



The Thunderbolt



1999 - 2nd Quarter - 1999

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From The Past

President's Desk

J. K. Horne



The 517 P.R.C.T. has had many very capable leaders during its many years' existence. They have set a very high standard for all the rest to follow ... that is from all other associations as well as the 517th.

It has been my privilege and my honor to serve, as your president these past two years and my greatest wish is that I have met the standard set by others in the past.

It has been an education and a joy for me to serve as your president and I know that good and great things are yet to come.

Should any of you have the opportunity to serve, in any capacity, grab hold, you will be glad you did ... the rewards are many and they are great.

I know that I have learned more about the 517th's gallant history and just what our effort meant to the outcome of WW II in Europe.

Each of us knew many other 517 members during the war ... but only those we were closely associated with. Today I know more of you good people in the 517 than I ever dreamed of knowing.

The words: Pride, Honor, Spirit, Dedication, Courage, Esprit de Corps, Devotion to Duty, Bravery, Commitment, Perseverance,

Continued on page 2

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From The

President's Desk

Merle McMorrow



(Merle McMorrow's acceptance speech at the Change of Command Ceremony in Columbus, GA.)

A little more than 56 years ago hundreds of young, frightened, boys were heading for a small town in Georgia that most had never heard of before. The town was called Toccoa. They came from all walks of life. Many had never been more than 100 miles from their birthplace. They stepped off that train at a little station by the side of the tracks. They were tired, hungry, and scared because they didn't know what to expect.

A lieutenant with the strange nickname of "Boom Boom" met them as they disembarked. He did nothing to reduce their fears; in fact, he elevated them.

They came as individuals and in a short time the cadre of officers and non-coms began molding them to function as a team.

Many had been active in sports and other activities. Each felt they were in top physical condition when they arrived. However, before the summer was over, they were made aware that their physical condition at arrival time was a beginning point.

They were in their formative years and I am certain the discipline and hard work helped shape and give direction to their future lives.

Continued on page 2

Cont'd from Past President's column on Page 1

Humanity, Sacrifice and Comradeship have all come to their full meaning to us because we served together in the 517.

And as survivors, we get to enjoy the good life and still visit with old friends on a regular basis. What a joy it is to see old friends greet each other at our reunion. Attend as many of these as you can. The years are slipping by and there are fewer of us each year.

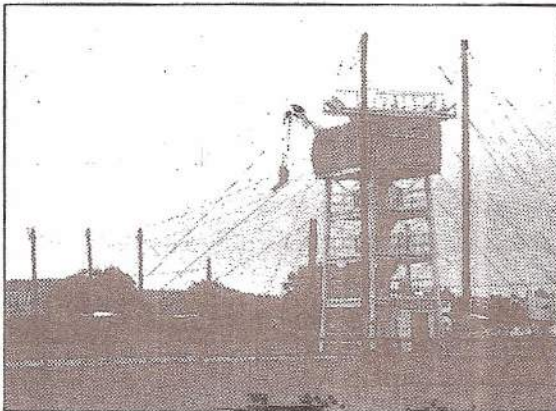
I wish each and every one of you a happy and healthy year to come. I must tell each member what a pleasure it has been to work with our secretary Bill Lewis.

Bill is a great asset to our Association, untold hours of devoted work, by he and Irene. Let him know just how much you appreciate them the next time you have the opportunity.

God Bless you and all your loved ones.

Airborne

A Harry Saunders photo



This tower plus Mount Curahee made men of us all.

Continued from President's Column on page 1

Basic training was completed by the end of August and jump school was as scheduled for early September. All the hard work and training had brought us to a point where five jumps from a plane in flight would culminate with the right and honor to wear boots and wings of a paratrooper.

Back at Camp Mackall we had two pair of boots; one pair for training and one pair for dress. Each night as we sat around on our bunks, we put another coat of polish on those the

dress boots.

Following completion of jump school, furloughs were issued. I received mine in November and I was an entirely different person from the one that left home 8 months earlier. I walked a little taller and I walked with an air of confidence and pride. Proud to be in an outfit that was special in so many different ways.

I remember coming out of church, while home on furlough, and this little old lady that must have been at least 50 years old said to me, "Oh, my you look nice, but tell me. Why do they make you boys wear those old work boots home on furlough. I would think they could afford some nice, black, highly polished oxfords."

She was fortunate she was standing on the church steps.

People often ask me how can you meet year after year with people you only knew for a short period of time over 50 years ago. I can never express how I feel or why the strong bond exists. I guess "Chop-Chop" expresses it best when he says, "It's here in your heart".

Mike Ranney from North Dakota was a paratrooper with the 506th Regiment. His grandson asked him a few years ago, "Grandpa, were you a hero in the war?" "No", he replied, but I served in a company of heroes."

