



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



**MailCall No. 2399**

November 25, 2018

*517<sup>th</sup> Parachute Infantry Regiment  
460<sup>th</sup> Parachute Field Artillery Battalion  
596<sup>th</sup> Parachute Combat Engineer Company*

### *Major Lory Vaughan Curtis, Ph.D.*



I want to inform family and friends of the 517th that my brother **Dr. Lory V. Curtis** passed away peacefully on November 19, surrounded by his family. Lory battled ALS courageously for the last 3 years, but has gone on to be with family, troopers and friends on the other side.

Lory was as tough as they come, and whenever I talked to my brother, he always told me he was doing "great" right up until the end. As many of you know Lory was past vice-president of the association, and hosted the 2007 Salt Lake City reunion as well as taking an important role in other reunions, including the last national reunion in New Orleans. He also wrote the book "Letters Home" about our father Harland "Bud" Curtis, which includes many other stories about the 517th. "Letters Home" was made into the movie "Saints and Soldiers Airborne Creed," which will forever continue the legacy of the 517th. Our father asked Lory to do all he could to keep the legacy of the 517th alive, and I believe he went above and beyond to fulfill that wish.

He leaves behind his wife Chris who was by his side until the end, 5 children, and 16 grandchildren.

Lory began his military career in the United States Marine Corp, and finished as a Major and helicopter pilot in the United States Army. He was also an educator for many years in the state of California and Utah. He was devoted to serving his family and country all of his life. I will miss my brother dearly.

**Tim Curtis** brother of **Lory Vaughn Curtis** and son of **Harland Curtis** (Hdq Co., 1st Battalion)



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# Lory Vaughn Curtis

March 27, 1949 - November 19, 2018

**Lory Vaughn Curtis** was born in Long Beach, California on March 27, 1949 and passed away peacefully, surrounded by his family on November 19, 2018, in Riverton, Utah.

Lory enjoyed all aspects of his life; recreational, professional, religious, and family. It was not uncommon to find him doing something with his hands. Whether it was tinkering with wood working tools, fixing something on a car, helping those in need, writing books, taking pictures, or blessing his family, his hands were always active in doing good.

Lory joined the Marine Corps in August 1967 and was trained in structural mechanics wherein he quickly became one of the instructors of the Naval Air Technical School, in Millington, Tennessee (just outside of Memphis). It was there that he met his wife, Christine Verdon, and they were married in July 1969. He later transitioned to the Army and was commissioned an officer and flew helicopters until his last assignment as the ROTC Director at the University of Utah. He served for a total of 27 years in the military and retired as a Major in the U.S. Army.

He was enamored with teaching and education. He was a college professor, a high school teacher, a Vice Principal, and a Principal. He earned a Bachelor's Degree, 2 Masters Degrees, and a Ph.D. He retired as a Principal from the Canyon School District in 2014.

Lory is survived by his wife, 5 children, 16 grandchildren, and 2 brothers.

A viewing will be held in his honor on Monday, November 26, at the Bluffdale 1st Ward from 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm. (15429 S Iron Horse Blvd, Bluffdale, Utah)

Funeral services will be held Tuesday, November 27, 2018, at the Bluffdale 1st Ward from 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon. (15429 S Iron Horse Blvd, Bluffdale, Utah)

Burial Services will be carried out after the funeral at the Utah Veterans Cemetery (17111 S Camp Williams Rd, Bluffdale, Utah)

To send flowers or a remembrance gift to the family of Lory Vaughn Curtis, please visit our [Tribute Store](#).

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### Memory of Lory Vaughn Curtis

