



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



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

**MailCall No. 2454**

November 22, 2020

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

### *Robert D. Hart, D Company*



Born: June 29, 1924

Died: November 9th, 2020 at Solstice Senior Center in the arms of Kathleen Mary Hart, his lifelong love and wife of over 70 years.

Children:

William Scot Hart

Karl Robert Hart (deceased)

Paul Edward Hart

Five grandchildren and seven great grandchildren.

Graduated from Lincoln high school Tacoma WA 1942

Graduated from Clover Park Technical College with an airframe and engines certification in 1947.

Worked for Alaska Airlines, Pacific Northern Airlines, Western Airlines (retired).

Sir Robert enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1942 and was a member of the elite 517th Airborne D company combat division "Battling Buzzards". He fought in the Italian and German theaters during WWII. He parachuted behind enemy lines during "The Battle of the Bulge" and fought a rear guard action through enemy lines, commandeering German vehicles and equipment to rejoin the main force during a pivotal operation to help bring an end to World War II.

His many military commendations include the Bronze Star, and the Purple Heart for injuries incurred during the Battle of the Bulge. He was awarded the French Legion of Honor for which he was "knighted" by the ambassador from France in a ceremony in Seattle.

He was a lifelong volunteer in Tacoma, Browns Point, Olympia, and Shelton WA.

He helped start the little league program at Browns Point by joining a group of neighbors to build a baseball diamond. Bob, as he preferred to be called, took the youngsters who did not make the team and formed them into their own unit. He was a volunteer fireman at the Browns Point Volunteer Fire



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Department and a volunteer at American Lake Veterans Hospital in Tacoma WA. He was a member of the Elks for over 50 years.

He was a member of Saint Davis episcopal church in Shelton, WA.

His passion was working at the food bank in Shelton, WA.

“Bob” was a lifelong motorcycle enthusiast who took his last ride on his motorcycle at the age of 91.

Sir Robert “Bob” Hart was a humble man who never wanted to lead but always was there to volunteer whenever he perceived a need. He was a person who stopped his motorcycle on the way home from work at 2:00 in the morning to help a person in need in one of the remotest parts of town, with no thought that he might be putting his life in danger. This is a small example of the way he lived his life.

Sir Robert left behind a legacy of loving actions that benefited those whose lives he touched. We are all better off to have known this great man.





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### *MailCall News*

I have my Dad's (**John Stonis**) uniform. I don't really know what to do with it. I would really like to donate it and I was thinking about sending it to Camp Toccoa, what do you think?

What have others done with the uniforms?

**Juliana Stonis**

Daughter of **John A. Stonis**, H Company

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Bob great Veterans Day edition! Just a head's up the DDN214 you included had a social security number on it. Might want to alert the family as they may not want that picture out there online even though it has been years since the loved one passed. Hope you are doing well. We still don't have a date set for Arlington but we will let you know when Dad's funeral is finally set.

Thanks, **Wayne Cross**

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Hi Wayne,

Actually, unless I am missing it, there is no SS# showing, just the army serial number, which is easily available from other public sources if you know where to look. But to be safe, I've blocked out a few fields.

Good to hear from you.

Bob Barrett

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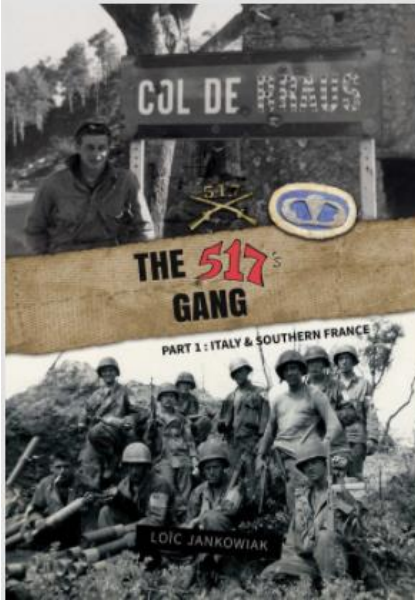
Hello Bob, I just received, and already read, our 517th PRCT MailCall #2453. As usual, very well done, and interesting. Thanks to your hard work, and dedication. I read everything, and what particularly caught my my eye, was the article on Native Americans in the 517th. It is of particular interest to me because I am 100% Blood Quantum Yaqui Indian. Many of my family, and ancestors have served in our country's military since WW1. I had many Uncles serve in WW2, both in the European, and Pacific Theater. For some reason, the majority became Paratroopers with the 82nd Abn, 101st, and 503rd in the Pacific Theater. What also caught my eye was the part of then **Sgt Frank Dallas** being native American. We named our [Special Forces Chapter #78](#), in honor of Lt Col Frank J. Dallas.

