



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2458

December 27, 2020

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

MailCall News

I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and I hope 2021 is a much better year. I loved reading Irma's story during her time living through the Bulge. Thanks for keeping Mail Call going.

Chris Lindner

Thanks Bob for including Irma's recollections, they brought a few tears and reminded me of all of our Blessings for those who served and those who endured great suffering.

Wayne Cross

Hello Bob, Ray Estrella .here, A very early Merry Christmas, and a Happy, Healthy, and Safe 2021 to you, and your family. As usual, I open, and read, very thoroughly, my 517PRCT Newsletter, as soon as I receive it. Every time that I read our newsletter, I find yet another connection between men of the 517, and my former unit, U.S. Army Special Forces (Green Berets) Not to bore you with old stories, I would like to again point out the very special connection that both our Special Forces Chapter, and I personally have with men of the 517th. As a young Special Forces soldier in my early 20's, I had the honor, and pleasure of serving under then Captain, **Gene Frice**, our company XO. While serving in Special Forces, after a 5 year courtship, I married the Love of my Life, Phyllis Duran, the Daughter of **Bert Duran**, A Company, 517th PRCT. we are now in our 57th year of marriage. In 1999, we formed Chapter 78, of the Special Forces Association, here in Southern California. I was honored to be chosen as the Founding President. After our provisional period, our association granted our 22 chapter members, full-fledged membership. At this point, we needed to name our chapter, and after much member input, and research, we selected our chapter's namesake: **Col Frank J. Dallas**. His name had been suggested to me by my good friend, and mentor, Col. Gene Frice. After much research, and vetting, our membership voted unanimously to name our SF chapter after this great man and patriot. We had the great honor of meeting him personally, and hosting he, and his wife over a week's period in Southern California, at several Airborne related events. We then had the pleasure of escorting Col Dallas to the then annual Palm Springs, CA 517PRCT Convention. We made, and shared, many great memories which will never be forgotten. Thank you Bob, for allowing me to share this lengthy, but memorable experience's with you, and the rest of our 517 Family. -- God Bless -- **J.R. "Ray" Estrella**



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Special Forces Association Chapter LXXVII is named **after LTC Frank J. Dallas**

This is from the Frank Dallas bio page:

<https://www.specialforces78.com/members-pages/ltc-frank-j-dallas/>

Born on November 25, 1924 at Mount Carmel, Pennsylvania. His father was a coal miner and he was the oldest of six children. Early in life, he developed a passion for the outdoors and hunting and fishing and as a young man helped provide food for his family during the years of the Great Depression.

While still in high school, LTC Dallas enlisted in the Army during World War II. He served with the 517th Regimental Combat Team (RCT) in Italy, France, Belgium and Germany. During this time, he made a combat jump into southern France and was awarded both the Silver Star and Bronze Star for valor.



After the war and a short break in service, LTC Dallas served in both the 82nd Airborne Division and the 11th Airborne Division. He then went to Officer Candidate School (OCS) and commanded a mortar platoon company in the 1st Cavalry Division during the Korean War.

As a Captain, he completed Special Forces training at Fort Bragg and helped organized the 77th Special Forces (SF) Group, one of the earliest SF units. After an assignment with the 10th SF Group in Germany, he was reassigned to the Special Warfare School at Fort Bragg as the Director of Logistics. His other overseas assignments included training Korean Special forces units in Korea and commanding Special Forces B and C Detachments during the Vietnam War.

In the IV Corps district at Can Tho in the Mekong Delta of South Vietnam, his unit (often called Dallas' 'Navy') successfully integrated three Navy hover boats and nearly 30 airboats into regular Special Forces tactical operations including developing specialized boat gun mounts and floating helicopter landing pads. LTC Dallas retired from the Army at Fort Bragg on July 1, 1970 after 26 years of devoted service. After retiring from the Army, he worked as a draftsman and project designer for the Fayetteville NC City Engineer. He also enjoyed more time for his lifelong passions for hunting, fishing, woodworking and square dancing.