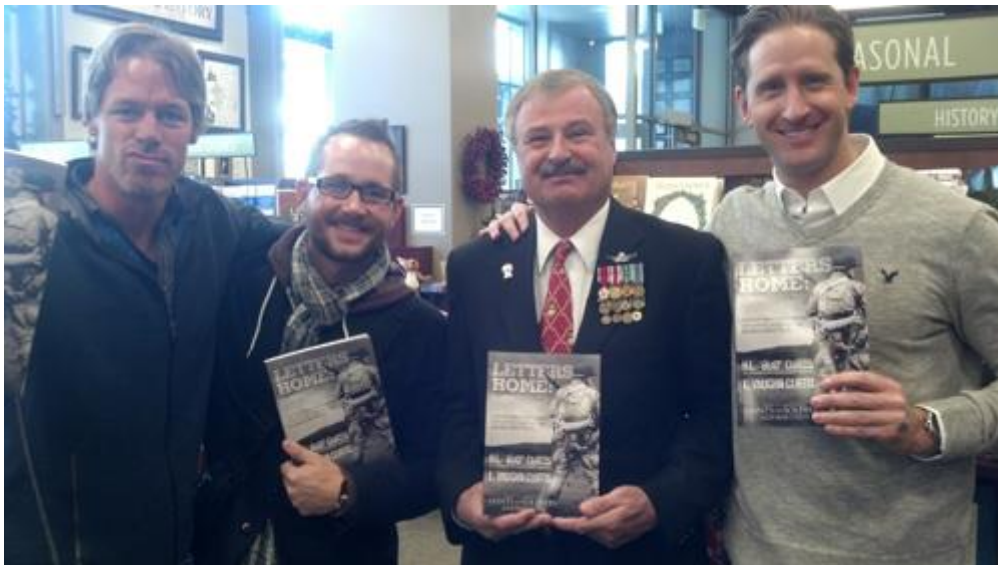
Mike Wells would like to share the life celebration of Lory Vaughn Curtis. Click on the [link](#) to go to share a favorite memory or leave a condolence message for the family.



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**Harlan Curtis, Dick Seitz, Lory Curtis, Tim Curtis**  
at the Washington DC 517th reunion in 2007



**Jason Wade, Corbin Allred, L. Vaughn Curtis and David**  
at a promotional event at Deseret Book and Lory's book, "Letters Home" -2012





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**Mike Wells** and **Lory Curtis** at one of their annual Utah 517<sup>th</sup> reunions, in 2016



In 2012 a movie captured theater audiences with its gripping story of the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team's dangerous mission in the height of World War II. The story behind *Saints and Soldiers: Airborne Creed* is a true story, inspired by a book by L. Vaughn Curtis called *Letters Home: A Paratrooper's Story*. Curtis based the book on the experiences of his own father, Harland "Bud" Curtis, as they were written in 150 preserved letters. When film director Ryan Little came to a reunion of the 517th in 2009, Curtis gave him a copy of the book. Two years later, Little contacted Curtis to ask permission to use parts of the book in a new movie.



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### *MailCall News*

Hi Susan,

I just posted the document in this week's MailCall. Unfortunately, I cannot find a mention of **Harold Geibel** in my incomplete records. Other than his name is listed with I Company in the December 1944 roster. Maybe someone on MailCall has some info, but there are few 517th troopers left, and I don't know if any I Company troopers read MailCall.

My Dad, **Ben Barrett**, was also with the 3rd Battalion. He was with H Company, who saw much of the same action as I Company, including the attack on Manhay in late December 1944, when many from I Company were killed. [http://517prct.org/documents/odyssey/paratroopers\\_odyssey.htm#manhay](http://517prct.org/documents/odyssey/paratroopers_odyssey.htm#manhay)

Ben also joined the 517th as a replacement in Sospel probably around the same time as Harold Geibel. Ben told similar stories about being shelled in the top floor of the Golf Hotel.

If you do uncover the citation for the Silver Star or other photos or records from Harold Geibel, I would love to post them on the 517th website.

Regards,

Bob Barrett

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**Harold Geibel's** letters are so vivid describing the suffering and sacrifice of the men of the 517th. Am so grateful to have had the opportunity to read them. Thank you to his family and you for publishing them.

On this Veterans Day, Alan and I thank God for all of our heroes in the 517th. May we honor their memory and service by the way we conduct our lives day in and out. Because of their willingness to put the welfare of others before their own, we have been blessed to live in freedom. May we never forget that freedom is not free. Let us gladly follow their example of self-sacrifice. God bless each and everyone of them and their descendants who strive to do their best to promote justice and peace with truth and honor.

**Pat Seitz**

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Hello Ben,

I would like to help Susan Dufek to know more about his father who was a member of the I Company. I can't find his email address. Can you give me her contact ?

Thank you very much !

Regards,

**Loïc.**





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

I would like to attend the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 517<sup>th</sup> ump into France. I would a week or two to make all the events. I see the dates range from 8/11 to 8/23/18. Is it every man for himself or is there some group I can sign up with that is part of a tour?

