



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



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

**MailCall No. 2462**

February 7, 2021

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

## MailCall News

Hi. My Grandfather **John M. Mounce** was honored to be part of the 517. He is no longer with us but loved what he did in the military. Would love any information on him and the Company. Thank you.

**Adam Mounce**

Hi Adam,

I see that you signed up for the MailCall newsletters. Just news of family and friends of the 517<sup>th</sup> PRCT, that I send out weekly (more or less).

A few years back, we did get a photo of Jon Mounce sent in by Bruce Fischer. See: [http://www.517prct.org/photos/john\\_mounce.htm](http://www.517prct.org/photos/john_mounce.htm) Bruce also mentioned that he had more photos and stories, but I don't think we ever got them. If you can track any down, or have bio you can share, let me know.

Here is one note from **Ray Hess** back in 2005, talking about F Company:

Good morning Ben: Another rainy morning in the Northeast, but I'll take it over waiting for another Hurricane (Wilma) to hit. Ben, I recognize the picture in your "MAIL CALL" of **John Mounce**. I recall him as being a quiet fellow in the 3rd Platoon, **Lt. George Giuchici's** Platoon. I would also like to add to **Merle Traver's** account of Bergstein. I remember the fluorescent strips handed out to "F" Co. men. also the orders handed down that if any man fell into one of those tank traps, the man behind him was not to stop and help him, but to continue on, so as not to disrupt the column. Who the soldier was that fell in the hole or the who the soldier was that helped him, I do not know to this day. But it makes me wonder now if "F" CO. could have fought its way back to friendly lines or not or if the rest of the battalion or combat team would come to the rescue or not is a big question. Bergstein has been a big question or "what if" in my thoughts all these years. I also wonder if rained any harder in all of the 517th history that what it did that first night in BERGSTEIN.

BEST REGARDS TO ALL  
**Ray R. Hess**





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And here's a photo with **John Mounce** from **Earl Boone**:



Machi, Peacock, Zalik, Hill, Shaw, Fedal, Hanson, Holderman, Jop, Penrtol (?), Mounce

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Thank you for getting back to me. Bruce is my cousin and will see that he gets more information to you. My grandfather would be 100 this year. I can't imagine a lot of these heroes are still around. It's too bad that more people would not get involved with this last fighting generation. I joined the navy and was part of the Bosnian War and Desert Storm serving onboard submarines. The local American Legion and VFW are dying out because the younger generation don't join. Would love to learn more of the 517 if you have any more information.

Thank you.

**Adam Mounce**

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I did find a little more about John Mounce's life in his obituary from 2009, and from his short bio in the 1998 517<sup>th</sup> PRCT book from Turner Publishing. – BB

From the Southern Illinoisan, November 15 2009:

**John Marion Mounce II** (Grandpa), 89, went to be with our Savior, Jesus Christ, at 9:30 p.m. Friday, Nov. 13, 2009, at his home in Metropolis, surrounded by his beloved family.



John was born in Ozark, the son of John and Ollie May (Carter)

Mounce. He was raised in Massac County; the oldest of eight children.

John and Rebecca (Emery) Mounce were married Nov. 1940, in Mayfield, Ky.

John enlisted in the U.S. Army in May of 1943, at Toccoa, Ga. He was a member of the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team, part of Company F, 2nd Battalion. He was in four battle campaigns, parachuted into the South of France, Italy, Belgium and Germany. He fought in the Battle of the Bulge and was awarded the Bronze Star. John was honorably discharged from the Army Nov. 7, 1945, with the rank of corporal.

For 40 years, he contracted maintenance with Standard Oil.

His greatest joy in life was his grandchildren. As a young man, his hobbies included air shows in which he was a stuntman for the group Thrillmasters. He participated in wing walking and low-altitude jumps. He enjoyed hunting, fishing and camping, accompanied most of the time by his grandchildren.

517<sup>th</sup> Parachute Regimental Combat Team, Turner Publishing (1998):

**JOHN MARION MOUNCE**, born March 14, 1920, in Ozark, IL. Enlisted in paratroopers in May 1943 at Toccoa, GA in Co. F, 2nd Bn.

He was in four battle campaigns and parachuted into southern France and fought up through France, Italy, Belgium and Germany. He has four Battle Stars, one Invasion Arrowhead and the Bronze Star.

On D-Day he was pinned down for some time by snipers in a grape vineyard outside of La Matte. Lt. George Givichici and a soldier with a B.A.R. came along and said the sniper was gone and the town of La Matte had been taken. So the three of them went in.



About the middle of town shutters started flying open and Germans started coming out. The B.A.R. soldier and Mounce made it around the corner of a building but Lt. Givichici was hit by grenade shrapnel. The Germans were using burp on them. They had a grenade launcher and grenades but no blanks to use with them. They tried to get bullets out of a 30 cal. shell with no luck. They made it back to the Nortuby river and the lieutenant spent a time in the hospital.