I had the privilege', and Honor of meeting, and spending time this True Patriot, when he came to California as our guest. We also had the privilege of escorting him, and his wife, to the 517 Reunion in Palm Spring CA many years ago. Thank you again, and our Best Wishes to you ,and yours. Please stay Safe, and Healthy.

**J.R. "Ray" Estrella**- Founding President, - Col Frank J. Dallas-Chapter #78- Special Forces Association



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If you need a Christmas gift and don't have it already, *The 517's Gang, Part 1*, **Loic Jankowiak's** book of first-hand war accounts, is still available at:

<https://1stabtf.com/en/boutique/the-517ths-gang-us-eng-version/>

Greetings Bob,

I hope all is well with you and yours. I came across this YouTube clip and thought you and the gang would be interested.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6XwDDprQkOE>

I would typically say I was shocked and appalled by it but not much shocks me these days. I was however deeply saddened at the sight of the mess and the incredibly ignorant message sprayed in black paint. You'll know which one I mean when you see it, it stands out as the most egregious and offensive statement one could scrawl on such a place of honor.

I've been to Toccoa twice with the 517th gang and ran the hill once on Military weekend with some of the 517th family and a large crowd of good people who collectively seemed to understand the serene gravity of that simple red dirt trail cut in the Georgia wood. All who participated experienced the same pristine environment that those young paratroopers trained in all those years ago. I found it to be a cathartic experience much like a pilgrimage. I imagine that those who knew where they were had a similar experience and that mess seen in the video was not waiting for us at the top. At the top was the sense of accomplishment, a beautiful view, a local historian in vintage uniform who told me - and others who stopped to listen - all





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about Camp Toccoa & Currahee, AND... **Alan Johnson** was there smiling and cheering us on. Thanks again Alan. Your presence on the mountain top was an energizing boost.

I didn't realize they were timing the run, didn't care, I came a long way and I wanted to take it all in. I quietly enjoyed the view from the top. The same view as the recruits of Camp Toccoa saw all those years ago. The view we still see today because of their sacrifice. I thought about the Vets and the stories I've read about Currahee, and I thought about my cousin "**Wild Bill**" **Boyle** who was a relay Medalist chasing the recruits up the hill. I'm sure the chase was fun for him. I also thought how special the day was. I was there running that hill with my cousin **Mimsey Boyle**, the daughter of Col. "Wild Bill Boyle. She took home a trophy that day. Bill would be very proud.

Today I wonder what Wild Bill would think if he ran up that mountain to find that mess at the top and imagine what might happen to the punks who defaced those rocks if he and the guys caught them in the act.

I'm glad there are watchdogs like this guy on Youtube who visit the sights and post this information so something can be done. I'm assuming the Toccoa Museum is aware of this, I can't imagine they're not, and I hope they are working with the state to do something to get it cleaned up and prevent this from happening in the future. I'm sure it's difficult to prevent.

I agree with man in the clip that for starters the trail should be closed to vehicle traffic - authorized vehicles only. I wouldn't mind if kids wanted to go up the top and hang out. It's a free country after all but the place should be left as they found it for all to enjoy. I also agree with him that the best way to keep this from occurring is education. If the kids who do this truly understood Currahee and its history, they might choose to respect and protect the sight. Maybe "Respect and Protect" could be a slogan the Museum could use to help create that sense of pride.

In the meantime, it needs to be cleaned up and who better to clean it than those who messed it up. In the spirit of the Toccoa Paratroopers I think those who get caught, whether they make the mess or watch someone make the mess, they are equally responsible. In my opinion the culprits, when caught, should be provided the tools to clean those rocks. They should be made to do a timed run up Currahee at 6 a.m. every day and thoroughly restore said rocks to their natural state. I believe this should be done in the presence of some local Veterans, young and old, who might enjoy a nice breakfast and some Iced tea on the mountain while they watch these punks scrub rocks. Of course the Vets will get a ride up to the top. The Museum's Historian could also be present to educate the rock scrubbers on the history of Currahee. Maybe some recruits will come from Ft. Benning to join in on the "history lesson". This might create the incentive for the scrubbers do a good and thorough job.

