



MailCall No. 2471
July 25, 2021

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

MailCall News

From Currahee Military Museum https://www.facebook.com/groups/toccoahistory



Great photo of the numerous barracks once standing at the enormous Camp Toccoa constructed not far from Currahee Mountain. This photo is from 1942. Before these were constructed, the soldiers in training were forced to live in tents. Parachute training was a new experiment for the U. S. Military, and it was a true honor and something we should forever be proud of, that Stephens County was chosen as the location of this Camp.



From February 2021 (not sure if I already included this in a previous MailCall)

Hi Bob

I am featuring the same great parachutists backdrop in my forthcoming book on the 517 which image I believe is in the public domain.

My book begins with the pre-war idea by Gen Billy Mitchell to create a special force combat paratroop regiment and how it evolved etc. Training, creation of the 517, deployment, its role and missions in MTO and 2nd DDay ETO etc.

My father, Jerome V. Callahan, started out as Staff Sgt 3rd Bat Co G. See Mail Call # 2217

My father and **Lt Dick Spencer**, 3rd, G Co, stayed friends through the rest of their lives. Dick was the cartoonist and map illustrator for the cartoons for and used by the 517 and the booklet on the Champaign Campaign which I have an original. Dick went on to become publisher of Western Horseman Magazine.

I also could not resist closing a key chapter in my book with the Kilroy was Here Meme!

Nancy Carlson

May 31, 2021

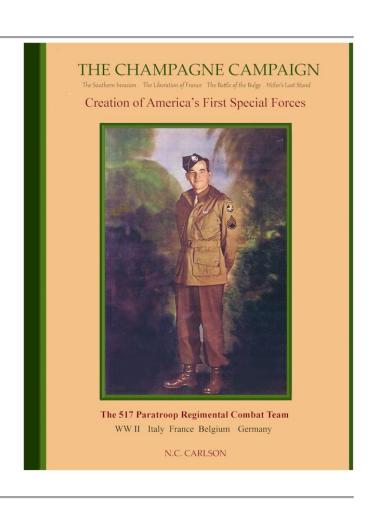
Attached are a few excerpts in PDF from the New 517 Book I have been writing for completion in 2021. Presently its 206 pages, 46k words.

My father served with the 517. His photo is on the cover...because its a grand full size picture of a 517 Trooper in uniform...not just a the typical head shot.

I hope to provide book copies to WW II Foundation to help raise money for veterans.

Nancy Callahan Carlson Laguna Woods, CA 92637

(Daughter of S/Sgt Jerome V. Callahan, Co G.)





My Dad (**Kenneth Baker Tucker**) got a FREE (judio) trip across The Pond to Glasgow, Scotland on the Queen Mary. Told me they packed about 5,000 soldiers at a time in her and scooted them across the Atlantic. He told me that as they neared the English coastline, the pilot would zigzag the ship at full speed to avoid German u-boats (submarines). Guys puking all over the place. When they got to the pier in Scotland, the British soldiers gave a hand to each American soldier as they disembarked. Dad said he had the utmost RESPECT for how truly professional the British soldiers were. The British soldier that grabbed my Dad's hand looked him directly in the eyes and told him, "it's about time you Yanks showed up."

My Dad responded to the British soldier, "don't worry, we are here to kick some Nazi a\$\$!!!"

My Dad NEVER talked about the War until he was on his deathbed. God bless him.

Glenn Tucker

https://www.insidehook.com/daily_brief/travel/soviet-submarine-queen-mary-long-beach

This is my FAVORITE pic of my Mom and Dad at Grandpa Dr. Mastellari's beach house in Santa Clara Beach, Rep. of Panama.

Loved that my Dad (even out at the beach) ALWAYS wore his "nerd pocket protector" along with his 3x5 cards to jot down notes. He was a very learned man...a good, wholesome man. Not perfect, but a damn good man.

