



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



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

**MailCall No. 2359**

June 18, 2017

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

### *Pvt. Robert R. Gruwell – MIA/KIA*

**From:** "Forbes, Christopher S COL USARMY DPAA RA (US)

**Date:** June 18, 2017 at 2:17:22 PM EDT

**Subject:** PVT Robert Gruwell, 517 PIR. WWII MIA (U)

CLASSIFICATION: UNCLASSIFIED

CAVEAT: None

Dear Mr. Barrett,

Please pardon my intrusion out of the blue. I am with the Department of Defense's POW/MIA Accounting Agency. I am writing you due to an article I observed on the web from the 517 PIR newsletter in 2013. In it I saw where you had listed several sources who potentially had information reference an MIA, PVT Robert Gruwell from the 517 PIR. I am leading a team to Southern France later this week to follow up on a visit I did last year in our efforts to locate, identify and return PVT Gruwell to his Family.

Any information or leads that you could provide would be most welcome. We believe we have found where he was buried and are working with the French local officials for permissions to exhume. But any additional information or leads that you could provide us would be most helpful.

I will be on the move most of this next week hosting a Russian delegation related to our archival research we do in Moscow of their records. So I will be on my cell phone mostly. Feel free to contact me any time.

Thank you again for your time and any assistance you can offer.

Best,

Chris Forbes

CHRISTOPHER S. FORBES, COL, U.S. Army

Director, Euro/Med Directorate

Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency

COMM: ###-###-####

Cell: ###-###-####

DSN: 499-1220



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The info below is from [MailCall 2161](#), June 2, 2013. There is also additional info about the search for Gruwell's remains in [MailCall 2192](#) December 22, 2013.

I happened to be looking through some old records of **Clark Archer's** today (Memorial Day). I have seen most of these records before, but I did find a couple of things that I never knew about. One group of these notes includes the details about the search for **Pvt. Robert R. Gruwell**. (**Merle McMorrow** will probably remember some of this story from when he was the Association president.)

The conclusion is that Pvt. Gruwell of G Company was MIA on August 15, 1944, and believed killed in the vicinity of La Motte. But his body was never recovered. Clark's records, as always, are very thorough. They include a lot of correspondence dating back to the initial investigations in 1949-1951 as well as another search done by the 517<sup>th</sup> in 1997 with potential witnesses and the Department of the Army and even our friends in France (**J. Michel Soldi** and **Eric Renoux**) looking for the gravesite.

The conclusion is that Pvt. Gruwell was killed, and his body was discovered on the road from Callian to La Motte on August 17, and identified by three other members of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion. His dog tags were missing, but they recognized his weapons (a BAR belt and clip) and were able to find an identification number in his boots. Unfortunately, his body was not recovered, then went missing and has never been located. In one note, they believe it was taken to a local Catholic Church and buried.

There is one final note about Pvt. Gruwell at the end of the 1997 documentation:

Our single lead of a fairly specific nature is provided by Dr. Walter Plassman who served as 3rd Battalion/517th PIR Medical Officer.

I quote from his recent letter;

" The casualties I attended were in Montauroux. I believe there were seven (7) in number before we were evacuated on D+3 or D+4. The townspeople were very helpful with food etc."

" Diagonally across the street from our wounded center was a Catholic church and a small cemetery."

" One dead U.S. soldier was brought to us by the FFI on D+1. "

★ " The local priest and several others gave him a Christian burial in that small cemetery. "

" ....He was one of ours, but I don't remember his Company, "

Because of his longtime MIA status, Gruwell has never been listed on the 517 Honor Roll, our listing of those who were Killed in Action. So I am now going to go ahead and add Robert Gruwell's name to the KIA list, which brings the total count to 254 men of the 517<sup>th</sup> killed in WW2.

See: <http://517prct.org/kia.htm>

On the next page is one of the letters written in 1997 in order to have a memorial marker installed in remembrance of Pvt. Gruwell. Does anyone know if this was ever done?

Bob Barrett



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Although I am very hopeful about this note above from Col. Forbes, based on past false starts and some questions about his email, I have to be skeptical for now. But I will keep everyone posted.