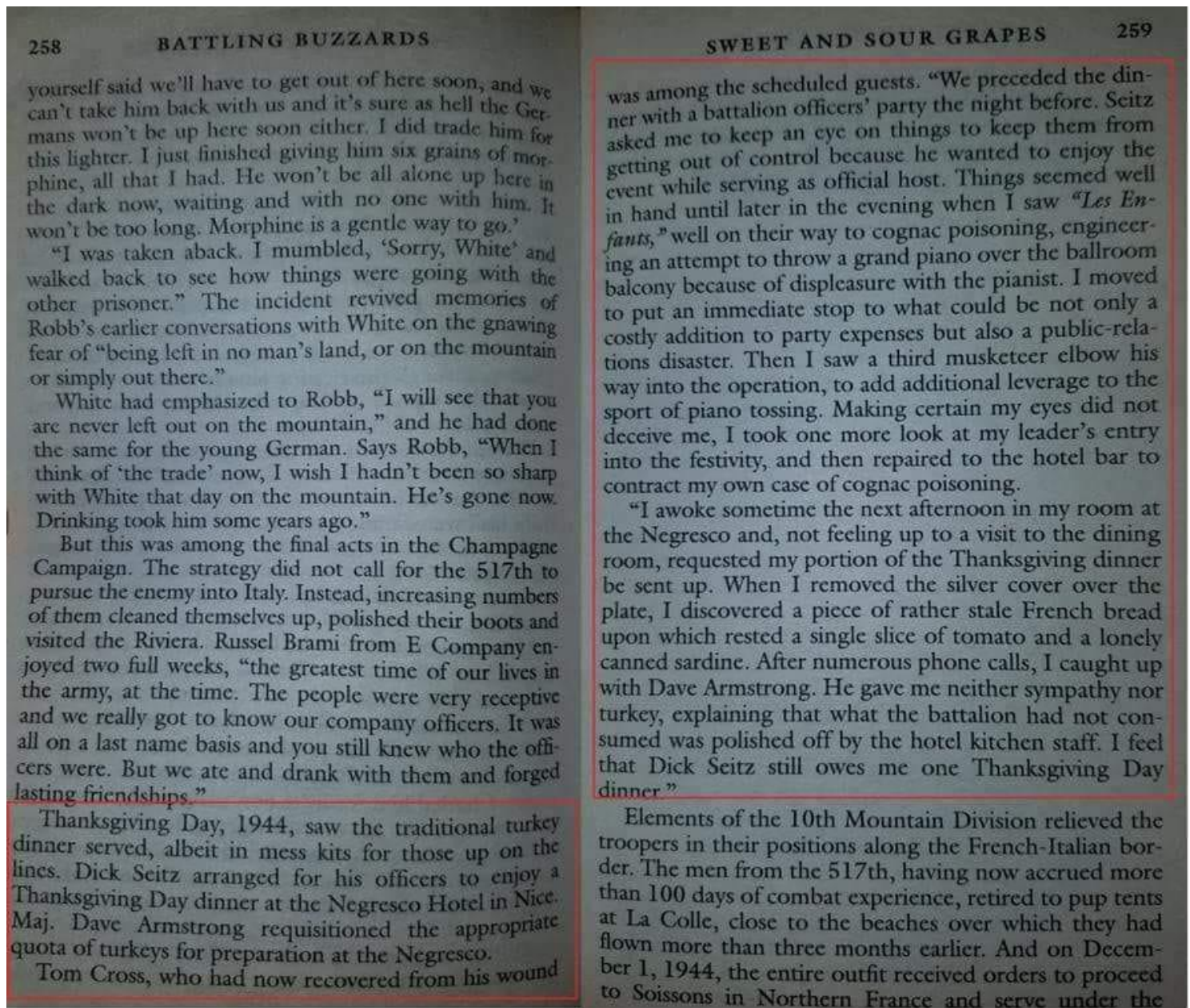
Dennis Sura son of Mike Sura Company H

From [F Company, 517th PRCT - American Military Historical Company](#)

November 22 at 10:00 AM ·

Happy Thanksgiving!