Glenn



Glenn sent in some more info and photos, which I have added to his Dad's bio page at: https://www.517prct.org/bios/kenneth_baker_tucker.htm -- BB

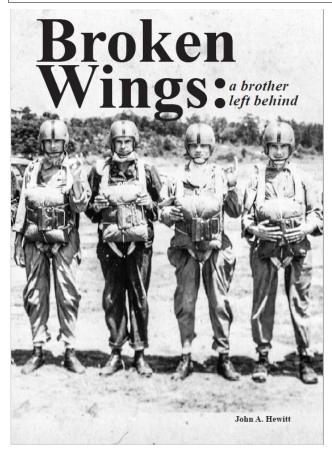
Sent July 4, 2021:

Dear friends of America, on this special day, we think of you with affection and we wish you a wondeful day – God bless you, God bless America.

Have a nice summer

Arnold and Irma TARGNION and members of CADUSA





I have recently completed a book about my father's time as a paratrooper and would like find out how to get a link on your site to help promote the book. A draft version is attached for your review. Any suggestions you make have will be greatly appreciated.

Thanks in advance.

John Hewitt

Son of James McIver Hewitt, 3rd Bn

John's book is called *Broken Wings – A Brother Left Behind* and is the story of **Sgt James Hewitt**. (later demoted to Private) of the 502^{nd,} 506th and the 517th PIR. He was a trainer of new recruits at Camp Toccoa under **Col. Robert Sink**.

We successfully completed the last group without any failures. This left both of us still on top of the Mock Tower.

Jim Hewitt was recently recruited from the Parachute School for eventual assignment to the Third Battalion. He was Intelligent, well built, and proficient in Parachute physical training and operations. He was only temporarily attached to the In and Out Platoon.

Normally when two were up on the tower, one could climb down the ladder and the other would harness up and jump out of the mock tower, and upon landing tie the harness to the pole.

I was about to climb down the ladder when Jim mentioned that while he was at the Parachute School, some of the instructors to the Mock Tower jumped together to keep the other from climbing down the ladder. I then said, "Let's try it. If this was done at the parachute school why not here at Toccoa."

He agreed, and prepared the harness in a loop, which was placed around our rumps, then placing my left arm around his shoulder, and he with his right arm on my shoulder followed by holding the harness with my right hand, and he the harness with his left hand.

Does the name **Jim Hewitt** sound familiar? I've heard the story many times of "The Mock Tower Incident" from **Lt. John "Boom Boom"** Alicki. Jim Hewitt was John's partner in crime in that incident. John lost touch with Jim after they were both injured that incident. This book answers all the questions about Jim Hewitt and his Army career. I'll include excerpts in the next MailCall.

BB



Lt. John A, Alicki

https://www.517prct.org/bios/john_alicki_files/alicki_book/alicki.pdf



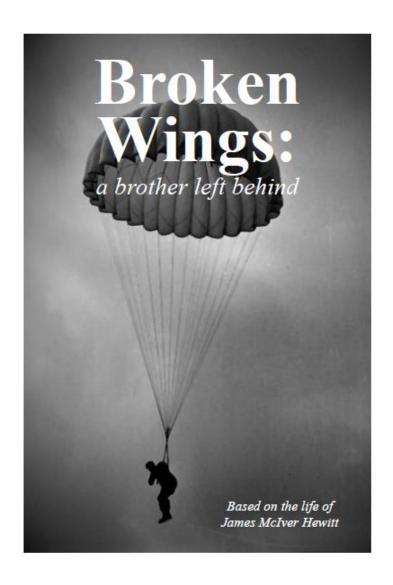
Hi John,

Just catching up with emails and read your note. I haven't read the entire draft yet, but what a story. I was well into it before I realized that your Dad was John "Boom Boom" Alicki's partner in the infamous Mock Tower Incident at Camp Toccoa. Now, we finally know what happened to Jim Hewitt. I know that all the friends and family of the 517th will be excited to hear Jim Hewitt's story after all these years.

I will start with a mention of your book in the next MailCall newsletter that I send out periodically to the friends of the 517th PRCT. I'd be happy to mention the book in future MailCalls and on the website. I'd love to include a couple of excerpts as well in future MailCalls.

Let me know when you're ready to release the story.

Bob Barrett MailCall@517prct.org







The death of Mel Edwards and his wife, Margaret, has shocked all of us who knew them. Mel's dedication to the Airborne and especially to the 517 PLT was a labor of love. The Airborne has lost one of their best and he will be sadly missed.