Bob Barrett

### *MailCall News*

Wow! Dad just told me that **Bob Dalrymple** is turning 100 tomorrow!

Bob, I wish you the very happiest of birthdays! You are an inspiration and a hero, and we're proud to know you!

All the very best with great thanks and respect -

**Claire Giblin**

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Happy Birthday Bob -- amazing 100 years young and still going strong.

**Pat Seitz**

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Greeting Bob: I ran across 13 Thunderbolts that I published during the period 1st Quarter 2000 through the year 2004. I wonder if copies were ever furnished to you. When did you set up the website?

I sent one of the issues by regular mail this morning. Let me know if you want the rest. I saw Ben mentioned in some issues.

**Merle McMorrow**

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I don't know where it was found but I believe that this person bought the helmet from someone else. Speaking of morning reports, is my dad in any of them? He was in third battalion "H" company with Howard Hensleigh. I know he was wounded twice but it may have been when he was with the 504PIR "A" co. My dad fought in Market Garden and I wonder if he wasn't part of D day because the 504th was there. "A" company was wiped out at some point of the war and he was transferred to the 517th on Oct 9, 1944. I have to get back on my I phone to find the guys name who has the helmet...Thanks allot for your assistance.

**Rick Sweet**

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I found a little more information on that helmet. He said it was found in Belgium. The owner is Frederic Hermann and he lives in Cornillon-Confoux. He is also a friend of **Claire** and **Jean Michel Soldi**. Thanks again for the info. I'll let him know who you think it may be.

**Rick Sweet**



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Bob:

Listening to a TV program this afternoon titled "Events in World War II that History Forget" covered many events that were considered training exercises. If they were unsuccessful and men were lost, the public never heard of it. One case you probably heard off recently is the practice D-Day invasion in April 1944 held off the isolated south shores of England. Over 25,000 men in LTS out in the ocean in these landing craft were surprised by German torpedo boats (Schnellboot). The Germans torpedoed two of the landing craft and damaged others. Over a thousand men were lost.

The reason I bring this up is because of something similar I thought of when watching the program. In September 1944, the Army was scheduled to try a glider experiment. At the end of the runway, two poles were erected one on each side and a 1-inch diameter nylon tow line between the poles. Below that line were 13 of us sitting in a glider, a C-47 came out of nowhere at full speed and the hook on the tail of the plane snatched this 300 tow line. The nylon tow stretched and then we shot ahead. I am surprised we didn't all end up with whiplash.

The experiment was a success since we all survived but if we hadn't you wouldn't have heard about it, After that one glider ride, I would have preferred to go into combat without a chute than to ride one of those gliders in.

### Merle McMorrow

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Hello,

I was wondering if you could help point me in the right direction... I have a family member who served in Company I of the 517 during world war II. His name was **Joseph S. Shari**. He never really spoke at his time in WWII, he was wounded in combat and did receive the purple heart.

I am just trying to find out more information about his experiences and possibly locate anyone in the 517 who might have served with him.

He is on the top row second from the right end, two away from flag.

[http://517prct.org/photos/3rd\\_battalion\\_I\\_Co/i\\_co\\_mackall.htm](http://517prct.org/photos/3rd_battalion_I_Co/i_co_mackall.htm)

Any assistance would be greatly appreciated.

John Shari





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Can anyone identify this 460<sup>th</sup> trooper?

From:

<https://www.facebook.com/WW2ABHistoricalCo/posts/1573630812670253:0>

Unfortunately he's unidentified. Found it on eBay.

<http://www.ebay.com/itm/311893092545>

WWII 460th PFAB 17th Airborne 8x10 Studio Photo  
Paratrooper in Jump Jacket Patch

Item condition: Used

“Awesome original Studio Photo with one bend crease, see 6th photo.”