Seventeen men jumped from their plane that day. Fourteen were captured that day (most landed in the river). All 14 were rescued from a cellar a few days later.

After discharge Nov. 7, 1945, he learned to fly on the GI Bill and made 47 high and low altitude stunt jumps as a member of the "Thrillmasters" in air shows. He is now retired from an oil company and spending extra time with six children, 18 grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren.



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From: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/toccoahistory/>

What became of Camp Toccoa after all the soldiers were gone? Great articles from the hometown newspaper reveal this. For a brief period of time, it became a POW Camp for captured German soldiers. From what I have read, these prisoners were well taken care of and loved the area.

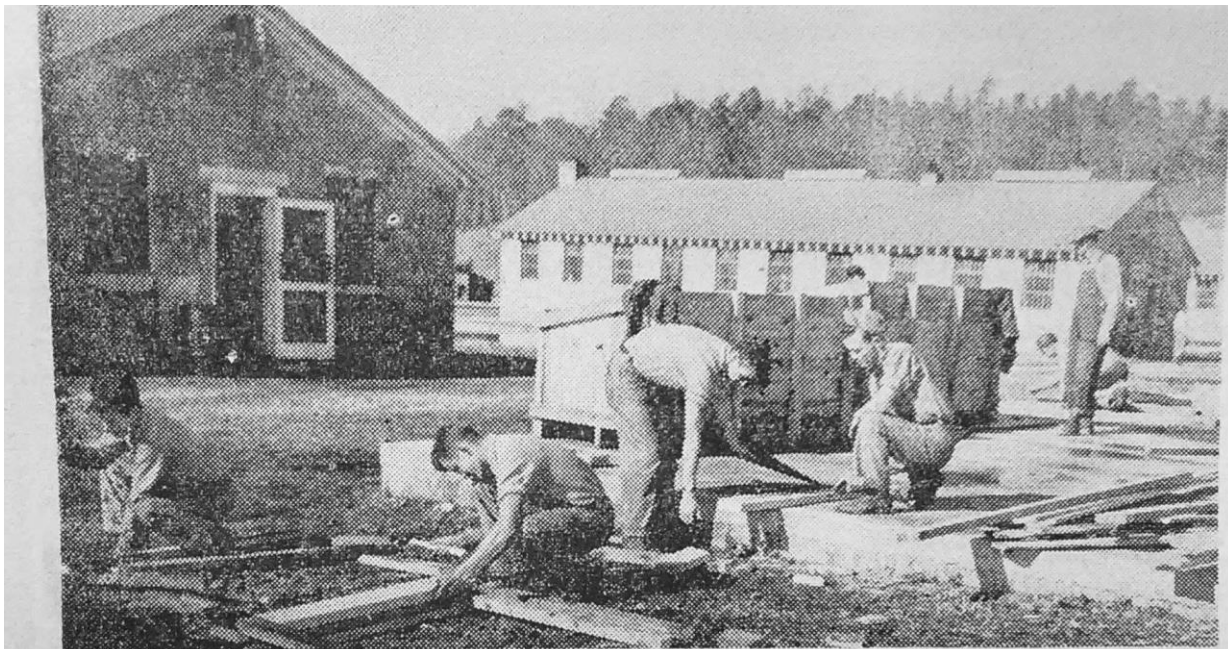
When World War 2 came to an end, the former Camp Toccoa would become a Juvenile Detention Center. And this proved not be as bad as it sounds One of the young men sent there was a young man from Augusta, Ga. who fell in love with Toccoa and made it home after his release. This young man was none other than James Brown. It would be here as the birthplace of the Fabulous Flames. And the rest, as they say is history! – Stan Smith

### German Prisoners Sent Here For Peach Season Removed to Camp Croft

Upwards of 100 German prisoners of war have been removed from Camp Toccoa to Camp Croft, S. C., where they have been assigned to work at that army post for an indefinite period.

While here, the German prisoners picked, packed and shipped 19 cars of peaches, each car averaging 386 baskets of the choice fruit.

The peaches were sent to Army posts located in the Fourth Corps area, it was said.



### CAMP TOCCOA - NOW SAVING LIVES

Camp Toccoa, famed World War II paratrooper camp, where young men were trained to kill, today is the site of the Georgia State Industrial School for Boys—a model institution for saving and rebuilding the lives of teen-agers who have stumbled off the beaten path. Above—Youthful inmates are busy repairing some of the war-time camp buildings and making preparations for new projects. An honor system prevails, and guards are unarmed. The school was transferred last month from Rome, Ga., to the Toccoa camp to provide larger quarters on a 302-acre tract. Below—The boys practice basketball for inter-state competition. (Independent photos by Maurice Payne).