MICHAEL J. KANE (D 517)

(D 517) 101 Second Avenue Mt. Ephraim, NJ 08059 PH 609-931-5802

TOM W. DAVIS (517) 1346 Drexel Road West Palm Beach, FL 33409

Retired in 1972 after a Vietnam Tour and 29 years;— 20 years with Air-borne units. Thanks to CAMERON GAUTHIER for getting me back in touch. Would like to hear from my C-480th Buddies. C-460th Buddies

C-460th Buddies. LT. COL. LEONARD F. AXTMAN (RET) (Bty C-460th PFA-517th) 2 Oak Drive Minot ND 58701 PH 701-838-2478

Was that a great convention in Minneapolis?
Nobody enjoyed it more than I did. I know nothing better than seeing old friends.

It seems that we tend to forget some of the great weapons that helped win the Big War— pup tent, jeep, C-47, spam, short arm inspections, DDT powder, slit trench, cat hole and jump boots.

These pictures are of me in Italy, using a slit trench and a cat hole. See you in Orlando.

JAMES M. MOSES (596-517)
P.O. Box 5
Uvalda GA 30473
PH 912-594-6206
ED NOTE: Which one's a cat hole?—D.L.



DON'T LOOK



Please change address. ROBERT BROOTEN

(517th) 310 S. Arnold Avenue Thief River Falls, MN 56701 PH 681-7718

Hi Don—
Sorry I am late with the dues. I am the Commander of the Disabled American Veteran's Gator Chapter 90, Gainesville FI. and was out of State for ten days. I am kept very busy helping the disabled veterans in the Gainesville area.

I like your STATIC LINE very much. Keep up the good work, Don. So, take care.

Yours in Comradeship.
JOHN W. BROWN
(517th RCT; 187 RCT; 508 REG)
8620 211 N. W. 13th Street

Gainesville, FL 32601 Ph 904-377-5782

Don— It was good to see you in Minneapolis at the Reu-

nion.
PETER F. RACICH (517) 1924 Cora Street Joliet, IL 60435 PH 815-723-4608

DonHad a good time at Minn. Reunion. Glad to see that you could make it and hope to see you at next Reunion.
We should have a better resentation of G Co. personnel in '81 in Orlando. Good luck; good health and keep up the good work. keep up the good work.

DUANE (DEWEY) C.

DUANE (DEWEY) C.
KOLLVER
(517 P.I.R. G Co.
1943-45)
5519 Michael
Dearborn Hgts. MI

48125 PH 292-0478

Attended Minneapolis Reunion. Best Ever. MARTIN J. MERTZ (C Btry 460) 3340 Cardinal Drive Brookfield, WI 53005 Ph 781-0377

Don—
Please keep STATIC
LINE coming. It's like a
breath of fresh air.
WILLIAM E. FREY
(517th Sig. Co., 17th A/B

1005 1st Avenue Hellertown, PA 18055 PH 838-9426

Sorry my brother and I missed the Reunion. We will make the next one. SGT. JOHN R. IVEY passed SGT. JOHN R. IVEY passed away this past Summer. I'm sure many in Bty A will remember him. Keep up the good work. ROGER TALLAKSON (Bty A 460th-517th) 3320 W. Palmaire Phoenix AZ 85021 PH 973-1398

LES HOLDRIDGE (517) 2901 E. South Street Jackson, MI 42901

Ah, the power of the press! You've done something I couldn't do in 4½ years— made me a Ma-

JIM LANTZ (460 P.F.A.) 641 W. 61st Street Kansas City, MO 64113 PH 816-363-6503

JOSEPH SANFORD (517) 3400 W. Fourth St. Ft. Worth TX 76107 PH 336-4706

Don—
Good to have had you at our Reunion in Minneapolis. Hope we are all together again in Buena Vista, Fl. in 1981.

Very sad about untimely passing of Med Edwards and wife.