Maybe this could be scheduled to take place on Military weekend and the scrubbers could scrub rocks as all the runners crest the mountain. Sorry, I'm half Sicilian and half Irish and I could come up with this stuff all day.

Currahee !

All the best,

**Paul Abbene**



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My name is Rudy Hayer. I was a friend of **Merle McMorrow's**.

I would love to be added to the MailCall list. I haven't received the MailCall in years, and would love to start receiving it again. I see I'm still on the roster, but have a T in yellow by my name.

Years ago, Merle had mentioned me on the MailCall (January 17th, 2005). It meant the world to me. I heard from **John "Boom Boom" Alicki** and **Adrianna (Floyd) Polk** and corresponded with them for a while. I even got a signed sheet from members that attended the mini reunion in Florida that year!! Later on, I ended up becoming a paratrooper myself! I looked up to all my friends and wanted to be as close to my heroes as possible. Merle and I would talk on the phone when I was in Airborne School. While stationed in Italy, I tried contacting the guy overseas in charge of a reunion for the Invasion of Southern France (in 2015). I wanted to surprise Merle and show up, but never heard from the organizer. When I got out, he and I would get together occasionally going out to eat. Sadly, life got busy as it does and I hadn't seen him for almost 2 years when he had passed.

With all the craziness in the world I have been keeping busy, and started collecting WWII items again (even been lucky to find some 517th items- which are some of my most prized items in my collection!!). I want to start interviewing WWII veterans again (over the phone of course), and correspond with them too (even if not interviewing them). I would absolutely love to start interviewing veterans again and would be beyond ecstatic if I could interview/correspond with some 517th veterans. It would be amazing! The 517th still is my favorite unit (yes, even more than the 503rd that I served with in Italy)!!

As an amateur historian, my ultimate goal someday would be to open a WWII museum, and write a book with a compilation of stories from WWII!!

Fun fact- my last jump in the Army was in Italy!! I had a knee injury so I only jumped 6 times total in my time in the Army. At least I can say I wasn't a 5 jump chump!

**Rudy Hayer**

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This was a great Mail Call. I so very much enjoyed reading it and seeing the pictures remembering November 11 both in 1944 and in 2020, despite the pandemic. The **Bud Curtis** letter and the postings about the Native American members of the 517th were particularly interesting.

A very blessed happy Thanksgiving to you and your family and to all of our 517th band of Brothers and their families.

**Pat Seitz**



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Dear Mr BARRETT, For the CADUSA (US AIRBORNE RECEPTION COMMITTEE) we need your help. In fact the Belgian Government propose to name us « **Passeurs de Mémoires** » To help the CADUSA to obtain this distinction could you send a few words to present our actions of gratitude and reception as we welcomed US vétérans and families. Thank you so much ; We do hope you are OK – God bless you, God bless America.

For the CADUSA ;  
**Irma and Arnold TARGNION**  
Trois-Ponts, Belgium



As most of you know, the CADUSA (US Airborne Reception Committee) has maintained the heritage of US soldiers, including the 517<sup>th</sup>, in Belgium especially during the great sacrifices during the Battle of the Bulge. **Irma and Arnold Targnion, Maria Gaspar,** and many others of the CADUSA have always

recognized the 517<sup>th</sup> during memorial ceremonies every year. And when any of our 517<sup>th</sup> family visit Belgium, the CADUSA receives and guides us through the combat sites and memorials. I was there myself once in 2009 with **Ben Barrett, Lud Gibbons, Gene Frice, Merle McMorrow, Allan Johnson, Leo Dean, Tom Copsy, Nancy Armand Fraser, Jeanie Davis** and families. Any of the 517<sup>th</sup> family who have been to Belgium have undoubtedly been greeted by the CADUSA.