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When James Brown was sixteen, he was convicted of armed robbery and sent to a juvenile detention center in Toccoa. While in prison, he formed a gospel quartet with fellow cell mates Johnny Terry, "Hucklebuck" Davis and a person named "Shag", and made his own instruments – a comb and paper, a washtub bass, a drum kit made from lard tubs, and what he called "a sort of mandolin [made] out of a wooden box." Due to the latter instrument, Brown was given his first nickname, "Music Box". In 1952, while still in reform school, Brown met future R&B legend Bobby Byrd, who was there playing baseball against the reform school team.



Byrd's family helped Brown secure an early release in 1952 after he'd done three years of his sentence. The authorities agreed to release Brown on the condition that he would get a job and not return to Augusta or Richmond County and also under the condition that he find a decent job and sing for the Lord – as he had promised in his parole letter. After stints as a boxer and baseball pitcher in semi-professional baseball (a career move ended by a leg injury), he finally turned his energy to music.

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Thanks for your reply. I'm familiar with the St. Louis fire since I had requested my dad's (**Ray Helms**, E-Co) personnel records several years ago. I was very disappointed to learn those records are gone forever. The only thing I ever got was his medical records, which are as difficult to decipher as the Morning Reports. While they sent me 117 pages of medical records, they are just copies of original handwritten forms that document medical treatments and transfers from one location or facility to another. Many of these original documents have sketchy handwritten information which makes it difficult to build a history that includes dates, locations, and reasons for treatment. The records appear to be incomplete, are not organized in any way at all, and some are duplicate copies of other records. I've spent a great deal of time trying to sort through them to define the time periods when my dad was away from his unit receiving medical treatment during his time in Europe with the 517th.

His first medical event was a sprained ankle during a road march 10 miles south of Rome on Route #7 on 7/16/44. He ended up at the 33rd General Hospital in Rome and was discharged for duty on 7/26/44.

His next medical event was the result of a shrapnel wound from a German mortar shell during the attack on LaRoquette on 8/28/44. He was evacuated for treatment at field hospitals and general hospitals in France. The records seem to indicate he was in medical facilities from 8/28/44 to around 10/14/44 before being discharged to duty status. **Jean-Loup Gassend** interviewed my dad over the phone in 2008 and included his account of his experience at LaRoquette in his book. He also sent me the actual transcript of his conversation with my dad.

Apparently, my dad was with his unit when they moved to Belgium for the Battle of the Bulge. His records indicate he suffered frozen feet during the period 12/22/44 to 12/24/44. He was tagged by medics near Malmedy on 12/24/44 and evacuated to England for treatment on 12/28/44. A note in his



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hospital record says "Feet were frozen while moving in truck over 48 hours, crowded and other GI's sleeping on his feet". It looks like he was treated in England for "trenchfoot" until 2/19/45 before being discharged to duty status again.

On 4/3/45 he was admitted to a field hospital in France with more trenchfoot problems. After being treated at several locations in France he was evacuated again to England on 4/18/45 for treatment. He was discharged for duty again on 5/4/45 and assigned to the 10th Reinforcement Depot.

His assignment to the 10th Reinforcement Depot may have been related to treatment for a dental abscess and a cut lip inflicted by the dentist who was draining the abscess. He was finally discharged to duty again on 5/30/45 and I assume he returned to his unit in time to be included in the photo of E-Company at Joigny.

I'm still working on a biography of my dad and a set of photos to send to you for the 517th web site. It's taking some time because I just can't sit down and stay with it. It's an emotional experience for me and I just work on it when I feel motivated to get back to it.

Based on your work with the 517th archives, where would you direct me for the best chronological summary of the movements of the 517th and E-Company during their time in Europe? As with the medical records I can find bits and pieces here and there, but it's a struggle to put the whole thing together.

Thanks for your help.

**Glenn Helms**

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Bob, Some time ago you had asked how my dad and **Gene Brissey** might have gotten together in England during the war. Based on the review of my dad's medical records it looks like he was in England for medical treatment during the period 12/28/44 to 2/19/45 and then again from 4/18/45 to 5/30/45. I believe those dates overlap the time Gene was also in England for medical treatment.

Thanks,  
**Glenn Helms**

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Hi Bob and Diane.

Diane, I believe your dad was in quite a few of the pictures I have and I'd be happy to make some hi resolution scans for you. Shoot me an email directly and we'll go from there.

I look forward to hearing from you.

**Mike Kane**

[**Diane Bradford** is the daughter of **Fred Canziani**, D Co.]



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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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Looking for the H Company Command Post - From Yank Weekly, Sept 8, 1944