DR. W.P. PLASSMAN (Hq. 3rd Bn. 517th RCT) 630 Short St.
Centralia, IL 62801
PH 618-532-1145

WILLIAM H. COINER (D 517) Star Rt., Ely Rd., Box

122 Sumerco, WV 25567

DonWould like to hear from any of the old B Co. 460th. Maybe we could make a Reunion sometime.
E.F. BUD SCHUET (B Co 460th) 12 Chaperelle Minot, ND 58701 PH 838-1647

DonEnjoy the STATIC LINE very much. Also good to see you in Minn. So sorry about Mel Edwards and wife. Our prayers go out to his children.
WARREN W. DAVIS (Svc. Co. H 517) 50600 Willis Rd.
Belleville, MI 48111 PH 461-1256

Don-Good health and good luck to all members of the Airborne Fratemity. ARNIE HUGHSON (Co D 517) 121 Coleman Avenue Spencerport, NY 14559 PH 716-352-6671

Static Line Is Your Life Line



MINNEAPOLIS HONEYMOONERS Lena & Al Sobel were married at the 517 Reunion in Min-

KENNETH I. ROLL (Hq 3rd-517) 1127 Meadow Lane Dr. Bettendorf IA 52722 PH 319-355-4673

Don—
Read every line. Didn't realize until not too long ago that there were other parachule units besides the 517. Stay with it. It's creat!

great!

JAMES E. PEASE
Regt'l Hq. Co. 517th

P.O. Box 543 Union, S.C. 29379 PH 803-545-2115

D.W. EUGENE (517th RCT; Reg. Hq. Co. S-2) 3249 E. Monmouth Cleveland Hts., Ohio

44118 PH 321-8989

Dear Don— News of the Airborne from the Ohio Veterans' Home, Sandusky, Ohio:

Mr. Jerry C. Nease (82 and 101) was promoted to Sergeant of the Poppy Shop. This shop makes about 800,000 poppies are shipped throughout the United States and Europe.

Mr. Jack Myers (82nd) is in the hospital recovering from a heart attack.

Also, I'm enclosing a picture of Mr. Ralph (A Co. 517th) and Mrs. (Evelyn) Harmon and Alice and myself. Mr. Jerry C. Nease (82

myself.

Sincerely Yours RALPH K. CLINK (Hq. 1-517th) Ohio Soldiers' and Sailors' Home Sandusky, Ohio 44870



Ralph & Evelyn Harmon (L) and Alice & Ralph Clink

Don—
Please note change of address. Old address was 7926 W. 90th Pl., Hickory Hills IL, 60457.
CLIFFORD BURCH (Co G 517)
1328 Gray Fox Lane Port Rickey, FL 33568 PH 813-848-1284

GRAHAM WATTS (517) Rt 9, Box 433 Laurel, MS 39440

It was great to meet the old gang of mine once again at Mpls. Sgt. Belanio was really a pleasant sur-RICHARD MILLER

(D Btry 460th, 10 Combat Team) 851 W. 5th St. Winona, MN 55987 PH 507-452-9544

JOSEPH H. CALDER JOSEPH H. CALDER (517) Dir. of Security East Carolina University Greenville, NC 27834 PH 756-4010

Enjoy it very much. KENNETH W. TRUAX (505) 416 No. Main St. Ettrick WI 54627

CHARLES A. STEWART (B Battery 460 FA) 1282 Ford Park Way St. Paul, MN 55116 PH 698-9179

Here tis. Ain't got no ex-cuse why I'm late! Best of luck to you and the STATIC

luck to you and the GINELINE.
W.E. "BILL" PRICE
(1st Bn 517 PIR)
825 Broughton, N.W.
Orangeburg, SC 29115
PH 803-534-3424



517th news in the *Static Line* December 1979 from Loic Jankowiak via https://www.facebook.com/groups/1472895329686741/



Bob,

I noticed it's been awhile since the last Mail Call. I hope you're in good health. Were you able to convert my dad's WWII Photo History document from Word to PDF?

Thanks,

Glenn Helms

Hi Glenn. Just trying to finish up a long overdue MailCall now. Thanks for the reminder about converting your Dad's bio. Attached is a pdf version.

I will add it to the photos section of the website soon, although I know you said you are working on a whole bio. I look forward to that as well.

