



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2393

August 12, 2018

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

MailCall News

I hope this finds you well. I recently started compiling the service history of all my family members and was having trouble finding out where **Charles R Fedel** served during the war. I knew that he was a paratrooper, and family stories always told about him getting separated from his unit during the drop and being MIA for a month, but I never knew what unit he was with where besides France. I recently discovered that Charles served with the 517 PIR, and a quick google search lead me to your site.

My name is Matthew Fedel, and I'm the grandson of **Charles "Chuck" Fedel's** youngest brother Jim. Charles would be my "Great-Uncle".

Further, I spotted in the mail call section from [October 8 2017](#) and [October 29 2017](#) where **Thomas Maruna** wrote in inquiring about Charles Fedel as well. I've attached the digital scan of the Silver Star citation I have of him, along with the picture my Grandfather had scanned before his death in 2002. Based on his jump gear, it looks like it was taken before Operation Dragoon.

Thanks to your site and Tom's contact with you, I was able to piece together more details, and sent him an email as well. It's great piece together stories that have been passed down word of mouth. I'm now squinting at my monitor at the pictures of Company F trying to match unknown faces to his.

Thanks to your site, it also looks like I'm now have connected with a distant relative!

Any further information on Charles that you or anyone else has, would me much appreciated!

All the best,
Matthew Fedel

Thomas Maruna sent me an additional photograph of Charles Fedel. Figured I would pass it along.

Thanks, Matt Fedel





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Good afternoon,

It has been nearly a year since we last corresponded, but I wanted to inform you that I just obtained Charles R. Fedel's Silver Star citation from another family member. The citation is attached along with an additional photo.

517 PARACHUTE INFANTRY THE REGIMENTAL CHAPLAIN

EXTRAC FROM GO #42 HQ. 1ST. ABTF, 21 NOV, 1944

Charles R. Fedel, 36666247, Private First Class, Parachute Inf., US Army, for gallantry in action near Le Muy, France, on 15 Aug. 1944. Private First Class Fedel was a member of a small patrol advancing through strongly held enemy territory to rejoin their unit... He aggressively gave continuous covering fire with his automatic rifle. Under intense enemy small arms fire, and with the assistance of another soldier, he moved a wounded comrade to cover into a near by building. Under prolonged attack by enemy patrols, supported by artillery, Private First Class Fedel, with utter disregard for his own safety, took a position at an open door and repelled repeated enemy attacks. Through his courageous actions and devotion to duty, Private First Class Fedel contributed substantially to the preservation of the lives of his comrades by maintaining the one possible field of fire on the enemy, as all other supplies of ammunition were exhausted. His gallant actions are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service. Entered the military service from Chicago Illinois.

Very Respectfully,

Thomas J. Maruna, MSc, MLS(ASCP), PMP, CPH
Lieutenant Commander, U.S. Public Health Service
Senior Program Management Officer





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Good morning, Bob

1). I wonder if you have e mail or snail mail address for any of the Dalrymples. I had an e mail for son George and sent a note but it bounced back.

2) do you know if any of the 517 families would like a 75th anniversary trip to Le Muy and other Dragoon towns in Aug 2019 and possible side trip to Normandy. I am interested and wondered if anyone shares this interest.

Thanks

Theresa Pugh

Daughter of **Charles Pugh**

Hi Theresa,

Sorry for the very late response. I'm still catching up with MailCall letters in a busy summer. (Including my youngest daughter's wedding in 2 weeks!)

I'm not sure I have a direct contact for Bob Dalrymple's family, just an old address. But I heard about his passing from **Merle McMorrow**, who might have a better contact. I am copying Merle on the email.

As far as attending the events in France, I never heard of any formal group planning on that. However, just yesterday I saw a Facebook posting that appears to be **Claire and Jim Giblin**, with our 517th president-for-life, **K. Allan Johnson**, in the airport on their way. At this time of year, I'm certain that Nice, Le Muy and Sospel are their destinations. I just checked again, and it looks like they've now arrived in Sospel. I have a couple of pictures for today's MailCall.

By the way, next year, 2019, will be the 75th anniversary of Operation Dragoon and the Battle of the Bulge. I expect there will be some big ceremonies planned in France and Belgium.