Pages 258 - 259 of "Battling Buzzards" by Gerald Astor shows how some of the officers of the 517 PRCT celebrated the holiday in 1944 after fighting in the Maritime Alps.



yourself said we'll have to get out of here soon, and we can't take him back with us and it's sure as hell the Germans won't be up here soon either. I did trade him for this lighter. I just finished giving him six grains of morphine, all that I had. He won't be all alone up here in the dark now, waiting and with no one with him. It won't be too long. Morphine is a gentle way to go.

"I was taken aback. I mumbled, 'Sorry, White' and walked back to see how things were going with the other prisoner." The incident revived memories of Robb's earlier conversations with White on the gnawing fear of "being left in no man's land, or on the mountain or simply out there."

White had emphasized to Robb, "I will see that you are never left out on the mountain," and he had done the same for the young German. Says Robb, "When I think of 'the trade' now, I wish I hadn't been so sharp with White that day on the mountain. He's gone now. Drinking took him some years ago."

But this was among the final acts in the Champagne Campaign. The strategy did not call for the 517th to pursue the enemy into Italy. Instead, increasing numbers of them cleaned themselves up, polished their boots and visited the Riviera. Russel Brami from E Company enjoyed two full weeks, "the greatest time of our lives in the army, at the time. The people were very receptive and we really got to know our company officers. It was all on a last name basis and you still knew who the officers were. But we ate and drank with them and forged lasting friendships."

Thanksgiving Day, 1944, saw the traditional turkey dinner served, albeit in mess kits for those up on the lines. Dick Seitz arranged for his officers to enjoy a Thanksgiving Day dinner at the Negresco Hotel in Nice. Maj. Dave Armstrong requisitioned the appropriate quota of turkeys for preparation at the Negresco.

Tom Cross, who had now recovered from his wound

was among the scheduled guests. "We preceded the dinner with a battalion officers' party the night before. Seitz asked me to keep an eye on things to keep them from getting out of control because he wanted to enjoy the event while serving as official host. Things seemed well in hand until later in the evening when I saw "Les Enfants," well on their way to cognac poisoning, engineering an attempt to throw a grand piano over the ballroom balcony because of displeasure with the pianist. I moved to put an immediate stop to what could be not only a costly addition to party expenses but also a public-relations disaster. Then I saw a third musketeer elbow his way into the operation, to add additional leverage to the sport of piano tossing. Making certain my eyes did not deceive me, I took one more look at my leader's entry into the festivity, and then repaired to the hotel bar to contract my own case of cognac poisoning.

"I awoke sometime the next afternoon in my room at the Negresco and, not feeling up to a visit to the dining room, requested my portion of the Thanksgiving dinner be sent up. When I removed the silver cover over the plate, I discovered a piece of rather stale French bread upon which rested a single slice of tomato and a lonely canned sardine. After numerous phone calls, I caught up with Dave Armstrong. He gave me neither sympathy nor turkey, explaining that what the battalion had not consumed was polished off by the hotel kitchen staff. I feel that Dick Seitz still owes me one Thanksgiving Day dinner."

Elements of the 10th Mountain Division relieved the troopers in their positions along the French-Italian border. The men from the 517th, having now accrued more than 100 days of combat experience, retired to pup tents at La Colle, close to the beaches over which they had flown more than three months earlier. And on December 1, 1944, the entire outfit received orders to proceed to Soissons in Northern France and serve under the



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Hi Bob,

Here is the finished film on the Central Illinois WW2 Reenactors. It's ready for public viewing.

<https://vimeo.com/302532131>

Their website is:

<https://www.centralilww2.com/>

Thank you for helping me out. The quick response was greatly appreciated.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Thanks,  
Jason Boyer



On May 27, 2018, at 2:17 PM, Jason Boyer wrote:

Re: 517th Picture for short film

My name is Jason, a video producer who recently shot a local World War 2 reenactment. I am producing a 5 minute short film and would like to feature a photo of the 517th as one of the reenactors represented a soldier from the 517th. I would like to use the below picture from your site.

[A Battery, 460th PFAB at Camp MacKall 1944](#) from David Sturzenegger

<http://517prct.org/photos/photos.htm>

Do you know if this is public domain or if someone owns the copyright? If someone owns the copyright, do you have their contact information so I can ask for permission to use it?

Thanks for your help.

Jason



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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.

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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>             |
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| 2018 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>     |



Major Lory V. Curtis