Bob Barrett

A few sample pictures of **Ray Helms** and friends:



Ray (L) and Gene Brissey (R)



Ray (on ground), Bob Morris (standing), On leave at Ray's home - Landis, NC - Possibly Christmas 1943 Kasimer Lesiak (kneeling) - Camp Mackall, NC - March 1944





Ray (L) and Bob Mourek (R) (KIA) Camp Mackall, NC – March 1944



Pitching horseshoes - Somewhere in France



November 9, 2019 - Fremont News Messenger, Fremont, OH

'I was lucky': Veteran, 95, recalls experiences as WWII paratrooper

Elmore's Calvin Haar had 1 combat jump and a close call as phone operator Daniel Carson

The News-Messenger



This photo of Calvin Haar, a World War II U.S. Army veteran from Elmore, shows him in 1943 at 18 shortly after graduating from Fremont Ross High School. Now 95, Harr is one of the last remaining World Warr II veterans still living in Ottawa County. *Daniel Carlson/The News Messenger*

ELMORE - If Calvin Haar had a moment of truth about whether he should be a U.S. Army paratrooper, it probably came when he took his first look down from a Fort Benning training tower.

He'd grown up on a farm in Lindsey.

When he'd enlisted in 1943, Haar volunteered for parachute school.

And there he stood months later high above the Georgia training base, not far removed from high school, hundreds of miles from his Northwest Ohio home and peering 250 feet down at the ground.

"I was a little scared, " Haar, 95, of Elmore, said as he recalled the experience with his wife, Betty, at their Ottawa County home Thursday.

Haar, 95, of Elmore served as a paratrooper and also as a switchboard operator during World War II.

Sara Toris, director of the Ottawa County Veteran Services office, said Haar is one of the few World War II veterans still living in the county.

She is not sure if he is the oldest.

The National World War II Museum, citing U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs statistics, reported only 389,292 of the 16 million Americans who served in World War II are alive in 2019.

Of those veterans, more than 15,000 live in Ohio.

Haar gets animated when he recalls some details of his service during the war.

His only combat jump, one close call as a phone operator with the Germans, his substantial poker winnings — the memories came flooding back as he recounted his journey from a local farm to World War II's end in Europe.



Heads for Europe

Had World War II never happened, Haar probably would have been working on a farm.

He graduated from Fremont Ross High School in 1942. In high school, Haar took several agriculture-related classes.

Instead, he immediately joined the military.

After enlisting in Toledo, Haar went through months of training in Georgia, then Camp Mackall in North Carolina before heading across the Atlantic Ocean toward Italy as part of a six-ship convoy.

He remembered reaching Italy and initially camping in an olive grove.

"The olives weren't fresh," he joked.

One combat jump

Haar never got entangled in any bad battles, he said.

Through timing, an unfortunate case of jaundice, and circumstances, Haar stayed in the background of the war's most brutal fights toward the end of World War II in Europe.

The Ottawa County man just missed the Siege of Bastogne, part of the larger Battle of the Bulge.

His outfit took a beating at Bastogne, Haar recalled.

"I was lucky. I didn't get there in time," he said.

Haar jumped 13 times out of a plane.



Calvin Haar, 95 of Elmore, holds up his photo of himself from 1943, after he had enlisted in the U.S. Army. Haar served as a paratrooper in Europe during the war. *Daniel Carlson/The News Messenger*

There were generally 12 paratroopers in a jump lineup, he recalled, with a jumpmaster who told the soldiers to check each other's equipment and make sure everything was packed properly.

To make a jump, paratroopers would first make a right turn at the plane's door, then a left turn as they left the plane.

Haar said that allowed a paratrooper's chute to open up over his head.

"You don't feel a thing. The chute goes over your head and you start swinging," Haar said.



A paratrooper's backpack would be attached to a static line, which broke a light cord attached to the pack and allowed a parachute to open.

On his one combat jump, Haar dropped into southern France on Aug. 15, 1944.

Word got around among the U.S. paratroopers that the Germans had pulled most of their troops away from the drop area and sent them toward a region where the Battle of the Bulge raged on.

"We got a little confident," Haar said.

The jump didn't go as planned.

Seventy five years later, Haar mused that the pilot of his plane "must have been drunk," as he and other paratroopers ended up 20 miles inland from their intended landing zone.