Regards,

Bob Barrett



On the Way!

(Aug 11)

Allan Johnson, Claire and Jim Giblin



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From <https://www.facebook.com/CampToccoaAtCurrahee/>

August 11, 2018:

Had a tremendous work day at Camp Toccoa at Currahee today. We had a great group of guys show up and worked really hard in the hot sun. This is the flooring system for our second Barracks at the Camp which will be in honor of the 517th Regiment, one of the four Regiments that trained at Camp Toccoa. This Barracks, when finished will be the one closet to the Pavilion, Headquarters Building and the bathhouse. It will also be ADA compliant with a ramp on the back platform for anyone needing a little mobility assistance.

We want to thank the 517th Association for their generous donation, making this build possible.

We had to order the rest of the flooring, so when it arrives, we will be able to finish the floor. We are working on getting more panels removed, reworked and ready for installation.

Please keep looking for our next workday at the Camp.

Thanks to Seth Roesch, David Faucett, Gary Bellamy, Matt Lathan, Steve Lathan, Kieth Hornick, Larry Poole and a special thanks to Brad Rettig, for coming down from Knoxville, Tennessee to help with the build. We appreciate all the help, from all the guys. Currahee!





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I am very careful about not including political statements and opinions in MailCall. I know there are members of the 517th family who are all over the spectrum – left-right, liberal-conservative, democrats, republicans, independents, green party. These days, there's no quicker way to start an argument than to try to convince the other side. But I found this article, forwarded by Teresa M, to be thoughtful. How about a vote for old-fashioned respect and politeness? -- BB

Hello Bob;

I hope this finds you and the 517prct family well. As you may know I am a flight attendant, and I've had the honor bringing home fallen soldiers home to their final resting place. On one of my solemn flights a dear colleague I respect discussed about the change of our society's conversation is about politics rather than kindness and compassion. Mary is a passionate writer and she shared her most recent essay which she allowed me to share with Mail call family. I thought perhaps her words will move others as it did for me.

Very Truly,

Teresa Messina

From Seattle

YES, YOU CAN.....BUT SHOULD YOU ?

By Mary Kesselring

The 1st Amendment .

Freedom of speech. A privilege that is a hallmark of American life. A hard fought privilege and one that should be embraced and appreciated.

The men and women of the Armed Services (my father included) sacrificed much to maintain this honor. Some gave their lives and I don't think it's a stretch to say that most gave at least a piece of their emotional well-being. Many return to their beloved USA in flag - draped caskets. Many come back severely wounded - some with life altering physical challenges to deal with. ALL come back with a changed view of what America's freedoms mean to them - they realize the steep price that is paid for that freedom. They form camaraderies in whatever capacity they served, whether on the battlefield or not, and recognize the importance of working together to achieve a great goal. They are all a part of a military system that protects our nation from so many who do not share our same liberties and do not understand that those liberties are not something to fear.

Their efforts give us the freedom to express our views in an open forum without fear of imprisonment, torture, or any other punishment that many other countries don't afford to their citizens.

So YES, because of this,

You can go onto a liberal college campus and burn a flag, yell insults, curse and degrade others.

But SHOULD you?

You can shout racial slurs, openly express your distaste for homosexuality and treat other human beings with disdain because they lead a life you don't agree with.

But SHOULD you?



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You can disagree with the outcome of an election because a flawed candidate you dislike won and you can riot in the streets and loot and burn down innocent citizen's businesses and quite possibly escape legal consequences.

But SHOULD you?

You can judge other's opinions and call them bigots, racists, elitists even if you don't know anything about them or their lives, their experiences, or their relationship with the Almighty God.

But SHOULD you?

You can write provocatively sexual music with lyrics of profanity and violence and market it to the youth of our country at the expense of their innocence.

But SHOULD you?

You can call yourself a journalist, write biased and unsubstantiated "news" pieces. You can publish them on social media reaching exponentially more people at a faster rate than any other newspaper ever could in an effort to sway public opinion-instead of writing a truthful story with facts you might not like...

But SHOULD you?