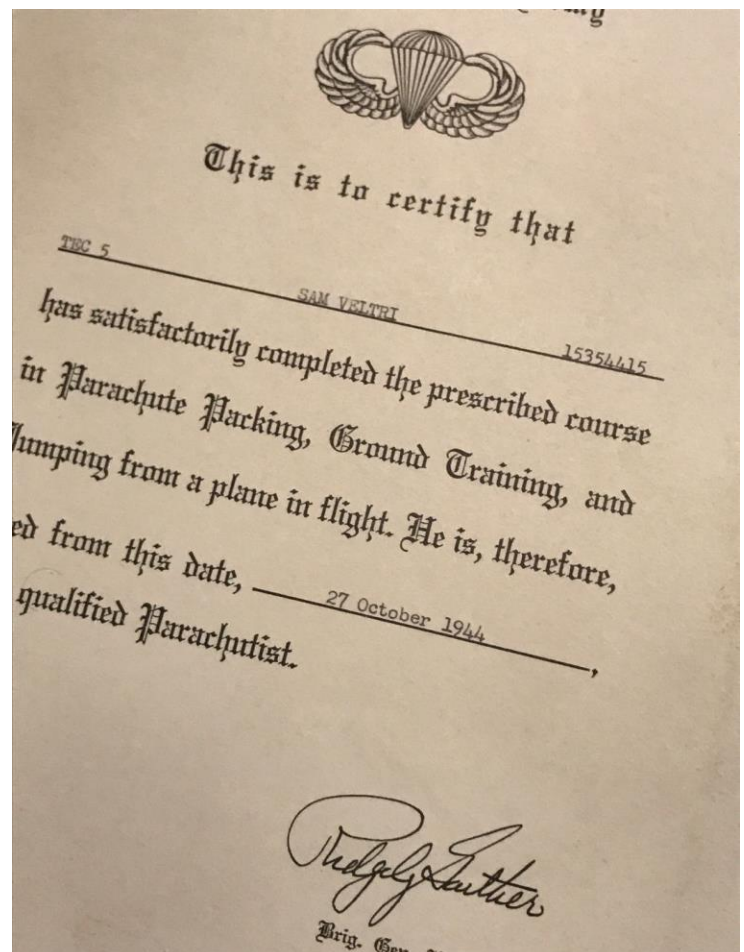
Ended: Jun 15, 2017 , 3:17PM <span>12:17:51  
PDT</span>

Winning bid: US \$210.50 [ 26 bids ]

Also found on eBay at:

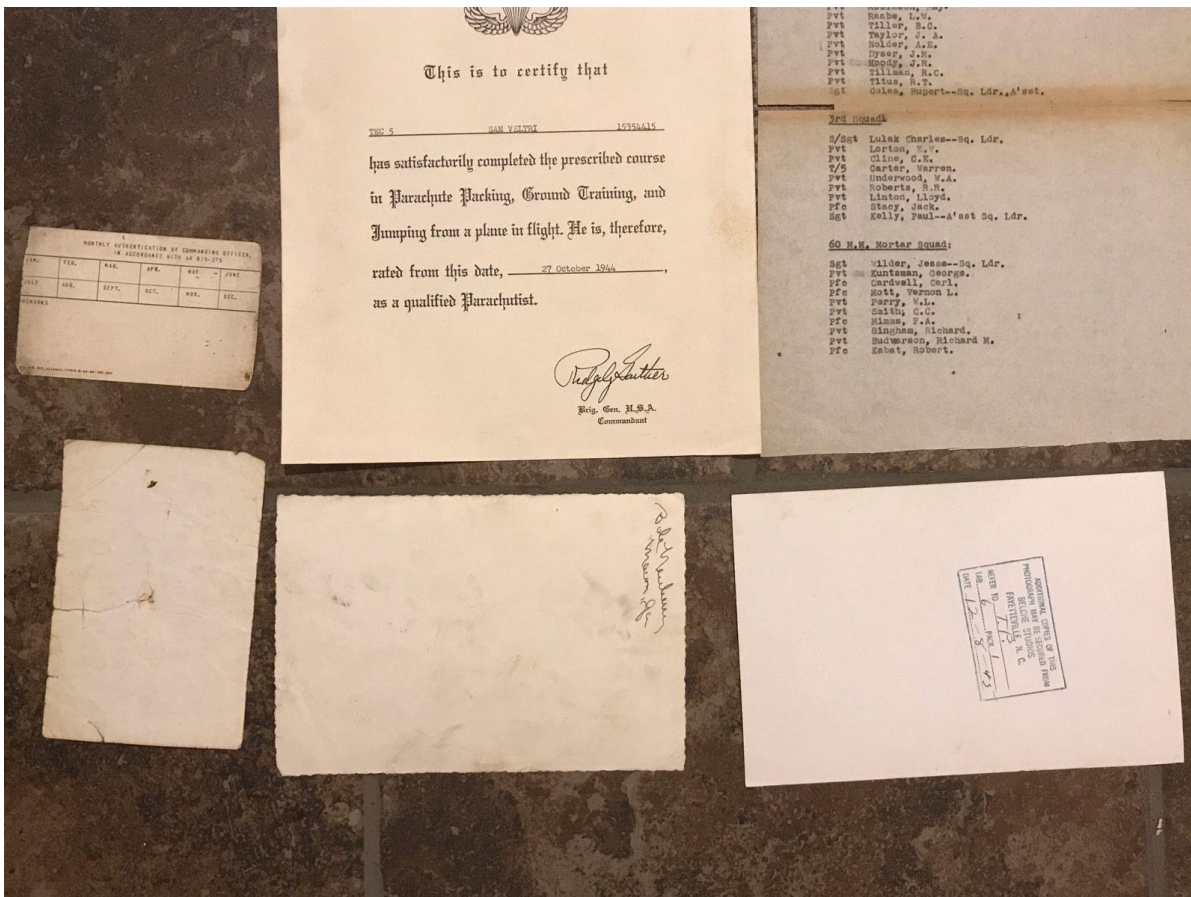
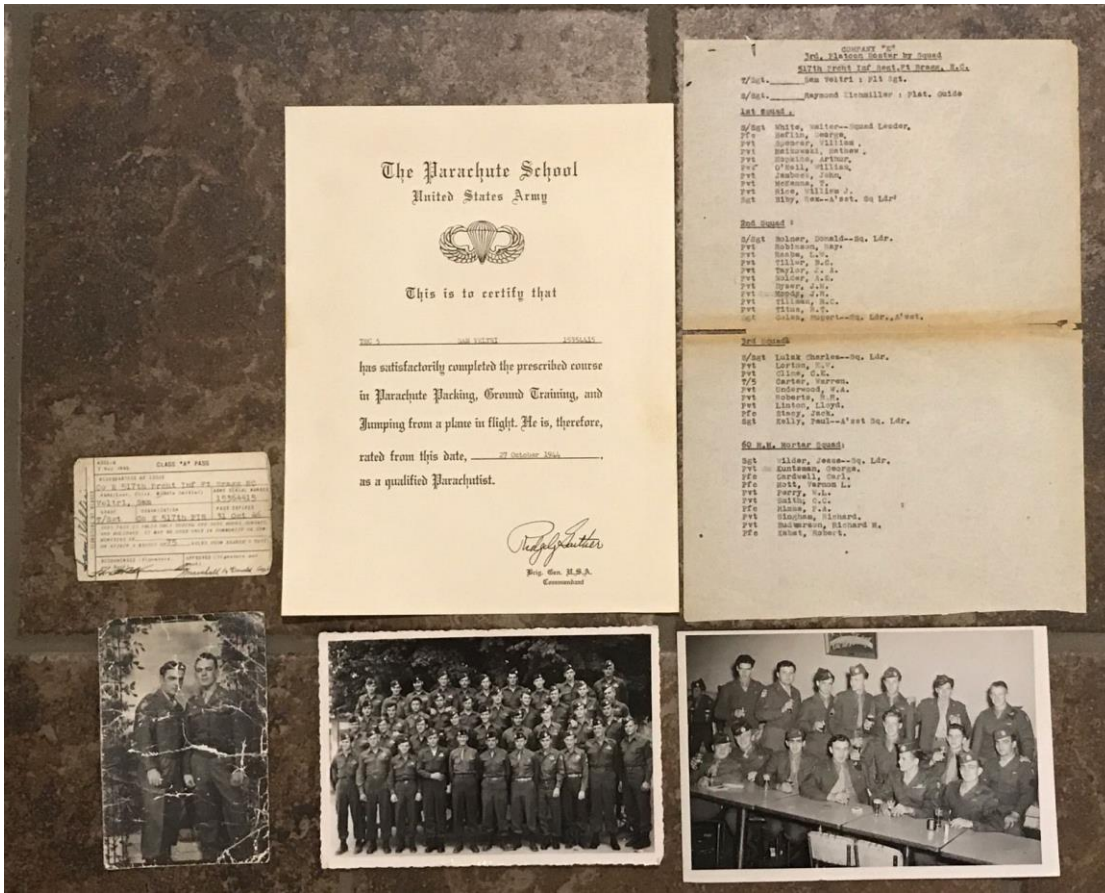
<http://www.ebay.com/itm/Ww2-517th-Airborne-Paratrooper-Jump-Certificate-Named-Grouping-/263038478419?hash=item3d3e50a853:g:V5wAAOSwK6RZKhKQ>

