the candelabras were offered by the men of the 517 th PRCT





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Other MailCall News

On this day in 1944:

22 August 1944

Patrol encountered M.G. fire from ST. CEZAIRE. Strong defensive position reported in ST. CEZAIRE. The 3rd Battalion attacked the town and received heavy mortar and M.G. fire

28 August in 1944: "E" Company road block, north of LA ROCQUETTE, was fired on throughout the day by mortars and small arms.

U.S. Pole Vaulter Who Serves in Army Stops Mid-run to Stand at Attention for Anthem



A Team USA pole vaulter named Sam Kendricks also happens to be a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army Reserves. His love and respect for his country, already evident by the titles he holds, was on full display in Rio last week.

Kendricks was about to take flight for his final qualifying jump last week when the U.S. national anthem started to play. Check out how he responded.

Kendricks, who already serves his country by making the ultimate sacrifice, left Rio by earning the U.S. a bronze medal. He told the Team USA website that he is "proud" to represent the nation on these two fronts.



<http://m.townhall.com/tipsheet/cortneyobrien/2016/08/22/watch-us-army-pole-vaulter-in-rio-stops-midrun-to-stand-at-attention-for-anthem-n2208327>



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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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