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THE THUNDERBOLT



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Published for former Troopers of the 517th Parachute Combat Team

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517th PARACHUTE RE-UNION INVADDED THE FRENCH QUARTER OF NEW ORLEANS WITHOUT A CASUALTY ON AUG. 12

Although everywhere you looked, and on every corner in the French Quarter of New Orleans, there were clearly visible signs reading "OFF LIMITS 517th PARACHUTE RE-UNION"; with a number of years of wisdom, and cautious approach, some 350 former Troopers, Wives and kids captured and conquered the whole French Quarter without a single known casualty. The Royal Sonesta Hotel, & Command Post Hqs. was then the scene of many a handshake and head scratching trying to remember old faces and glad to see more familar faces of other recent re-unions. As time went by, there were a few minor casualties seen at check paying time in various clubs and restaurants, however this type casualty is always expected when in old New Orleans. First a well deserved thanks, to Ed & Nita Jolly, Re-Union Chairmen, who did a great job setting up the whole re-union, although they lived some 300 miles away. A special thanks to thoes who helped Ed & Nita too. Ed & Nita want to add, that they surely hoped everyone enjoyed the re-union just half as much as they enjoyed putting it on.

A few other casualties of minor nature were, Gene Brinkman, G.Co., arrived and found no room, & with tactful approach, Ed Jolly, Gene Champlin, Hq. 1, Dr. Phil DiStanislao, A. Co. managed to set Gene up in a supply room with requisitioned rollaway bed, although a little later someone was heard screaming up and down the hall about a lost rollaway bed.....A groupe of early birdsbirds, had to borrow waiters jacket to get in a very swank restaurant, at which time Joe Williams, B Co., & Jim Wallis Hq. 1, presented their old buddy, Al Sobel C. Co., with his old tennis shoes, they had stolen from him in earlier years on an Oregon fishing trip, Al graciously accepted the bronzed-plaque shoes with a few choice words, no one was thown out of the place, so thus these early birds & path finders made it more easy for the main groupe to be fully accepted in the French Quarter. It was reported the closest of anyone being thrown in jail, was Funky Dungeon and a few other wild "Northwesterners" kept one place going until 8:30 A.M. Reportedly, Erle Ehly slipped into an "Off Limits place, Pat O'Brians, and set that place up for the arriving troopers. A couple of Texas boys, Ed Ellington & Darrell Wells Hq. 1st lost their shoes, and were found later in a rather unique place. The Hotel management broke up one 4:30 A.M. swimming party, which devoloped later into a Brennan's Breakfast, which brought about some more minor pocket book casualties. There were many other capers, which would take a month to write so we just mention a few that we heard about.



ED JOLLY, GENERAL CHAIRMAN OF THE RE-UNION STARTS THE FINAL BANQUET-DANCE OFF, by making a few comments to the effect that up until that time, there were no known casualties, and to his knowledge, no bail had been posted for any of the former 517th Troopers, and further intelligence informed him there ~~were~~ none locked up. Some special thanks were handed out to those who helped, in making the Re-Union a good one.... Ed gave a special thanks, followed by strong feeling from the crowd, to George F. Correa (Former Co. G) & his groupe, "The Pathfinders" who entertained prior and during the meal serving. This fine groupe of vocals from California did an outstanding job of entertaining. The General Chairman, then introduced, Past President, Bill Boyle, & Mrs Boyle, Past Chairman, Russ Johnson & Mrs Johnson, shown in above picture to the left of the podium. Col. Tom Cross (Ret) was introduced (in picture above, the distinctive looking gentleman with the slight grey hair and glasses). Erle Ehly, setting to the left of Col. Cross, then introduced, the Honored Guest & Speaker of the Evening, Lt. General Dick Seitz, who is that younger looking gentleman seated right next to the podium. After receiving a standing ovation from the entire crowd of former Troopers, Wives & Children, the General then spoke on the highlights of the 517th from start to finish, and then onto the modern Airborne of todays US Army. Dick Seitz, is now the Commanding General, XVIII Airborne Corps & Fort Bragg, Ft. Bragg, North Carolina. As many of us will remember, this means, he is the "Old Man" of the "whole damned outfit involving all the Airborne" in the US Army.....