I too was no hero, but over the years I have had the honor and pleasure of associating with many who were heroes. They were men who recognized that serving their country was more an honor than a duty and their sacrifices helped make the world a better place.

I was a member of the 17th, the 82nd, and the 101st Airborne Divisions. However, when I am asked what outfit I served with during World War II, I am happy and proud to respond that I was with the 517th Parachute Combat Team. Thank you for the privilege and honor to represent you for the next two years and may we all meet again in the year 2001.

And now I think it is appropriate at this time to observe a moment of silence for all those who could not be with us this evening. Some because of ill health and others because they made the supreme sacrifice in Europe.

Correction: caption under James Anderson photo is in error. It should read, "James Anderson with son David. David is on the left. Sorry 'bout that".

**Clark Archer
Company B**

Soldi and Renoux of the Musee de la Liberation have found additional items in area near Les Arcs and they would like to identify the owners of the material.

Life Preserver - Frank Jabara 37240318 Gas Mask - 2070680 and Binocular Case - D 44160. (Items found near LaMotte). Also trying to find the person nicknamed "Cinny"

We were able to identify E. Jolly as owner of weapons case J 0293.

Have adjusted 517 PRCT KIA count from 250 to 255. Traced SWAs who later died of wounds (+3); identified Willison as man buried in Montauroux (+1) and info from ABMC that Olea was actually 517 (+1).

Update: We have end game on T/Sgt. Peter M. Panagakos as a member of Company G.

**Margret DeLaHunt
Company F**

Am looking forward to seeing some of the greatest people in the world at the reunion.

Roselyn "Jo" Bucher
Widow of Gaylord Bucher (C - 460th)

Dear Bill: In 1943, Gaylord left Fort Bragg for Camp Mackall as Cadre. He helped build the dayrooms. His men

started coming in a few at a time. They were about 18 to 19 years old. Gaylord gave them their basic training and took them to jump school at Fort Benning, Georgia. While there he went to demolition school. He and his men returned to Camp Mackall for more training before they went overseas in April 1944.

Everyone who would say anything about his boys got this response from Gaylord: "They might have been boys when they entered the service, but they were men when they left for overseas and even greater men while in Europe!"

He was so proud of them. The night they jumped in southern France, he walked through the plane and saw some of his men crying, but most of them were saying a prayer. When he told them to go ... all of them went out the door. They were together until the end of the war.

Gaylord always said his men were closer to him than anyone. Each depended on each other for survival, and he loved every one of them. They really never gave him any trouble and for that he was thankful.

Koy Dawkins called me when Gaylord died. (We had an apartment at his folk's home during my stay in Rockingham, while Gaylord was at Camp Mackall. Koy was nine years old at that time.) He said this is a difficult time because "I'm loosing all my war heroes".

Gaylord loved his country, his wife and family, and his men.

Throughout his life he remembered the courage and dedication of his men and the struggles they endured.

Frances Incontro
Widow of Sal Incontro (D - 460th)

Dear Friends: It was wonderful to receive your holiday greetings and condolences. I spent a peaceful holiday with my family. It was very different without Sal but my children and grandchildren made it a warm loving time.

I have begun to drive again and still get to spend part of each day with my granddaughter. The family gathers often and I see all the grandchildren regularly. I even visited my only remote grandson on a weekend trip to Penn State. Of course, there seems to be no end to the paperwork and meetings needed to resolve issues from the estate. I guess keeping busy is good therapy.

Your kind words, your prayers, and your visits have supported me through this difficult time. I cherish the memories of Sal you shared with me. We were all touched by the depth of affection so many felt for him. Our memories of times together and our love for him will long keep him in our hearts. There can be no finer epitaph. Thank you for writing and do keep in touch. I need your continued friendship and support

Marshall Robyn, (Co. H)

I appreciate the job you are doing with the Thunderbolt. Keep up the good work.

**Jack Gonyer
Company C**

I'm sorry I will be unable to make it to the reunion as I have just returned from open heart-surgery. Four bypasses.

I will miss seeing many of my Buddies from the good old days in Toccoa, Georgia when we first got together. I started as a member of "C" Company and that's where I finished.

My plans have changed but I will be looking forward to the next one.

Please cancel my registration for this great reunion and tell my special friends I'm looking forward to the next one.

**Mike Bulino
596 Engineers**

Enclosed check to cover cost of reunion registration for me and my wife Catherine.

After all the miserable weather we had I hope we will have nice weather during the reunion

**John Fraser
Service Company**

Enclosed check for reunion registration. Barbara and I are looking forward to this event. It should be a lot of fun.

We will arrive May 1st and will stay at the Howard Johnson Express Inn.

See you then.

**Jule Barry
Regimental Headquarters**

Do you send and receive E-Mail?