As one of the early Special Forces soldiers, LTC Dallas was the chairperson of the committee that approved the design and purchase of the first Green Berets and the first SF unit shoulder patch. He was an original member of the SF Decade Club (predecessor to the SF Association) and was, in fact, the first club president. He holds the first membership card issued (#D-1) in the history of the organization. He also helped design the statue of the Special Forces soldier that still stands in front of the JFK Special Warfare Center at Fort Bragg.

His military awards and accommodations included the Silver Star, the Legion of Merit with one oak leaf cluster, a Bronze Star with V-device and two oak leaf clusters, the Purple Heart with two oak leaf clusters, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Air Medal with two oak leaf clusters, three awards of the Combat Infantryman's Badge (CIB), and the Special Forces Tab. He also earned the European-African-Middle



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Eastern Medal with an arrowhead and five campaign stars, the World War II Victory Medal, both the French and Belgium Croix de Guerre, the Vietnamese Gallantry Cross, the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, the United Nations Medal, the Master Parachutist Badge, the Glider Badge, and both Korea and Vietnam Parachutist Badges.

LTC Dallas and his wife of 65 years, Josephine (Jo) Dallas have three children and eight grandchildren. All of their children are also associated with the Army; Lieutenant Colonel retired Edward Dallas and wife Mary Jo, Nancy Dallas Boatner and her husband Colonel retired Jim Boatner, and Lieutenant General Patricia Dallas Horoho and her husband Colonel retired Ray Horoho. LTG Horoho is an Army nurse and is currently serving as the 43rd Surgeon General of the Army, the senior medical soldier on active duty.

Today LTC Dallas lives in Clifton, Virginia and remains an active member of the Clifton Lions Club and the Saint Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church.

From https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Army_Special_Forces

The Green Beret^[edit]

U.S. Army Special Forces adopted the [green beret](#) unofficially in 1954 after searching for headgear that would set them visually apart. Members of the 77th SFG began searching through their accumulated berets and settled on the rifle green color from Captain [Miguel de la Peña](#)'s collection. **Captain Frank Dallas** had the new beret designed and produced in small numbers for the members of the 10th & 77th Special Forces Groups.^[41]



Their new headdress was first worn at a retirement parade at [Fort Bragg](#) on 12 June 1955 for Lieutenant General Joseph P. Cleland, the now-former commander of the XVIII Airborne Corps. Onlookers thought that the operators were a foreign delegation from NATO. In 1956 General [Paul D. Adams](#), the post commander at Fort Bragg, banned the wearing of the distinctive headdress,^[42] (although members of the Special Forces continued to wear it surreptitiously^[43]). This was reversed on 25 September 1961 by *Department of the Army Message 578636*, which designated the green beret as the exclusive headdress of the Army Special Forces.^[44]

In 1961, President [John F. Kennedy](#) authorized them for use exclusively by the U.S. Special Forces. Preparing for a 12 October visit to the Special Warfare Center at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, the president sent word to the center's commander, Colonel [William P. Yarborough](#), for all Special Forces soldiers to wear green berets as part of the event. The president felt that since they had a special mission, Special Forces should have something to set them apart from the rest. In 1962, he called the green beret "a symbol of excellence, a badge of courage, a mark of distinction in the fight for freedom."^[41]

Forrest Lindley, a writer for the newspaper *Stars and Stripes* who served with Special Forces in Vietnam said of Kennedy's authorization: "It was President Kennedy who was responsible for the rebuilding of the Special Forces and giving us back our Green Beret. People were sneaking around wearing [them] when conventional forces weren't in the area and it was sort of a cat and mouse game. Then Kennedy authorized the Green Beret as a mark of distinction, everybody had to scramble around to find berets that were really green. We were bringing them down from Canada. Some were handmade, with the dye coming out in the rain."^[45]

Kennedy's actions created a special bond with the Special Forces, with specific traditions carried out since his funeral when a sergeant in charge of a detail of Special Forces soldiers guarding the grave placed his beret on the coffin.^[45] The moment was repeated at a commemoration of the 25th anniversary of JFK's death – General [Michael D. Healy](#) (ret.), the last commander of Special Forces in Vietnam and later a commander of the [John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School](#), spoke at Arlington Cemetery, after which a wreath in the form of a green beret was placed on Kennedy's grave.^[45]



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I learned this week from Tom's son, also **Thomas D. Hill**, of Texas that Tom passed in Bemidji, MN on 12/22/2019. Tom, Jr mentioned that if you search YouTube you will find a tribute to his Dad.