Parachute Jump School certificate and photos from  
**T/Sgt. Sam Veltri**, E Company.





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COMPANY "E"  
3rd. Platoon Roster by Squad  
517th Prcht Inf Regt. Ft Bragg, N.C.

T/Sgt. \_\_\_\_\_ Sam Veltri : Plt Sgt.  
S/Sgt. \_\_\_\_\_ Raymond Zichmiller : Plat. Guide

1st Squad .

S/Sgt White, Walter--Squad Leader.  
Pfc Heflin, George.  
Pvt Spencer, William .  
Pvt Maikowski, Mathew .  
Pvt Hopkins, Arthur.  
Pvt O'Neil, William.  
Pvt Jambock, John.  
Pvt McKenna, T.  
Pvt Rice, William J.  
Sgt Biby, Rex--A'sst. Sq Ldr:

2nd Squad :

S/Sgt Bolner, Donald--Sq. Ldr.  
Pvt Robinson, Ray.  
Pvt Raabe, L.W.  
Pvt Tiller, B.C.  
Pvt Taylor, J. A.  
Pvt Nolder, A.E.  
Pvt Dyser, J.M.  
Pvt Moody, J.R.  
Pvt Tillman, R.C.  
Pvt Titus, R.T.  
Sgt Coles, Rupert--Sq. Ldr., A'sst.

3rd Squad

S/Sgt Lulak Charles--Sq. Ldr.  
Pvt Lorton, E.W.  
Pvt Cline, C.E.  
T/5 Carter, Warren.



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4SCL-6  
7 May 1945 CLASS "A" PASS

HEADQUARTERS OF ISSUE  
Co E 517th Precht Inf Ft Bragg NC

NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial) Veltri, Sam ARMY SERIAL NUMBER 15364415

GRADE T/Sgt ORGANIZATION Co E 517th PIR PASS EXPIRES 31 Oct 46

THIS PASS IS VALID ONLY DURING OFF-DUTY HOURS, SUNDAYS, AND HOLIDAYS. IT MAY BE USED ONLY IN COMMUNITY OR COMMUNITIES OF \_\_\_\_\_ MILES FROM BEARER'S POST.

SIGNATURE OF BEARER: *Sam Veltri*

RECOMMENDED (Signature and Rank): *[Signature]*

APPROVED (Signature and Rank): *Marshall Lt Donald Capri*





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Camp Toccoa 517<sup>th</sup> Wall banner reproductions sold on eBay:

<http://www.ebay.com/itm/WWII-US-AIRBORNE-517-TH-PIR-CAMP-TOCCOA-GA-WALL-HANGER-BARRACKS-FLAG-/122546125795?hash=item1c88517be3:g:RToAAOSwyltZPuTq>





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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](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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Website	<a href="http://www.517prct.org">www.517prct.org</a>
Send MailCall news to	<a href="mailto:MailCall@517prct.org">MailCall@517prct.org</a>
MailCall Archives	<a href="http://www.517prct.org/archives">www.517prct.org/archives</a>
2016 Roster (updated!)	<a href="http://www.517prct.org/roster.pdf">www.517prct.org/roster.pdf</a>
Thunderbolt Archives	<a href="http://www.517prct.org/archives">www.517prct.org/archives</a>

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