My family and I use it everyday - it was my Christmas gift. I brought my receiver with me to Florida. It connects to my TV set.

Send us your E-Mail address.

(Ed. Note: After receiving Jule's letter we received sad news from Dave. Jule suffered a stroke; we hope and pray she will recover completely. Seems Florida is bad luck for the Barry's. A couple of years ago Dave also suffered a stroke while in Florida. He, although shows a few problems from the ordeal, is doing nicely.)

**Notch Reform Legislation
Introduced**

The Notch Fairness Act of 1999 (H.R. 148), sponsored by Rep. Ralph Hall (D-Texas), is before the 106th Congress. It calls for those ages 73-82 (born between 1917-1926), or their surviving beneficiaries, to choose between lump-sum payments over four years (\$1,250 per year) totaling \$5,000, or an improved benefit computation formula; which would increase their monthly Social security benefits through 2003.

Price tag: \$60 billion - to be financed by offsetting cuts to non-defense and discretionary spending.

(Source: TREA Senior Citizens League, Dept. SF904, 909 Washington St., Suite 301, Alexandria, VA 22314).

**Genevieve M. Gray
Company H**

A note to inform you of my husbands passing. He died November 8, 1998 so you can remove him from your mailing list; James Gray (Co. H), 417 Shabbona Drive, Park Forest, IL 60466-2251. Jim always enjoyed reading the Thunderbolt.

**Bob Christie
Headquarters 2nd**
(Via E-Mail) I received a Tour Letter from "Command".

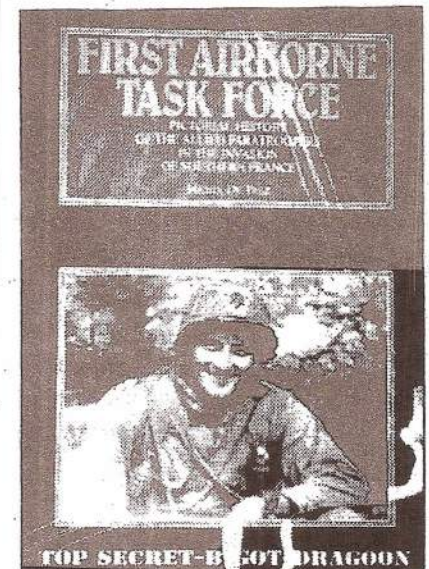
The address label was partly right. It should read 390 301 Blvd. W Unit 10 C and the zip code should be 34205. We haven't had a 33507 for a number of years.

Hope you and Irene are in good health.

We're finally getting some cooler weather, but it is getting very dry. We have been averaging 6 to 8 wildfires a day in our district (5 counties).

We'll see you in Columbus.

Price \$95.00 plus \$5.00 S & H.



You can purchase the book from you're Association for \$75.00 plus \$5.00 shipping and handling. Make check or money for \$80.00 payable to the 517 Para-chute combat Team.

**Harris E. Miller
Battery A, 460th**

I will be home in Forrest Lake, Minnesota on April 1st.

Please correct your mailing roster to reflect this change.

Good luck and good health.

Ed and Nancy Vallette
Headquarters 1st

My name is Nancy Vallette. My husband, Ed, and I would like to register for the 517th Parachute reunion. My parents, Rev. Marvin and Mary Jane Miller are already registered. I am enclosing a check for the registration of \$55 for each of us for the week.

We have already made hotel reservations in Columbus, Georgia. Please advise us if there are any further arrangements that we should make. We are pleased to be able to come, after many years of hearing stories about the men my father served with it will be a pleasure to meet the people who go with the stories.

Violet B. Brazie
Widow of Paul - Co. F

I have another guest for the reunion. Her name is Dot Harrison. Enclosed check for same. See you in May.

"Tex" Lowe
Company C

As you can see we are bringing someone to keep us "propped up".

I'm hoping that both of us will feel as good as we do now.

Looking forward to seeing both of you. I haven't been to a reunion since Niagara Falls!

Does that qualify me as a stranger? I hope not!

(Ed. Note: Tex it doesn't qualify you as a stranger. However if you miss this one and attend in 2001 we will consider you a "First Timer".)

Bill Carney
Rigger

Barring any complications from a removal of a superficial tumor from my bladder April 15th.

I am looking forward to the upcoming reunion at Fort Benning. I will be attending with Leroy Johnson.

Enclosed is check for registration plus a little extra.

Airborne forever.

Norm Johnson
Battery B, 460th

Thought I should send you this check for the reunion. I just found the check for May 19, 1998 on my desk under a lot of papers. So I thought I had better write out a new one.

Made my ocean voyage with my son, Sgt. Russell Johnson, U. S. Marines. Will write you about the voyage very soon.