John Patrick Egelhof (son of **Joseph B. Egelhof**, also D Company)
Bemidji, MN



[Tom Hill Tribute on YouTube](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Eo04gW2cSw>





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At the end of Tom Hill's video, he briefly mentions attending a 517th Reunion in California, where the 517th was hosted at a restaurant by **Eugene "Chop Chop" Mars** (Medic with HQ/2). I never met Gene Mars, but I remember that my Dad spoke often of him, and he was a regular at the reunions until his wife died and he stopped traveling.

Eugene Mars

Resident of San Jose

89, Eugene has passed away October 2, 2011 of natural causes. He was born in China on September 21, 1922. He emigrated to the U.S. as a teenager and lived with relatives in Akron, Ohio. He was married to the late Jane Yee in 1948.

He served in World War II as a medic in the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team and saw action in Italy, southern France, and Germany. He was awarded the Purple Heart and was honorably discharged in 1945.

In 1962 Mr. Mars and his family moved to San Jose from Akron. In San Jose he and his wife owned and operated small businesses: the Jose Creamery, the Happy Coin Launderette, and Gene's Bicycle Barn.

After retirement, he was active in 517th reunions and veteran events. He enjoyed creative landscaping, collecting coins on daily walks, and belonged to several bowling leagues at Oakridge Lanes. He is survived by daughter, Michou (Gordon), and son, Danny (Jane), five grandchildren, and three great grandchildren.



Hi Bob – Would like to add **Dan Higgins** to the email list. His dad, Ed, served in F Company. His email is xxxx. Thanks!

Mark Landreth

[Done – Bob Barrett]

Hello my name is **Dan Higgins** my Father **Edward T Higgins** served with the 517th Company F. He never spoke of his military service so I really don't have much information on where he served. I'd appreciate anything you could tell me.

Dan Higgins

Hi Dan,

I do see that Pvt. Edward T. Higgins was with F Company. He is listed on the Christmas 1944 roster: <http://517prct.org/documents/xmas1944/xmas1944.htm>



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Many of the troopers did not speak much about the war. I knew almost nothing about my own Dad's service other than he was wounded in the war. It wasn't until late in his life, in his 70's when he reconnected with the 517th and started attending reunions that I started to hear some of the stories.

I do see Edward Higgins mentioned in a number of Morning reports. It looks like he joined the 517th in June 1944, and has injuries and wounded a few times in Italy and France and Belgium:

Bob Barrett

Thanks any idea where he was fighting when wounded?

The locations were on the list I attached in that last email. I'll continue to dig in, but don't know if I'll find much more. There is a lot in the books and website to trace the history of the 51th and F Company, including some autobiographies of other F Company men.

Here is a copy of one of the morning reports from Jan 5, 1945.

- BB

COMPANY MORNING REPORT ENGINE 2400 5 Jan 1945

STATION Mile E of Bergevel, Belgium
 ORGANIZATION Co # 517th Front Inf Regt

SERIAL NUMBER	NAME	GRADE	CODE
38731745	Young, Paul A. 7745	Pvt	AG
38483380	Varner, James R. 7740	Pvt	
38426708	Kovac, Anthony J. 7607	PFC	
above (3) EN fr duty to ab sk in Hosp LIA basic status changed fr ascd to atchd ab of 3 Jan 45.			
33595499	Higgins, Edward T. 7745	Pvt	AGG
fr duty to ab sk in Hosp WBC LD (accid OSW) basic status changed fr ascd to atchd unsp d.			
38902043	Walton, J. B. 7745	PFC	
fr ab sk in Hosp WBC LD to duty.			
38296585	Turner, Ward A. 7102	Sgt	AG
38230284	Anderson, Ray C. 7745	PFC	
37552269	Mattson, Donald B. 7504	PFC	
38828543	Bruppel, Howard V. 7238	Pvt	
above (4) EN fr ab sk in Hosp WBC LD to duty basic status changed fr atchd unsp d to ascd.			

RECORD OF EVENTS.
 Company moved to present location set up CP.

