



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2403

December 30, 2018

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

Memories of Merle



Truly saddened by the loss of Merle. I am fortunate to have met him and spend some time with the great man, dedicated soldier, American author. He was an irreplaceable wealth of knowledge and history. I especially enjoyed our walk through the streets of New Orleans. He had a sharp and unique sense of humor as we all know. Unforgettable.

Cheers to Merle.

Paul Abbene

This Mail Call leaves a large hole. Merle was one of a kind whom I loved — smart, sharp and witty; with laser like ability to find the jugular in any issue. His sharp recollection was so critical in the proper wind down of the Association. Thank you, Joanne, for the moving tribute. Your love for him captured him beautifully. Thank you Bob for putting the wonderful pictures together. Merle was an extraordinarily faithful servant who made such a positive difference in my life. I am so blessed to have had the privilege to know him. He is at peace with his band of brothers who have gone before him.

Bob, thank you for the great picture of Tom Cross who holds a special place in my heart. Alan and I are so grateful to his son for sharing this very uplifting news. It helps counterbalance the news about Merle.

Alan and I wish all the blessings of Christmas on all of the 517th family. Merry Christmas.

Pat Seitz



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I am so sorry to hear of the loss of **Merle McMorrow** earlier this month. A past president of the 517 Association, he was widely credited with helping revive it in its later years. He and Mardy hosted that successful Fargo reunion, which my father greatly enjoyed.

Merle was whip-smart, instantly insightful and had a lethal sense of humor. It was my honor to know Merle, and we so enjoyed hm. When told that my husband wanted to be Merle when he grew up, both he and his wife, sweet Mardy, reacted with mock horror and told Jim that he needed higher aspirations.

As you can see from the photos of our 2014 visit to France, he was beloved by people all over the world. I actually am not sure if I know the name of the Frenchman who is kissing him, but he brought this out in people. A 460th soldier, these are probably the last pictures of him firing a mortar.

A 517 trooper in his heart, forever. Words are insufficient.

Claire





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A prayer for Merle. Love and respect for Merle

Patricia et Roland Orongo





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Other MailCall News

Congratulations to **Tom Cross!**

I was very sorry to hear about Merle.

Thank you for keeping mail call going and I hope you and your family have a very Merry Christmas.

I hope the 517PRCT family has a very Merry Christmas

Chris Linder

Subject: MERRY CHRISTMAS!

To my Family...immediate and extended. To all my Friends both near and far, I want to wish each and every one of you and your families the Best that Christmas can offer and for the coming New Year all the things you have wished for, most importantly, GOOD HEALTH!!

Love and blessing to you all....

Phil McSpadden

Subject: RE: COL Tom Cross inducted into U.S. Army Airborne Rigger Hall of Fame

Thanks Bob

Our main photographer at the rigger induction ceremony was a retired Air Force colonel who saw combat as a pilot in WW2. I always enjoy talking to the residents at Fleet Landing where dad lives. A number of the residents are retired military.

Tom

Thomas R. Cross
Chantilly, VA



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Subject: **John S Hopkins** per Kelly Holderbaum infor request 2007

John S Hopkins was a member of Company C of the 517th per his company photo and his name being marked.--google "long yadr picture) for company pictures with some pics having identification.

John Jolley [dad: **Oran B Jolley**, 1st Lieutenant, A company

John is referring to a page about John S. Hopkins posted in 2007:
http://www.517prct.org/photos/john_s_hopkins/john_s_hopkins.htm



I have been searching your wonderful website for a couple of hours now. I am looking on info on my Grandfather John S. Hopkins. He enlisted 17 Apr 1943 and was discharged 2 Oct 1945. He attended Cp. Mackall, NC and Ft. Benning, GA parachute school. I have his Parachute School certificate dated 25 Sep 1943. I have a christmas card he sent from the 517th home, a Vol 1 No 1 Thunderbolt newspaper, letters and a few photos. I know he was wounded in action in the neck while jumping in Belgium 8 Jan 1945 and was a prisoner of war during the Battle of the Bulge. He was reported as missing in action at one point. I just have not been able to find his name in any rosters of the 517th. I have him listed in the World War II Prisoners of War 1941-1946 on Ancestry.com, but I would like to find out exactly which part of the 517th he was in. Can you point me in a direction? You are welcome to put the attached photos on your website. I've got more photos if you are interested. Thanks!!

Kelly (Coghan) Holderbaum

John's Granddaughter

At that time in 2007, we did not have information to identify what Company Hopkins was with. John Jolley found Hopkins identified in a handwritten note on a photo of Company C. But I don't know yet what photo John Jolley is referring to, as the link in his email above doesn't work.

However, I did find another note from Kelly H, later in 2007, in which she found her grandfather's photo in an HQ/2 picture at Camp Toccoa.

<http://www.517prct.org/mailcall/2199.pdf>



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The Franco-American Society of Draguignan, France

Traditionnel rendez-vous de fin d'année du Souvenir Franco Américain. L'occasion de souhaiter à tous nos membres et amis de belles fêtes de Noël en famille.

On this end of 2018, the Franco American Society wishes our American members and friends à wonderful Christmas time with family and friends.

#wewillneverforget #Draguignan #TheFrancoAmericanSociety #Usa #Fran



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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.

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