



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

eLee HUe



MailCall No. 2474

February 13, 2022

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

Ceremonies for Col. Thomas and Bette Cross at ANC



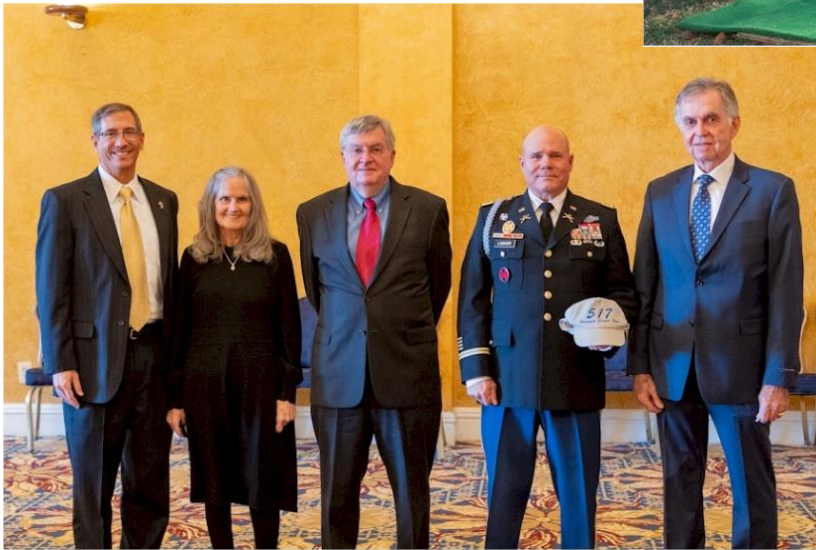


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I recently got the photos back from Tom and Bette's funeral and wanted to share with you. The day was particularly special because **Rick Seitz** and **Matt Lissner** were able to join us at the funeral and later at the reception at Patton Hall, Ft. Myer. Despite the harsh weather and Covid capacity limits placed on the Old Post Chapel at Ft. Myer, there was a strong turnout of active-duty personnel to honor dad's airborne career including representatives from the Airborne Rigger School at Ft Lee and the 82nd Airborne Division from Ft. Bragg.

- **Thomas Cross, Jr.**

The first picture is of **Matt Lissner** rendering a salute after placing a 517th PIR badge beside dad's Urn on the gravesite



The second picture taken at the reception is from the left **Rick Seitz, Mary Cross, Wayne Cross, Matt Lissner** and **Tom Cross, Jr.**

Third picture is **Rick Seitz** (son of **General Dick Seitz**, 3rd Battalion commander) and **Matt Lissner** (son of **Capt. John Lissner**, F Company commander)





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Short bio of Tom Cross in [MailCall 2447](#)

Tom and Bette Cross
2014



Tom Cross in France 1945



1/30/2022:

Bob

For my two years of active duty, I was assigned at the Pentagon and use to park at South Post, Fort Myer and occasionally after work would walk through different areas of ANC that I hadn't previously seen. Now I live 60 miles away and only seem to go there for funerals.

I'm working on trying to get a private marker authorized for dad and mom. He requested I have certain inscriptions placed on his gravestone and the standard issue markers are not large enough for what he wanted.

Before you release the next web site update, I'll send some relevant pictures including a 517th unit badge being placed on the gravesite and a picture of the "517th PIR next generation" at the reception – **Rick Seitz, Matt Lissner and Tom, Mary and Wayne Cross.**

Tom Cross, Jr.



