



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2463

February 14, 2021

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

MailCall News

Guestbook entry:

Submitted by	Comments:
Name: Ursula Walton From: Redondo Beach, CA E-mail: uruskad8@gmail.com	My uncle Ralph Grizzle was a paratrooper in Company I. He had 27 jumps and received a bronze star for his heroics in Manhay. I truly enjoyed looking through this website and reading the stories of those in his company. His wife is still alive and I will get some photos for this website but if anyone else has any info, stories or photos of Ralph Grizzle, I would love to hear/see them.
Added: February 13, 2021	

Hi Ursula,

I see **Ray Grizzle's** Bronze Star citation on our website:

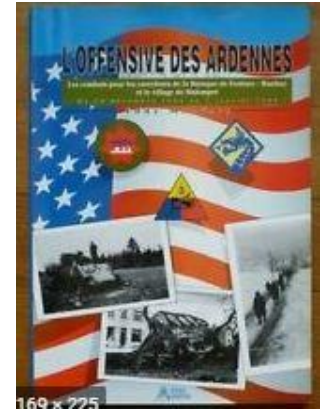
http://517prct.org/documents/1945_april_30_bronze_stars2.pdf

Staff Sergeant Ralph R. Grizzle, 16 019 589, (then Private First Class) 517th Parachute Infantry, United States Army, for heroic achievement in action. On 27 December 1944, at 0225 hours, Company "I", 517th Parachute Infantry, participated in an attack on the enemy held town of Manhay, Belgium. The First Platoon was given the mission of driving the enemy from houses in the northern section of the town. Staff Sergeant Grizzle, without orders and with utter disregard for his own personal safety, crawled to a comrade and asked him to give covering fire while he moved to the house. Staff Sergeant Grizzle then moved up the ditch to the house and, exposing himself to enemy fire, crossed a road and moved to a position in rear of the house. From this position, he threw three grenades into the windows and then fired his rifle through the door. This action resulted in the killing of one, wounding of three, and the capture of ten enemy. His courage is in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service. Entered the military service from Bloomington, Illinois.



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I don't know how much you know about that attack on Manhay. The most complete account of the battle is **Eddy Monfort's** book *L'Offensive Des Ardennes*. I have attached an English translation of the Manhay chapter for you. <http://517prct.org/documents/The%20battle%20of%20the%20crossroads%20--%20Dieter%20Laes.pdf>



My Dad, **Ben Barrett**, was in H Company and also in the attack on Manhay. Many I Company men were lost in that attack due to "friendly fire" from artillery. There is a long audio recording about that battle with Ben and several H and I Company troopers who tell the story:

[Accounts of the 3rd Battalion attack on Manhay](#) 📻 - 26 Dec 1944

Recorded at the 517th Annual Reunion , Oklahoma City, 04 June 2003

Lud Gibbons, Fred Harmon, John Guthrie, Cecil Doty, John Strojan, Ben Barrett, Bob Vaught



There are still Battle of the Bulge commemorations every year in December. There is a plaque on one of the buildings recognizing the 517th for their liberation. (I actually visited Manhay with my Dad back in 2009.)

I do not see any photos or specific stories of **Ray Grizzle** in my collections, but my records are very incomplete. So yes, please send any photos you have.

There are a number of photos of Manhay after the attack, that I will include in the next MailCall newsletter.

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





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From: Cher Thibou <cthibou77@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 9, 2021 1:17 AM
To: mailcall@517prct.org
Subject: Found photos 517 Prct service members 1943

Good morning all. Quite some time ago I found pictures of **Lt Carl Starkey** and fellow service members of the 517th Prct. I found them in a book checked out from the library. They are original blk & white photos. I would love to be able to return them to Lt. Starkey's family members. Copy attached. I hope someone can help me out in this matter. Thank you all!

Cher Thibou

Hi Cher,

I don't have an address or contact info for Carl Starkey or his family. He was not on any of the Thunderbolt rosters that I have. I will ask in the next MailCall newsletter. I do know he did attend some reunions, so he survived the war. I did some internet research and found an obituary for his wife Cornelia. She dies in 2018 at age 100, in Port Huron, MI. Her husband, Carl E. Starkey died in 1985. I cannot find his obituary (that was pre-internet) but Cornelia's obit names some children, also in Michigan. I have one or two family names and addresses that I will include in an email.

Bob Barrett

Is anyone in contact with the Starkey family? Let us know. -- BB

Photos of 1st Lt. **Carl Starkey**, D Company from **Mike Kane's** photos:
http://www.517prct.org/photos/d_company_files/kane_company_d.htm