The Germans had set up four-foot posts throughout vineyards in the area, which caused considerable damage to gliders attempting to land, Haar said.

He and other paratroopers fought their way back to a beach in Southern France, with light casualties.

Haar serves in Europe

Haar's remaining personal mementos from World War II include a frayed card emblazoned with a buzzard insignia, denoting the paratrooper's service with the 517th Parachute Combat Team's "Battling Buzzards" in the European Theater.

He served with the Buzzards' Company A, 1st Platoon, from May 1944 through June 1945.

When Haar was in Southern France, he came down with jaundice and went to the hospital.

While he was in the hospital, his outfit pulled out and marched to the Battle of the Bulge area.

Haar was released from the hospital and tasked with taking care of the phones.



Calvin Haar, 95, of Elmore served with the U.S. Army's "Battling Buzzards" 517th Parachute Combat Team during World War II. Haar made on combat jump as a paratrooper during the war. *Daniel Carlson/The News Messenger*

One night, a phone line went dead and he had to venture out in the dark about 300 yards to trace a call and find out where the line had broken.

His trip in the dark led him to finding German soldiers, who had briefly taken over an American outpost near his camp.



He quickly hot footed it back to the camp.

"What happened to the people out there, I'll never know," Haar said.

After the war

When World War II ended in Europe in 1945, Haar had the choice of going back to the United States (with the possibility of being sent to the war's Pacific Theater) or to remain in Berlin as part of the Allied postwar occupation.

He remained in Germany as a switchboard operator and on guard duty in the American zone of Berlin until December 1945, when Haar received his honorable discharge.

Haar saw the beginnings of the Cold War.

He remembered American soldiers being told that if they were on a bus in Berlin and sat next to Russian soldiers to not speak around them.



Betty and Calvin Harr will be celebrating their $73^{\rm rd}$ wedding anniversary Nov 15. They corresponded with each other while Harr served as a U.S. Army paratrooper overseas during World War II. $Daniel\ Carlson/The\ News\ Messenger$

Americans were told all of the Russians spoke English, Haar said.

While Haar was in Europe he stayed in touch with Betty Murray from back home.

Haar still has the 1944 holiday card, "Seasons Greeting from a Paratrooper," that he sent to his future wife.

Betty Haar said she met Calvin at the Sandusky County Fair as teens and corresponded with him during his time overseas.

The Haars will be married 73 years as of Nov. 15.

"That's a milestone," she said.

Sent \$4,500 poker winnings home

Haar also sent \$4,500 in poker winnings to his family, until the Army changed the rules and wouldn't allow soldiers to send more than their monthly pay back home.

For Haar, that was \$120.

When asked about his success at poker, Haar attributed it to luck.



He went to work at Martin Marietta in 1950 and stayed there 39 years until his retirement.

With his wife, Haar has visited every state in the U.S. and made trips back to Europe.

They showed an autographed photo from former President Jimmy Carter and his wife, Rosalynn, and talked about their tour of Carter's peanut operation in Plains, Ga.

"Jimmy Carter has just a little better house than ours," Calvin said.

Haar started making chocolate 25 years ago as a hobby.

He offered some of his hand-made chocolate-covered cashews to a News-Messenger reporter Thursday.

While he still commemorates Veterans Day every year, which is coming up on Monday, time has slowed Haar down and he's not as active as he was with veteran-related events.

It's been seven decades since he's made a jump.

Now, Haar has his memories of his service and the "funny, crazy attitude" he had when he enlisted, where he thought it would be fun to jump out of planes.

dacarson@gannett.com

Source: https://www.thenews-messenger.com/story/news/local/2019/11/08/i-lucky-veteran-95-recalls-experiences-wwii-paratrooper/2521925001/

Calvin Haar was with A Company. - BB

Bob.

I noticed it's been awhile since the last Mail Call. I hope you're in good health. Were you able to convert my dad's WWII Photo History document from Word to PDF?

Thanks.

Glenn Helms

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Bob Barrett



Administrivia

If you miss any MailCalls, they are all available online at http://www.517prct.org/mailcall/

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" I dropped out of Parachute School. "