OFFICER STRENGTH	FLD O & CAPT		1ST LT		2D LT		WO		PLT O	
	PRESEN	ABSENT	PRESEN	ABSENT	PRESEN	ABSENT	PRESEN	ABSENT	PRESEN	ABSENT
ASSIGNED			3	1	2					
ATTACHED		1		1		1				
UNASSIGNED										
ATTACHED FR OTHER ORGN										
TOTAL	1		3	2	3	1				

AVN CADET & ENLISTED STRENGTH	AVIATION CADETS		ENLISTED MEN			
	PRESENT	ABSENT	PRESENT FOR DUTY	PRESENT NOT FOR DT	ABSENT	PRESENT AND ABSENT
ASSIGNED			104	1	8	113
ATTACHED					44	44
UNASSIGNED						
ATTACHED FR OTHER ORGN			4		1	5
TOTAL			108	1	53	162

R 1 ESTIMATED NUMBER OF RATIONS REQUIRED FOR DAY OF WEEK DATE N. MEAL

T II MESS ATTENDANCE FOR DAY OF THIS REPORT TOTAL 3 AVERAGE

I BREAKFAST DINNER SUPPER

O MEN AUTHORIZED TO MEN ATTCHD FOR RATIONS

N III MEN ATTCHD FOR OTHER ORGN FOR RATIONS NET O & OTHERS MESSCD TOTAL

S MEN PRESENT LESS PLUS

PAGE 2 OF 2 PAGES
 I CERTIFY THAT THIS MORNING REPORT IS CORRECT AND THAT ALL MEN ARE ACCOUNTED FOR AS SHOWN



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Hi Ben

I noted in your last mail call that you mentioned taped interviews of **Paul Harris** and **Wilburn Lewis**, from E Co, that are supposed to be available at the North Carolina archives.

I clicked on the link you provided and tried searching their collection, but didn't manage to turn anything up for these two men. Where do you have to type in the keywords to find these archives? Are the video interviews viewable online or does one have to visit the archives in person.

As I am very interested in the battle at la Roquette sur Var, I would very much like to see what these two E company men would have to say about it.

Regards

Jean-Loup Gassend

Hi Jean-Loup,

I just ran across those links to the NC archives by chance. I was not able to find much more than those records that there are some boxes and interview recordings with a few members of the 517th.

I have no access to the actual contents, and I'm not sure they are actually online. Probably just in their library. But here are the specific research inquiries that will take you to the specific records.

<https://www.ncdcr.gov/things-to-do/archives>

MARS search index: <https://archives.ncdcr.gov/doc/search-doc> using this I search for "517th" and found the following. I can't actually recall how I found all these items, but you can search by the trooper's names and find the rest.

- 1st Lt. James Terry Sanford was in HQ/1
- Sgt. David K Brooks was with E Company
- [70-71] Paul T. Harris Papers. Papers reflecting the service of S.Sgt. Paul Theron Harris of Roanoke Rapids (Halifax County) in Company E, 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment, U.S. Army, European Theater.
- 2005 videotaped interview with Paul Harris (E Company)
- 2005 videotaped interview with Wilburn Lewis (E Company)

There are pages about searching the catalog:

I've Found Something - What Now?

What do I do once I find something and want to see the actual records?

If you plan to visit us in person to view the materials, please note the **Title** and **Record ID** of the collection, series, or record you are interested in and bring that with you to the Search Room. If you have located a specific container you would like to see, you can also bring us the **Container ID**.



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Don't you have any records that I can look at online?

Yes! A selection of archival materials are available to view online in the [North Carolina Digital Collections](#). If you are looking for photographs, our Special Collections staff have loaded some photos into [Flickr](#).

Unfortunately, I didn't find anything of use in the digital archives.

Bob Barrett

In re-doing this research, I did run across a photo of NC Governor **Terry Sanford** doing a training jump at the 1964 517th reunion:



among them—did not last. But the risk of failure did not deter Sanford from attempting to cope with public needs, especially the need for better education for all citizens, not just the college bound. And his success record was remarkable.