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Here is a story about Lt. Starkey from **Bob Hart**'s bio:

http://www.517prct.org/bios/bob_hart/Bob_Hart.pdf

Lt. Starkey—probably the toughest man I ever met in my life—was also a nice guy. Just no hanky-panky. He was leading the platoon on my first day up the mountain. He hated to see anybody ahead of him, so he stepped it up. By this time I'm gasping. And I fell out. That was no-no. I just laid down in the dirt next to the road. A corporal told me to get with the program. Starkey saw what was happening. He fell out and declared, 'Get back in that goddamn formation!' And I said, 'Screw you!' I was just a dumb recruit who didn't realize you couldn't talk that way to an officer." Starkey glowered, turned on his heel and sprinted back to the front of the formation. Angry and energized, Hart dusted himself off and rejoined the runners. He made it back to the barracks with the rest of the platoon and was surprised when nothing more was said of the incident. "After four or five days I could run the mountain as well as anybody. You got used to it. You felt like you could do anything. There was esprit." Decades later at a 517th reunion at Palm Springs, Hart visited with Starkey. "I says, 'Lieutenant, why didn't you kick me out of the outfit?' And he said, 'You got up and got back, didn't you?' "

And here is an interesting mention of **Carl Starkey** (D Co.) and **John Lissner** (F Co.) from **Tom Cross** from Mailcall #559, October 2003.

Ben:

I liked **Randolph Coleman**'s Co F story about **John Lissner** in Nice at the Negresco Hotel. It is typical Lissner.

Dick Seitz and I were sharing a Lissner story the other day about John Lissner being detailed to pay the Co. F Troopers that were in the Hospital in Nice on a payday. This happened after we came off the mountains outside of Nice and were encamped at La-Colle-Sur- Loup.

It goes like this: John was overdue from his assigned task of paying the troops in the Hospital in Nice so **Dick Seitz**, knowing John well and sometimes a willing accomplice in **John Lissner**'s and **Carl Starkey**'s (Co.D) off-duty capers, asked me to go into Nice and make sure I brought John back with me. I took off for Nice and found John and friends at one of the five Bistros, Restaurants, and/or Hotels that were On-Limits to Officers, the rest being Off-limits per **Major General Frederick**'s orders. Fredericks, as you know, was CG of the 1st Airborne Task Force. I found John sitting amidst his buddies well on the way to having a good night on the town. I told John what my instructions were from the Battalion Commander and not getting any acknowledgment or response proceeded to pick him up using the fireman's carry to get him out of the place. I got as far as the exit door where I mistakenly set him down to open the door. He bolted back to his buddies and resumed the



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activities upon which he was previously engaged. Making a quick estimate of the situation and knowing John as I did, I decided to join his gang so I could at least keep an eye on them as the senior officer present. I do not recall much after that other than we all got back to La Colle OK. I attributed our good fortune, with no reprisal, to my sly comment about the Battalion C.O. being a "sometime willing accomplice" earlier in this account. As a footnote let me add that the CG of the 1st ABTF knew that if he restricted his officers just to a few On-Limits places he could always get hold of them or so he thought. I believe this was the only time in the ETO, in my experience, where the Officers were restricted, and the rest of the gang had an "Open City." Don't know why I am telling all this but Randolph's comments set me "beguiling,"

Regards, **Tom Cross**

I also found this info about Lissner and Starkey in **Gerald Astor's** *Battling Buzzards* book:

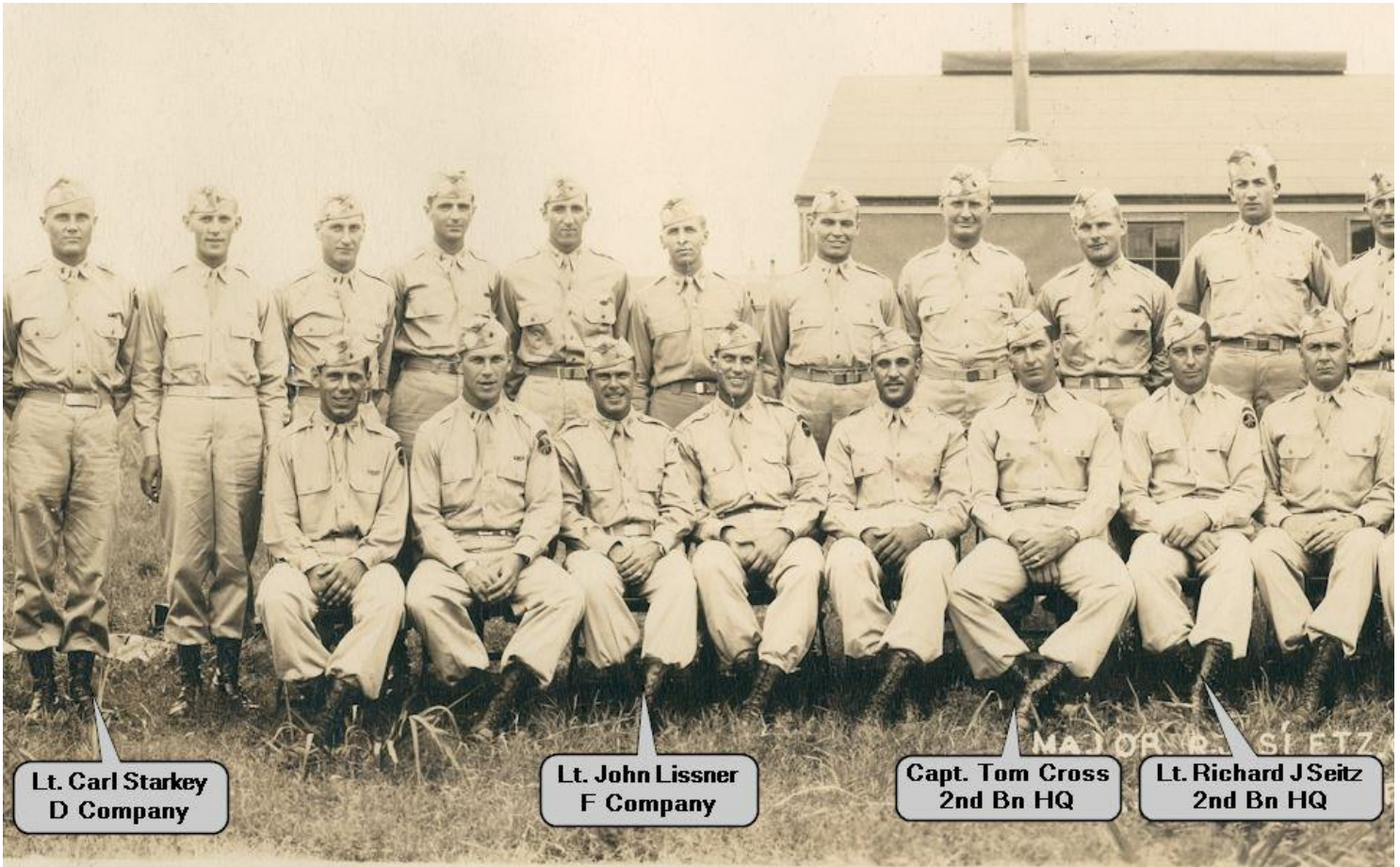
Tom Cross straddled the line between the top brass and their juniors. He had come in as a company commander but quickly progressed to become executive officer under Seitz. The lower echelons continued to enjoy his company during occasional off-duty sprees. Two of the foremost revelers, **John Lissner** and **Carl Starkey** of D and F Companies, were known as *Les Enfants*. "If there was trouble," says Cross, "you knew that Lissner and Starkey would be in the middle of it."