WHILE ON THE SUBJECT HERE IS A LITTLE HISTORY ON THIS MAN, THAT THE 2nd BATTALION CLAIMS THAT THEY STARTED OFF ON THE RIGHT FOOT .. General Seitz, was born in Leavenworth, Kan., and was Commissioned a 2nd Lt. from Kansas State ROTC in 1939. He also holds a BA Degree of General Education from University of Nebraska. Was called to active duty in 1940 and in 1941 was among the early graduates of the Percht. School, Ft. Benning. He joined the 517th in March 1943, and stayed with unit until war ended, & then returned with unit to Ft. Bragg. Since the war ended he has served with the 11th Airborne in Japan right after the war, served twice in Brazil with Joint Brazil-US Military Commision, served in Iran as a Team Chief, 1965 to 1967 in Republic of Vietnam, First as Deputy Commanding General, US Army Support Command, then Assist. Deputy Commanding General, and then Chief of Staff, U.S. Army Vietnam. Later assignments at Ft. Bragg, have been Commanding Officer, 2nd Airborne Battle Group, 503 Infantry, & 82nd Airborne Commander, and then Chief of Staff, G-3 - XVIII Airborne Corps and Ft. Bragg, and then other assignments have been tours in the Pentagon, and of late he was Army Assistant Deputy Chief Staff for Personnel, until July this year when he became Commanding General XVIII Airborne Corps & Ft. Bragg. The General has also attended many military schools, such as the Armed Forces Staff School, Army Language School, Sanz School of Languages, plus receiving many decorations, such as Silver Star, Two Legions of Merit, Two Bronze Stars, Air Medal, Purple Heart, French Croix de Guerre with Palm, Korean Order of Military Merit, National Order of Vietnam 5th Class, Brazilian Duque De Caxiz, Order of the Pacificodos. He is a member of the Pi Kappa Alpha Fraternity and the Scabbard & Blade, and he is keenly interest in sports as a morale and health builder. As many of you will remember, General Seitz, married the former Bettie Jean Merrill, of Ellis, Kansas in June 1945 at Joigny, France. Four Children, Patricia, Katherine, Richard & Victoria followed. To sum it up, as the people from Kansas would say "That ain't bad for a Kansas Boy".....

BUSINESS MEETING ON WEDNESDAY A.M. OPENED BY W.J. "BILL" BOYLE, PRESIDENT & DON FRASER, -SEC TREAS.

The main topic of discussion was the site of the next Re-Union. A number of places were named as possible sites, Philadelphia, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Raleigh-Ft. Bragg. Considerable discussion came about, pro & con about the various sites suggested, and for some reason Raleigh-Ft. Bragg area kept popping back into the discussion. The general opinion seemed to be that the 517th Re-union even with age, still had "Friends" in that area. That settled the question, so for a number of reasons, the next re-union will be in 1975 or two years rather than three between re-unions. So all of you, its not to early to start making your plans now. 1975 will be over 30 years since, you were in North Carolina, so without a doubt it would be safe to say, you would have no fear of returning. All those pretty North Carolina girls, that you made all those promises to, have since married themselves, and besides with all that grey hair and wrinkles, you have now, they would not probably recognize you anyway, so it will be entirely safe, we assure you to make your plans and be at the next re-union in 1975. Towards the end of the business meeting, there was a rigged election, which got James MacKenzie, Hq. 2nd, elected as President, and D. Co., West Texas Boy, me... Mel Edwards, elected - Sec-Treas. Jim asked Martin J. Setter, Charlotte, & Clarence E. McCollum, Fayetteville to act as Co-Chairmen. With Pres. Jim, getting the Glory, and Sec-Treas. Mel putting the word out, and Martin & Clarence doing the work, and with our "influential friends", WE PROMISE THAT YOU ARE GOING TO HAVE ONE HELLVA 517th PARACHUTE RE-UNION IN AUGUST 1975 AT IN OR ABOUT RALEIGH & FT. BRAGG, N.C. Now that is a guarantee in writing. You just can't get one like that everyday.....



ABOVE... THIS PHOTO REFLECTS A RATHER DISTINGUISHED LOOKING MIDDLE AGED GROUPE FROM HQ. CO.,
 2nd Bn., EXCEPT FOR ONE WHO CAN STILL EASILY PASS HIMSELF OFF AS A YOUNG MAN.....
 Standing .. L-R... Martin J. Setter, Co-Chairman 1975 Re-Union, Sam Povich, Lester Hold-
ridge, Joe Wuko, and the young looking Gentleman, Lt. General Richard J. "Dick" Seitz,
 former CO of the 2nd Bn. Next is Col. Tom Cross (Ret) former Exec. Officer of 2nd BN.,
 and Forrest J. Turner.... Kneeling is SGM Hubert M. Ingle, who has made a career of the
 Airborne & James H. MacKenzie, newly elected President of the 1975 Raleigh-ft. Bragg
 Re-Union. Not a bad looking bunch, considering some of them "lugged" them 81 mm's &
 50 Cal. machines over half of hell and back. Harry Robinson & Bill Lewis missed picture.



IMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT, W.J.(Wild Bill) Boyle) front center kneeling takes a look at the camera with a sizable groupe of his old 1st Bn. members. It appears Hqs. 1st Bn. bunch are holding up quite well or about the same as the 2nd Bn. Groupe. Standing in rear row... Left to Right are....Gene Champlin, Erle Ehly, Emmett Ebert, Darrell Wells, H.G."Sug" Lawrence, Ed Jolly, Dr. Ben Sullivan, Danny Coleman, Walt Smith, Joe Sliakis, Standing 2nd Row Don Fraser, (Immediate Past Secretary-Treas) Ed Ellington, Luis Fairhurst, Jim Wallis... Front row kneeling... Joe Kelly, Barry Beratelli, Bill Boyle, Dale Booth & Bob Anderson.

Received from Lory Curtis, son of Harland "Bud"