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Other MailCall News

Here are some 517th pictures from Tom Cross, Jr. The first two are a tower jump and the 517th "mascot" at Camp Toccoa, I assume. Who can tell me about the rest? – Bob Barrett

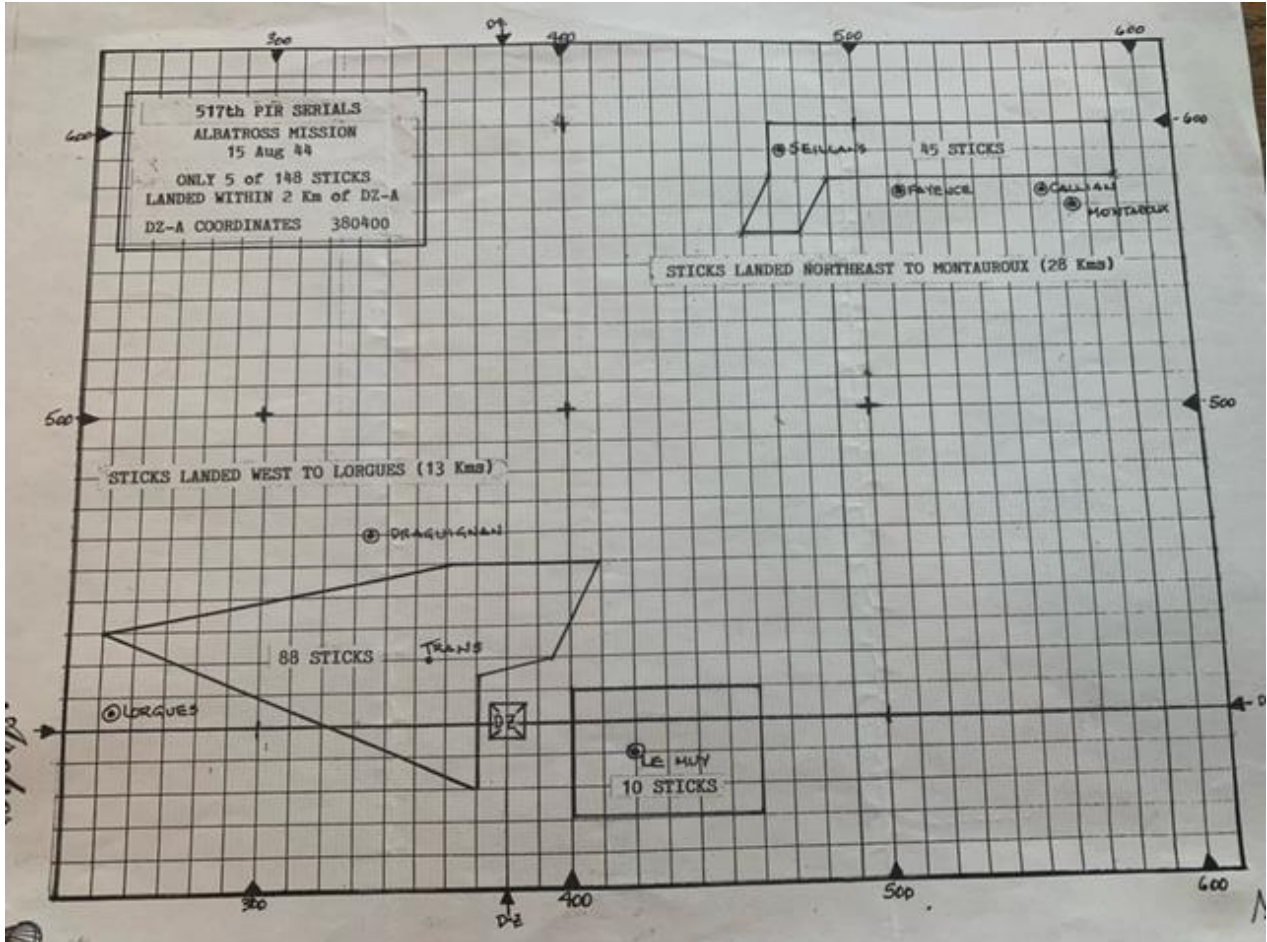




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And a couple of documents recapping the Operation Dragon drops:





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DRAGOON						
AIRBORNE DELIVERY SCHEME						
PARACHUTE	DEPARTURE FIELD	TCC WING/GROUP	SERIAL	SORTIES	DZ	DROP
Pathfinders	Maroiglinia	TCC IX	1	3	C	0323
			2	3	A	0300
			3	3	O	0334
509th PIB*	Follonica	50/442	1	45	C	0415
463rd PAB	Grosseto	50/441	2	45	C	0430
2/517th PIR*	Ombrone	50/440	3	45	A	"
3/517th PIR*	Orbetello	50/439	4	45	A	"
460th PAB	Montalto	53/437	5	45	A	"
1/517th PIR	Canino	53/438	6	45	A	"
British	Galera	51/ 62	7	36	O	0600
	Galera	51/ 62	8	27	O	"
551st PIB	Tarquinia	53/435	9	36	O	"
	Ciampino	51/ 64	10	27	O	"
	Ciampino	51/ 64				
	Voltone	53/436				
	Montalto	53/437	1	41	A	1800
GLIDER						
British 64th	Tarquinia	53/435	1	35	O	AM
	Voltone	53/436	2	40	O	AM
550th AIB	Follonica	50/442	1		O	PM
Equipment	Canino	53/438	2		O	PM
Resupply	Orbetello	50/439	3	332	O/A	PM
	Ombrone	50/440	4		A	PM
	Grosseto	50/441	5		O/A	PM
	Galera	51/ 62	6		O	PM
	Campiano	51/ 64	7		O	PM
* with one Platoon of 596th FEC						
AIRBORNE TROOPS DELIVERED						
PARACHUTE						
	Pathfinders	121		9		
	Albatross Mission	5630		396		
	Canary Mission	735		41		
		<u>6487</u>		<u>446</u>		
GLIDER						
	Bluebird Mission	375		75		
	Dove Mission	2250		332		
		<u>2625</u>		<u>407</u>		
<u>TOTAL AIRBORNE</u>		<u>9112</u>		<u>853</u>		
Note: 400,000 pounds of equipment and supplies were delivered by glider						



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The last two emails you sent, I could not open. Never issue before. Been getting for years.

Alan

Hi Alan,

Does it work now? It works for me and most other people. The only thing I can think of is that maybe you have a similar issue to what my Dad used to have with his AOL email. AOL sort of keeps its own copy of the internet that doesn't get updated sometimes for an hour or two or more after I make changes to the website. I wouldn't be surprised if you email service, Netscape.net, does the same thing. (Netscape has been owned by AOL since 1999.)

All past MailCalls are available and searchable at: <https://517prct.org/mailcall/index.htm>

PS: I know you are the son-in-law of **Thomas Blymire** [A Company]. But I don't even know your last name.

Regards,

Bob Barrett



Hello, Could you please added my site link titled "Battle of the Bulge Memories".
The new link is: <https://www.battle-of-the-bulge-memories.be>

Thank you and happy new year 2022

Henri Rogister (in Belgium)



Battle of the Bulge Memories is a Web Site created and maintained by Henri Rogister. His in-laws are from Stavelot and were very affected by the Von Rundstedt offensive in December 1944. Henri remained in contact with many veterans of the battle. He met some of them and they entrusted him with their stories, testimonies and memories.



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11/14/2021:

I hope you're OK. I haven't seen a Mail Call since July 25. Has it been discontinued or has there just been a lack of material to publish recently?

I haven't seen my dad's (**Ray Helms**) photo document posted on the web site. Are you still planning to do that for me and do you need anything else from me?

Thanks,

Glenn Helms

The World War II Photo History of Ray V. Helms



T SGT Ray V. Helms
517th Parachute Infantry Regiment
2nd Battalion – E Company – World War II



Ray (L) and Gene Brissey (R)
On leave at Ray's home - Landis, NC - Possibly Christmas 1943

Hi Glenn,

I'm starting to catch up on the website and MailCalls. I didn't know that your bio of your Dad was ready for release yet. If you tell me it is ready, I will, add it to the web page very soon.

Bob Barrett

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My great grandpa is **Claude Bynum**. He was in H Co in the 517th. Can I send some pictures and info to this email?

Nick Bynum

Hi Nick,

Yes, please. I would love to get any wartime or trooper info for MailCall or the website. BTW, my Dad, **Ben Barrett** was with H Company, so I especially look forward to any pictures or stories.