Sanford's ability to persuade the General Assembly to fund bold new ventures such as the School of the Arts did not depend entirely on his eloquent advocacy on their behalf. He well understood and skillfully practiced the traditional political arts of bestowing (or withholding) jobs, roads, and other

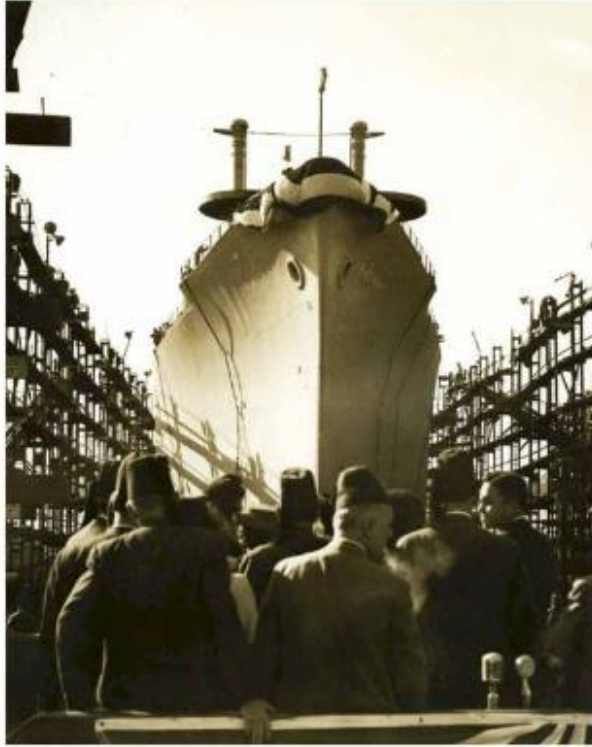


Clockwise from top left: Governor-elect Sanford meeting with President-elect John F. Kennedy in November 1960; former paratrooper Sanford preparing to jump from a training tower in August 1964, at the twentieth reunion of the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team; Governor Sanford joining President Lyndon B. Johnson during the latter's visit to a tenant farmer's home in Rocky Mount, N.C., in 1964; Duke University President Sanford making himself accessible to student antiwar demonstrators in spring 1970.

From: <https://www.sog.unc.edu/sites/www.sog.unc.edu/files/articles/bookrev.pdf>



Our State Quiz



World War II

In the early 1940s, many North Carolina citizens left their home state to fight for their home country on foreign soil.

by ALAN HODGE

1. Out of the 360,000 North Carolina soldiers who served in World War II, about how many lost their lives?

- A. 3,000
- B. 5,000
- C. 9,000

2. Shipbuilding was an important wartime industry in North Carolina. The North Carolina Shipbuilding Company in Wilmington produced hundreds of what type of vessel?

- A. Liberty ships
- B. Victory ships
- C. Hospital ships

On October 19, 1943, the USS *Kathay*, a product of the North Carolina Shipbuilding Company, made its debut.

3. German U-boats sank many ships off the North Carolina coast, especially in what area?

- A. Iron Bottom Sound
- B. Torpedo Junction
- C. U-boat Alley

4. Due to security concerns in 1942, officials moved that year's Rose Bowl football game from its original location in Pasadena, California, to what North Carolina town?

- A. Asheville
- B. Wilmington
- C. Durham

5. Robert Morgan of Asheville led the first U.S. Army Air Corps bomber crew to complete 25 missions over Europe in World War II. What was the name of Morgan's B-17 plane?

- A. Memphis Belle
- B. Enola Gay
- C. Old Crow

6. In May 1942, North Carolina and 16 other states began rationing gasoline. A driver could buy how many gallons of gas per week when the program began?

- A. 15 gallons
- B. 10 gallons
- C. 3 gallons

7. Former North Carolina Gov. Terry Sanford served in World War II as a member of the 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment. Sanford was wounded in what major battle that took place in Belgium in December 1944?

- A. Battle of Arnhem
- B. Battle of the Bulge
- C. Battle of Antwerp

Answers on page 171

The Quiz Master



This January marks Alan Hodges 23rd year as the author of the *Our State Quiz*. Alan has spent 13 years in newspapers where he's won four community news awards from the N.C. Press Association and N.C. Press Club. Today, he lives in Belmont and enjoys participating in living history reenactments.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF CAPE FEAR MUSEUM



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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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