



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2369

October 8, 2017

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

MailCall News

RE: Questions concerning **Pvt Gruwell**.

Thanks for the information. I will make an honest effort to be as accurate as possible. I do have a question and please let me know the answer, if you know it, right away.

Did members of the 517th go to Southern France as a sort of reunion in 1997 or at any other time?

As far as Pvt. Gruwell's family are concerned, Jean-Loup has contact information for them, but he told me they have not been very responsive to his inquiries. Perhaps if Jean-Loup sends the information to the Army search team the family would respond to them.

Joe Figueiredo

I saw in the last MailCall a note from Joe Figueiredo wanting to get a hold of me. He can reach me at mjkanejd@netscape.net. I'd be happy to meet up with him.

Mike Kane

I just found a note received from **John J. Strojan** (I Company), whom I met at the Kansas City reunion in 2012. Sorry for the delay. – BB

August 16, 2017

Dear Miriam and Bob,

Although this thank-you is now belated, as usual, I promise to write some more soon (quit laughing), at least before August 15, 2018.

Many thanks for all you have done in memory of 517th PRCT troopers like Bill and Ben, and even me.

Use the enclosed for expenses, salary, etc. God bless you,



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Sincerely,

John J. Strojan, I Company

PS: I am approaching my 92nd birthday September 22, 2017. No gifts, please, but a postcard would cheer me up. Am I still the youngest, as I was in KC in 2012?

From **John Strojan**:



Left photos is **Bob Vaught** and **Ben Barrett**



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Dear Bob: may I echo **Paul Abbene**. It's always such a treat to read MailCall. Thank you, thank you.

Thank you also for the latest update on the efforts to honor and identify the remains of **Pvt. Robert Gruwell**. The described dedication and persistence is truly remarkable. Hope a relative of his can be located.

Paul Lewis' story about his grandfather's memorable ride post-VE day to Paris reminds me of the family story Dad used to tell about one of his men he sent (I believe it was to Paris) to get a wedding ring for my mother for their wedding in Joigny June 23, 1945. Apparently, the person sent became side tracked in a bar. So a second person was sent, the ring ultimately obtained. Although it was too big, Mama wore it until she died.

Mama was a Red Cross worker who ran a R&R center in Holland. She and Dad met at Kansas State then College in 1938; Dad went into the Army in '39; they continued their romance long-distance. In 1943 Mama joined the Red Cross and was sent to England. In the fall of '44 she was transferred to Holland. Mama and Dad were writing to each other but their mail was censored so they didn't know where each was except that they were both in Europe. In January '45, Mama saw in the Stars and Stripes that Task Force Seitz was heavily engaged in battle at St. Vith. She drove the commandeered German staff car that she had been given (it was a convertible that had been repainted olive drab) from Holland and found the 517th Regimental headquarters in a Belgian farmhouse asking to see Dick Seitz. The rest, as they say, is history!



Mama (Betty Merrill) in German staff BMW commandeered for the American Red Cross

Alan and I look forward to seeing you, Joanne and Cody on October 7 in Boston. All of us descendants of the great men of the 517th are so indebted to your Herculean effort to properly dissolve the Association consistent with Massachusetts law and the IRS, and arrange for the continuation of the preservation of the 517th history at Toccoa, Ga.

Pat Seitz and Alan Greer



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Tom Cross Alice Gould Dad Betty Col. Graves

Seitz wedding party - **Tom Cross** (Best Man), Alice Gould (Maid of Honor), Dad, Mama, and **Col. Graves**, who gave the bride away.

http://www.517prct.org/photos/dick_seitz/seitz.htm



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Found on <https://www.ima-usa.com/products/original-u-s-wwii-517th-parachute-infantry-regiment-517th-pir-named-grouping-operation-dragon>



Original U.S. WWII 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment (517th PIR) Named Grouping - Operation Dragon

Regular price \$6,995.00

Original Items: One-of-a-kind grouping. **James Vincent Florentine** Army serial number 33435420 enlisted in 1943 and was a Sergeant in the 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment seeing combat as a member **First Airborne Task Force**, he was awarded a Bronze Star for

heroic achievement in a combat zone. We confirmed his bronze star on the 517th official website here: www.517prct.org

Included in this amazing grouping are the following items:

- M1942 Jump Jacket with 13th Airborne Division patch on left shoulder and laundry number D 2742 above the left breast pocket and on the inside. The jacket is in excellent condition.
- M1942 jump Pants in excellent condition.
- Ike Jacket, and medal ribbon bar with the following awards: Bronze Star, Purple Heart with Oak Leaf, Army Good Conduct Medal, European- Africa- Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with invasion Arrow and FOUR battle stars, Sterling silver parachute jump wings with battle star, Sterling silver glider wings with battle star, a Combat Infantryman Badge, 13th airborne shoulder patch (left shoulder) and Sergeant Chevrons on each shoulder . The jacket has a label stitched to the internal central seam that reads: **FLORENTINE**
- Overseas Infantry Garrison side cap with Paratrooper patch, Size 7 with upgraded lining.
- Standard issue Khaki cotton shirt with 13th Airborne Patch.
- Purple Heart medal with oak leaf in original case.
- Bronze Star medal in original case.
- "Thunder from Heaven" Story of the 17th Airborne Division 1943-1945
- Bone grip pocket knife with bootlace lanyard.
- U.S. Army issue whistle also attached to the bootlace whistle.
- 10+ Personal wartime photos
- Copy of original Application for World War Compensation document.
- Soda Fountain Tickets
- Paratrooper wrist compass without strap.