You may already know this, but **Claude Bynum** is mentioned in a few notes of the 517th, including this note from **Lt. Ed Athey**:

Entry of Jan 11, 2004 at 11:35 [EST]
From: Edward Athey , H Company
Subject: Glider -Dragoon Operation

PLANE CRASH OF CO. H PLANE DURING SOUTHERN FRANCE INVASION August 15, 1944 at 0220 hours Orbetello Field (130km NW OF Rome). The airfield was very dry clay. Lt. Edward Athey, S/Sgt Fred Harmon and sixteen men comprised the stick in the third C-47 in the line of take off, which by now was being done in a solid dust storm from the prop blasts. The plane broke out of the dust and the pilot, seeing a parked C-47 ahead, pulled the plane up too sharply and stalled out at 150 feet above the ground. The plane crashed on the left wing and motor and burst into flames. The jump door was about thirty five feet above the ground. Lt. Athey and S/Sgt Harmon, whose front teeth had been badly broken, formed a human chain up to the door and the men were pulled up through heavy smoke and helped out the door. When all the men were thought to be out, Lt. Athey and S/Sgt Harmon left the burning plane. Someone shouted that a man was at the door. It was Pvt. Pippin and he was cutting the drop bundles and throwing out the bazooka rounds ammunition. In the process, he deeply slashed his thigh with his jump knife. Then at Lt. Athey's order, he jumped to the ground. (He was awarded the Soldier's Medal.)

The following men went to the hospital with injuries: **S/Sgt Fred Harmon, Cpl Arthur Graham, Pvts Domingo Villalba, Walter Ostashen, Claude Bynum, Richard Denning, Layton Pippin, George Hamilton, John Kaudy, Donald Avery, Herbert Downs, and Fred Hellmer**. They had broken arms, legs, ribs, and extensive dental damage.

Lt. Athey took five men who had minor injuries and arranged with the 442nd Anti-Tank Company Commander (the Nisei Americans) to go into combat with them in the gliders. They were towed in by the C-47s which had returned to the field after the jump at about 0700. The gliders landed at the drop zone Les Arcs, France at about 1000. One glider pilot was killed and Lt. Athey's glider lost both wings on the ground when it went between rows of grape vines set on steel wires and stakes. The following men went into combat with Lt. Athey, in the gliders: **Cpl. William Frucht, Sgt. Reynold Laeben, Cpl. Harold Bischoff, Pvt. Elza Watkins and Pvt. Calvin Schroeder**. I think that we were the only Paratroopers in WWII that went into combat in gliders.

Bob Barrett



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Last July, I took my grandkids to a military exhibition that happens most years in Hamilton, MA at the [Patton Homestead](#). General George S. Patton, Jr's family owned this property in Hamilton since 1928, but General Patton died in an accident in Europe in 1945 before he returned to his home. His wife and children, including General George Patton IV, did live there for many years, and host military and community events.

This was my first time attending the Military Service Day in July. I only recently discovered this annual event, since my daughter now lives in Hamilton. Here are a few pictures of last summer's event, which to my surprise, includes a lot of WW2 re-enactors and exhibits. - BB