You can even take a knee on the sidelines as an NFL player in a misguided attempt to draw attention to inequality - even if that gesture offends the very people who fought to give you the right to do it. In fact, I bet a lot of the soldiers who fought for our country probably took a knee when they were in anguish over the loss of one of their fallen comrades. Or took a knee in a bunker to escape enemy fire.

You can show those soldiers disrespect if you want...

But SHOULD you?

Our American population has become so entitled and judgmental that the pendulum has swung to a level that alarms me. Often times I long for the days of the past when most people conducted themselves in a way that can best be described as POLITE. Most people practiced more humility, dignity, and respect for elders, leaders, teachers, laws, and the enforcers of those laws. Those concepts seem to be vanishing in our country.

It's really okay hold your tongue sometimes. It really is. Because of the 1st Amendment you don't have to - this is true. But returning to the "golden rule " is actually a good and honorable thing. Does this mean you agree with everything others believe, do, and say? Of course not. That is an unachievable goal.

Does it mean you are letting yourself be walked on because you're not letting everyone within earshot know how you feel about a certain idea? Of course not. You have your opinions - all of which are valued - mine as equally as yours. You don't have to always be ready for your feelings to be hurt by someone's views.

It's assumed you feel most validated when you surround yourself with others who feel the same as you. That's a pretty understandable concept. But sometimes in life you are NOT always in the company of those who agree with you.

And in that case, it's okay to be polite.

And SHOULDN'T you?



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From **Phil McSpadden** (460-HQ)

Subject: Seventeen Inches



Twenty-one years ago, in Nashville, Tennessee during the first week of January 1996, more than 4,000 baseball coaches descended upon the Opryland Hotel for the 52nd annual ABCA's convention.

While I waited in line to register with the hotel staff, I heard other more veteran coaches rumbling about the lineup of speakers scheduled to present during the weekend.

One name, in particular, kept resurfacing, always with the same sentiment — “John Scolinos is here? Oh, man, worth every penny of my airfare.”

Who is John Scolinos, I wondered. No matter; I was just happy to be there.

In 1996, Coach Scolinos was 78 years old and five years retired from a college coaching career that began in 1948. He shuffled to the stage to an impressive standing ovation, wearing dark polyester pants, a light blue shirt, and a string around his neck from which home plate hung — a full-sized, stark-white home plate.

Seriously, I wondered, who is this guy?

After speaking for twenty-five minutes, not once mentioning the prop hanging around his neck, Coach Scolinos appeared to notice the snickering among some of the coaches. Even those who knew Coach Scolinos had to wonder exactly where he was going with this, or if he had simply forgotten about home plate since he'd gotten on stage. Then, finally ...

“You're probably all wondering why I'm wearing home plate around my neck,” he said, his voice growing irascible. I laughed along with the others, acknowledging the possibility. “I may be old, but I'm not crazy. The reason I stand before you today is to share with you baseball people what I've learned in my life, what I've learned about home plate in my 78 years.”

Several hands went up when Scolinos asked how many Little League coaches were in the room. “Do you know how wide home plate is in Little League?”

After a pause, someone offered, “Seventeen inches?”, more of a question than answer.

“That's right,” he said. “How about in Babe Ruth's day? Any Babe Ruth coaches in the house?” Another long pause.

“Seventeen inches?” a guess from another reluctant coach.

“That's right,” said Scolinos. “Now, how many high school coaches do we have in the room?” Hundreds of hands shot up, as the pattern began to appear. “How wide is home plate in high school baseball?”



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“Seventeen inches,” they said, sounding more confident.

“You’re right!” Scolinos barked. “And you college coaches, how wide is home plate in college?”

“Seventeen inches!” we said, in unison.

“Any Minor League coaches here? How wide is home plate in pro ball?” “Seventeen inches!”

“RIGHT! And in the Major Leagues, how wide home plate is in the Major Leagues?”

“Seventeen inches!”