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RE : **Passeurs de Mémoires**

Bonjour Irma and Arnold,

From the whole 517th family, we thank you for all the effort and support that you have given to us all for 75+ years now. You have always done wonderful work to help remember the sacrifices of Belgian and American people during the Battle of the Bulge. You will always be part of our family.

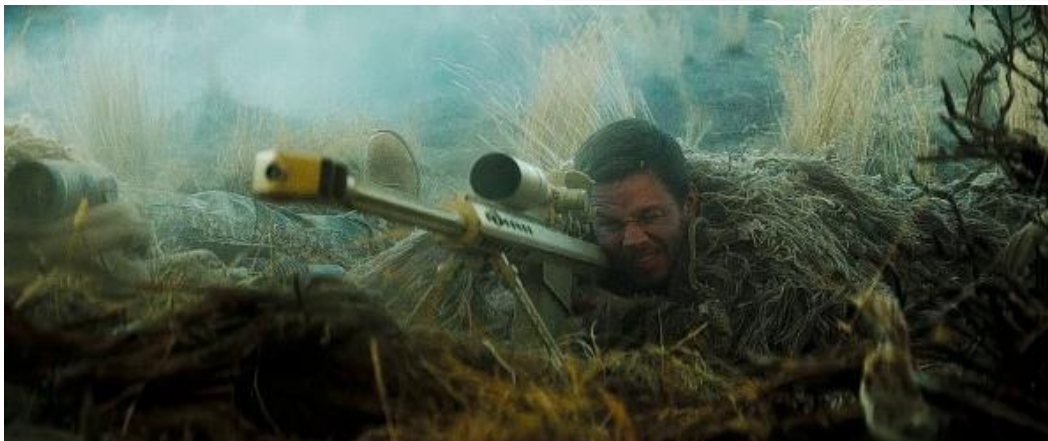
Of course, we would love to be able to help you and the CADUSA be recognized as “**Passeurs de Mémoires** ». Could you give us a little more information about this recognition – Who should we contact ? Do you have any more details about what this means and how it is earned ? My apologies, but my French is poor, and I do not know where to look for more information and who we should contact.

Best Regards,

Bob Barrett, on behalf of all the 517th

I had to throw this article (next page) about a new rifle for the Army from *Popular Mechanics* in here, given that this new rifle is from Barrett Firearms of Murfreesboro, TN. Barrett Firearms is known for their very expensive .50 caliber long-distance, low recoil rifles, including the M82A1. In many movies when you see Army sniper rifles, you see the Barrett M82 featured, including *The Shooter*, *Battleship*, *Oblivion*, *Eagle Eye*, *Terminator – Genesis*, and many others.

From *Shooter* (2007 film):



Although this Barrett Firearms company is no relation to me, I do have some of their t-shirts. -- BB





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### POPULAR MECHANICS

## Why the Army, Marines, and Special Ops All Want This New Sniper Rifle

Kyle Mizokami

Tue, November 17, 2020, 9:47 AM EST

From Popular Mechanics



U.S. Special Operations Forces are poised to deploy a new sniper rifle that's capable of quickly changing calibers to adapt to different missions. The Barrett Multi-Role Adaptive Design (MRAD) Mark 22 can switch between eight different rifle calibers in a matter of minutes. The rifle will enable Green Berets, SEALs, and other special operations troops to engage man-sized targets at a distance of a mile or farther.

Here's a promo video made by Barrett to show off the rifle:



In the U.S., you can own your own Mark 22 rifle. Barrett released the rifle kit, minus optic, as a limited run for \$16,770. The Leupold Mark 5HD scope, meanwhile, will run you another \$2,300 or so, making for a nice, round number of \$19,000.

See full article here: <https://www.popularmechanics.com/military/weapons/a34690253/barrett-mrad-sniper-rifle-army-marines-special-ops/>

PS: In April, 2020, [Team Global Precision Group makes the longest documented impact in history](#) at using a Barrett .416 rifle to hit target 7,070 yards away. (7070 yards is over 4 miles!) He needed 10 degrees of muzzle angle to hit the target at that range. With a muzzle velocity of 3,000 feet per second, that round took 23 seconds to reach the target!



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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>             |
| MailCall Archives      | <a href="http://www.517prct.org/archives">www.517prct.org/archives</a>     |
| 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>     |

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[Bob Hart biography](#)