OK, One more story from *Battling Buzzards*:

Still exploiting his athletic talents and interests, Lissner started a boxing team at Camp Lee, Virginia, and coached the base football squad. The Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor while Lissner pursued a commission at OCS. Subsequently, he enrolled at the Camp Holabird Automotive School. "I picked up a newspaper with an ad, 'Be a man, be a paratrooper.' I typed a request and sent it to the chief of army ground forces. Three days later, I had orders to report to Benning and finished jump school there in November 1942. I met **Bill Boyle** and **Carl Starkey** there. Starkey and I were having a few beers in the officers' club when a discussion arose at another table. A fellow I later learned was **Bill Boyle** picked up a wooden chair and threw it at the ceiling fan, disintegrating the chair while forcefully making his point.'



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Officers of the 2nd Battalion
Camp Toccoa 1943

From

http://www.517prct.org/photos/toccoa_1943_officers_2nd_btn/camp_toccoa_2nd_btn_officers_1943.htm



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Progress continues at Camp Toccoa at Currahee. New platform and ramp for the 517th Barracks. The 506th ramp was finished last year and now both Barracks are ADA compliant. Thanks to Matt Rosesch and his crew for another outstanding job for the Camp. Along with the exterior siding and trim, the interior is coming along nicely. Soon it will be time to sand, stain and paint the floors. The exterior will soon be painted also, waiting on good weather.

Project C-47 had to reschedule it's workweek for February. It will now be March 4th thru 7th. Hoping to get the windows installed, finish the flooring and maybe move the aircraft on to it's foundation.

Come visit and see the progress for yourself, there's nothing like it this close to home. Currahee!





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Subject: FW: **Gabe Delesio** 460th PFAB

Hi Denise,

Loïc Jankowiak is a great friend of the 517th in France, and he is the author of "The 517th Gang", about the 517th in Southern France. He continues to interview soldiers (for his next book?), and asked if he might be able to interview Gabe. Can I put him in contact with you?

Bob Barrett

Yes you can put him in contact with me. I gave my dad his book for Christmas last year. Hopefully my dad be willing to share.

Thanks for your time. And hope you are doing well.

Denise

Hello Denise,

Bob Barrett just give me your contact. I hope you are well and your father's too ! As he told you, I am still looking for informations on the 517th PRCT which is very important to me and would like to know if your father would be happy to share some informations, mostly stories of his jump in Southern France. This would be priceless to me. Also, I would like to know if you have any pictures of him or the 460th PFAB during WWII.

Thank you !

Loïc.

Great picture of **Gabe Delesio**, **Tony Mandio** and **Merle McMorrow** at the 2015 reunion. The men of the 517th are certainly a handsome group.

Thank you for the interesting history about Carlisle Barracks. Brings back memories of being a 12 year old when my dad, **Dick Seitz** was stationed there.

I am glad **Terry Sandford's** Wikipedia page now includes his 517th service.

Thank you for another fun to read Mail Call.

Pat Seitz



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Administrivia

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- 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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from Yank Weekly, Sept 8, 1944
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marie_McDonald