This grouping belonged to a true American hero who saw action in some of the most famous and gruesome battles in WW2 including the Battle of the Bulge and was awarded a Bronze Star for heroic achievement in a combat zone.



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Good afternoon,

I am attempting to gather additional information about a soldier in the 517th PRCT. His name was PFC **Charles R. Fedel**; he was my Great Grandfather. I am attempting to put together a shadow box of his service items (I have his medals and a newspaper clipping from the Bridgeport news in April 1945 titled: *Paratrooper Blow Astray: Joins Free French Forces*); he was awarded the Silver Star, Bronze Star, and Purple Heart, among his campaign and service awards. Additionally, I was recently able to obtain a unit patch from eBay, but I do not have any information concerning his company/unit, or anything else pertaining to his service time. He has a surviving daughter, Charlotte Daniels, my Grandmother, who resides in Chicago, IL.

Any additional information would be appreciated; thank you.

Very Respectfully,

LCDR Thomas J. Maruna, MSc, MLS(ASCP), CPH
Senior Program Management Officer (Data Quality)

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Hi Thomas,

I'm looking through my records, which BTW are very incomplete. Currently on the website, I only see PFC **Charles R. Fedel** listed in the *Paratroopers' Odyssey* on the Silver Star list – Page 251 -- so we do know he was in the 517th and had some significant action. Do you have info on the Silver Star award? If so, please send me that. I cannot find him on the Christmas 1944 roster, which probably means that he joined the 517th after mid-December '44, or that he was wounded before then. Can you tell me which Company he was with?

I just found him on Casualty report with F Company – Pvt, Charles Fedel, MIA on August 19, 1944 (Attached). Back on duty Sept 11.

COMPAN	TA	LAST NA	FIRST NAME	M	RANK	DATE	CODE	S/N	MOS	LOCATION	NOTES
F		Fedel	Charles	R	PFC	16-Sep-1944		36666247	745	600 yds. W. Mt. Venebran, France	fr MIA to dy as of 11th Sept 44.
F		Fedel	Charles	R	PFC	24-Nov-1944		36666247	7745	1 Mi. W. of La Colle, France	fr dy to sk in qtrs.
F		Fedel	Charles	R	PFC	29-Nov-1944		36666247	7745	1 Mi. W. of La Colle, France	fr sk in qtrs to dy.
F		Fedel	Charles	L	PFC	7-Jan-1945	AG	36666247	7761	1 Mile E of Arbrefontaine, Belgium	fr duty to ab sk in Hosp NBC LD basic status changed fr asgd to atchd unasgd
F		Fedel	Charles	R	PFC	28-Mar-1945	J4	36666242	7745	Joigny, France 675-410	Fr ab sk DS hosp. Basic Status atchd unasgd, to trfd Hq 55th US Gen Hosp APO 121 per SO 57 Hq 55th Gen Hosp APO 121 USA.

But I don't see any specifics on the actions or Silver Star. Let me know what else you have, and I'll keep looking.

Bob Barrett



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In doing research for **Charles Fedel**, I noticed that in the Christmas 1944 roster, for the 2nd Battalion HQ, the listing specifically lists some soldiers as “Non-Jumpers”. Can anyone explain why they are listed separately, and only on the HQ/2 page? -- BB

http://517prct.org/documents/xmas1944/xmas_1944_hq_co_3rd_2.jpg

Oct 7, 2017,

Joanne Barrett and I had the pleasure of joining a 517th mini-reunion in Boston last night. **Pat Seitz** and **Rick Seitz** came us to Boston to visit friends, and **Alan Johnson**, reigning president of the 517th Association, came up to Boston with his grandson, Tim, to join us. Also included was **Cody Thornton**, the young lawyer who has been helping us with the dissolution of the 517th and associated tax and IRS issues. – BB

Cody Thornton,
Allan Johnson (596th PCEC),
and **Joanne Barrett**

More photos in the next MailCall





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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.

Website	www.517prct.org
Send MailCall news to	MailCall@517prct.org
MailCall Archives	www.517prct.org/archives
2016 Roster (updated!)	www.517prct.org/roster.pdf
Thunderbolt Archives	www.517prct.org/archives



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