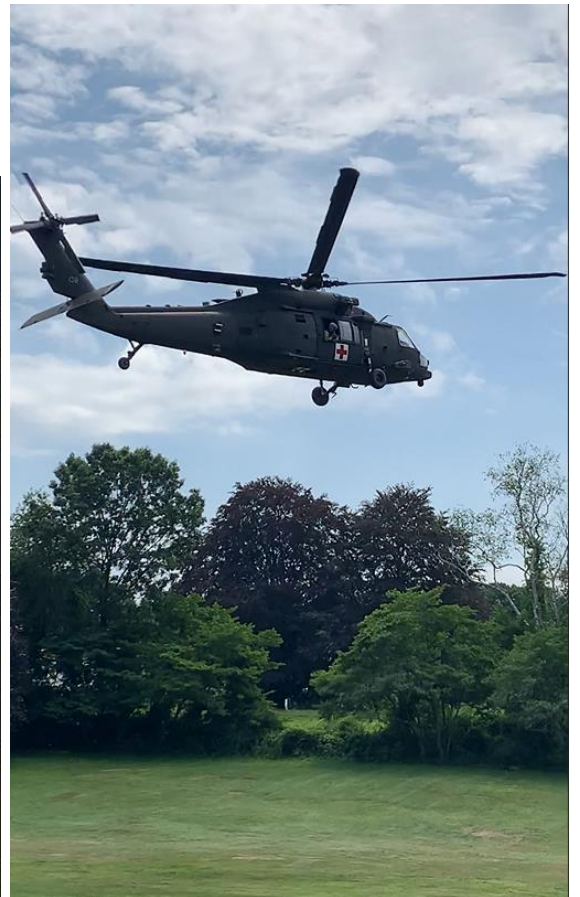


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Did you know?...



From Wikipedia:

1944–1950: World War II and after

Benedetto was drafted into the United States Army in November 1944, during the final stages of World War II. He did basic training at Fort Dix and Fort Robinson as part of becoming an infantry rifleman. Benedetto ran afoul of a sergeant from the South who disliked the Italian from New York City; heavy doses of KP duty or BAR cleaning resulted. Processed through the

huge Le Havre replacement depot, in January 1945, he was assigned as a replacement infantryman to the 255th Infantry Regiment of the 63rd Infantry Division, a unit filling in for the heavy losses suffered in the Battle of the Bulge. He moved across France and later into Germany. As March 1945 began, he joined the front line and what he would later describe as a "front-row seat in hell".

As the German Army was pushed back to its homeland, Benedetto and his company saw bitter fighting in cold winter conditions, often hunkering down in foxholes as German 88 mm guns fired on them. At the end of March, they crossed the Rhine and entered Germany, engaging in dangerous house-to-house, town-after-town fighting to clean out German soldiers; during the first week of April, they crossed the Kocher River, and by the end of the month reached the Danube. During his time in combat, Benedetto narrowly escaped death several times. The experience made him a pacifist; he would later write, "Anybody who thinks that war is romantic obviously hasn't gone through one," and later say, "It was a nightmare that's permanent. I just said, 'This is not life. This is not life.'" At the war's conclusion he was involved in the liberation of a Nazi concentration camp near Landsberg, where some American prisoners of war from the 63rd Division had also been held.

Benedetto stayed in Germany as part of the occupying force but was assigned to an informal Special Services band unit that would entertain nearby American forces. His dining with a black friend from high school – at a time when the Army was still racially segregated – led to his being demoted and reassigned to Graves Registration Service duties. Subsequently, he sang with the 314th Army Special Services Band under the stage name Joe Bari (a name he had started using before the war, chosen after the city and province in Italy and as a partial anagram of his family origins in Calabria). He played with many musicians who would have post-war careers.

Upon his discharge from the Army and return to the States in 1946, Benedetto studied at the American Theatre Wing on the GI Bill. He was taught the bel canto singing discipline, which would keep his voice in good shape for his entire career. He continued to perform wherever he could, including while waiting tables. Based upon a suggestion from a teacher at American Theatre Wing, he developed an unusual approach that involved imitating, as he sang, the style and phrasing of other musicians — such as that of Stan Getz's saxophone and Art Tatum's piano — helping him to improvise as he interpreted a song. He made a few recordings as Bari in 1949 for small Leslie Records, but they failed to sell.

In 1949, Pearl Bailey recognized Benedetto's talent and asked him to open for her in Greenwich Village. She had invited Bob Hope to the show. Hope decided to take Benedetto on the road with him and simplified his name to Tony Bennett. In 1950, Bennett cut a demo of "Boulevard of Broken Dreams" and was signed to the major Columbia Records label by Mitch Miller.



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Administrivia

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- 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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During WWII, the US Military designed a grenade the exact size and weight of a baseball, because "any young American man should be able to throw it properly." Soldiers learned to hold it the way a pitcher holds a knuckle ball.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BEANO_T-13_grenade