“SEV-EN-TEEN INCHES!” he confirmed, his voice bellowing off the walls. “And what do they do with a Big-League pitcher who can’t throw the ball over seventeen inches?” Pause. “They send him to Pocatello!” he hollered, drawing raucous laughter. “What they don’t do is this: they don’t say, ‘Ah, that’s okay, Jimmy. If you can’t hit a seventeen-inch target? We’ll make it eighteen inches or nineteen inches. We’ll make it twenty inches, so you have a better chance of hitting it. If you can’t hit that, let us know so we can make it wider still, say twenty-five inches.’”

Pause. “Coaches... what do we do when your best player shows up late to practice? or when our team rules forbid facial hair and a guy shows up unshaven? What if he gets caught drinking? Do we hold him accountable? Or do we change the rules to fit him? Do we widen home plate? ”

The chuckles gradually faded as four thousand coaches grew quiet, the fog lifting as the old coach’s message began to unfold. He turned the plate toward himself and, using a Sharpie, began to draw something. When he turned it toward the crowd, point up, a house was revealed, complete with a freshly drawn door and two windows. “This is the problem in our homes today. With our marriages, with the way we parent our kids. With our discipline.

We don’t teach accountability to our kids, and there is no consequence for failing to meet standards. We just widen the plate!”

Pause. Then, to the point at the top of the house he added a small American flag. “This is the problem in our schools today. The quality of our education is going downhill fast and teachers have been stripped of the tools they need to be successful, and to educate and discipline our young people. We are allowing others to widen home plate! Where is that getting us?”

Silence. He replaced the flag with a Cross. “And this is the problem in the Church, where powerful people in positions of authority have taken advantage of young children, only to have such an atrocity swept under the rug for years. Our church leaders are widening home plate for themselves! And we allow it.”

“And the same is true with our government. Our so-called representatives make rules for us that don’t apply to themselves. They take bribes from lobbyists and foreign countries. They no longer serve us. And we allow them to widen home plate! We see our country falling into a dark abyss while we just watch.”

I was amazed. At a baseball convention where I expected to learn something about curve balls and bunting and how to run better practices, I had learned something far more valuable. From an old man with home plate strung around his neck, I had learned something about life, about myself, about my own weaknesses and about my responsibilities as a leader. I had to hold myself and



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others accountable to that which I knew to be right, lest our families, our faith, and our society continue down an undesirable path.

"If I am lucky," Coach Scolinos concluded, "you will remember one thing from this old coach today. It is this: "If we fail to hold ourselves to a higher standard, a standard of what we know to be right; if we fail to hold our spouses and our children to the same standards, if we are unwilling or unable to provide a consequence when they do not meet the standard; and if our schools & churches & our government fail to hold themselves accountable to those they serve, there is but one thing to look forward to ..."

With that, he held home plate in front of his chest, turned it around, and revealed its dark black backside, "We have dark days ahead!"

Note: Coach Scolinos died in 2009 at the age of 91, but not before touching the lives of hundreds of players and coaches, including mine. Meeting him at my first ABCA convention kept me returning year after year, looking for similar wisdom and inspiration from other coaches. He is the best clinic speaker the ABCA has ever known because he was so much more than a baseball coach. His message was clear: "Coaches, keep your players—no matter how good they are—your own children, your churches, your government, and most of all, keep yourself at seventeen inches."

And this my friends is what our country has become and what is wrong with it today. Now go out there and fix it:

"Don't widen the plate!"

An excellent Mail Call today. A special thank you to Merle and Phil for their postings and a very special thank you to you for the recounting of the Battle of Troit Ponds and Monte Foss—am not sure my spellings are accurate. May I echo other's words that your work and dedication are inspiring and continues the spirit of the mighty men of the 517th and the 460th. Thank you.

PS Good luck with mastering all the new bells and whistles of your new computer. You'll have the hang of it in short order.

PSS We have crossed the Arctic Circle and are in the larger north Coast of Iceland town of Akureyri. A lively and beautiful place that pictures can't capture.

Pat Seitz

Hope you are well. I know you are very busy these days.

Here is the final copy of the Pvt. Gruwell paper. I have added a final paragraph, "Update, June 2018," with information about whether Pvt. and TSgt Gruwell are brothers.

Joe Figueiredo

See: http://517prct.org/bios/robert_r_gruwell/Pvt_Gruwell_Final_Draft_V3.pdf



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Administrivia

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- 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.

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