Did not have a chance to sit down and review my notes on the cruise due to some family crises. I just sent the film to be developed.

We had a real winter in January with about 18" of snow. The weather this month (Feb.) is good.

Lee and I are looking forward to the reunion. I hope all the doctors agree with me that I can make it.

Layton Mabrey
Hqs. 460th

Something toward the Thunderbolt. I hope to get to Benning but things still in the air. Give my best to Irene.

-5-

I'm still looking for a publisher. Will send you some more of the manuscript and illustrations.

Didn't move but they changed my address...17970 Raven Rock Road, Bluemont, Virginia 20135.

Good Luck/Good living.

Bill Uleman
Headquarters 460th

It was great to speak with you on the phone just a few moments ago, and as a man of my word you shall find a check enclosed to help with your expenses.

My good friend and fellow trooper Ernie Gilbert and I have reservations at the Holiday Inn. Ernie's wife does not enjoy traveling, it seems, which is somewhat of a break for me...half the hotel cost!

It is always sad to read the obituary column, however we all know that passing on to greater glories is a fact of life.

I am proud to have been a partner in the contribution to the war effort against the evil forces during WWII.

I have bought another home, same city and new address is as follows: 918 Grand St., Saint Paul, NE 68873-1919. My e-mail address is...uley@computer-concepts.com

Jim Bain
Battery D, 460th

Thanks for taking care of the A/B Task Force books for Joe Cicchinelle of the 551st.

It was good talking to you today.

**Donald and Ginger Walker
Company B**

Enclosed registration check for Don and I and our guests as follows: Pam and Jim Jones of Winter Park, Florida and Jody and Jim Williams, Kennesaw, Georgia.

We plan to be in on Tuesday, May 4. We are looking forward to seeing everyone and having a "fun Time"! See you in May.

**Manuel Ventoza
596 Engineers**

Enclosed reunion registration for LaVerne and I.

It will be good to see all the old friends again.

**Mike Bulino
596 Engineers**

Enclosed check for reunion registration for my wife, Catherine, and myself. I hope we have some nice weather after the miserable winter we had. See you both at Benning.

**Tom Cross
Co. E - Hqs.2 - Hqs. 3**

I am enclosing reunion registration for the Fort Benning Reunion with a check for 4 persons. My son Tom Cross Jr. and his wife, Linda, will be joining us at this reunion.

Tom Jr. was D+1 Operation Dragoon Baby as he was born on August 16th, 1944. I was in the same Hospital ward at the 45th general Hospital in Naples, Italy with Ike Walton, 517th Regimental Executive Officer, Bob Pearce, Regimental Adjutant and Charles Brown, Regimental Chaplain

when I received notification from the American Red Cross of Tom JR's' birth in Wadena, Minnesota. The ward Nurse allowed a small celebration and managed to get most of Ike's, Bob's and Charlie's beer ration for this occasion.

We are looking forward to the reunion, which from all early reports, is going to be outstanding and a good Rx for all concerned. Our very best wishes to Irene.

**Seymour Silverman
11th Airborne Division
Subject: Marty Balmuth:**

Thursday night, 3/23, a Fraternal Order, Knights of Pythias held an annual "Friendship Dinner". This one was held in Brooklyn, New York and a group of about 200 members were present.

Several plaques were given and at the end of those proceedings, I asked Marty to stay on the dais. I then discussed the 517th, and especially of Marty's participation with Headquarters, 3rd Battalion. At the end I presented Marty with our Parachute Wings emblazoned with a Combat Jump Star.

You would have been very proud...he did not get a word in edgewise and was speechless!!!

Most touching of all, he was given a great standing ovation!!! A picture will be forthcoming shortly. Please tell that brother of yours the 11th Reunion is this year in San Diego (I'm sure he knows!) and I hope to see him there!!

Airborne allways. Sy 188
PIR.

**Tom D. Hill
Company D**

Enclosed is my registration for my wife, Ila and I to the Fort Benning Reunion.

I delayed sending this until I received my test results as a result of taking radiation treatments for prostate cancer.

Everything seems OK, and we are thankful for that. We were able to make reservations at the Holiday Inn.

We are looking forward to seeing everyone again.

Thank you for all your time and efforts, and Hope all is well with you and Irene.

An old friend of yours, Wayne Breneman always said to say hello to you.

He has recently moved from Texas and is back in Minnesota.

Morris McDowell

Thanks for sending the information about the 517th reunion at Fort Benning in May. I am the Cousin of "Trooper" Layton W. Pippin", H Company, who was KIA in Trois Ponts, Belgium, 5 January 1945.

I would appreciate being put on the Thunderbolt mailing list, and hope to find someone who has an M1 Garand that was used in combat.

I have been considering bringing a couple of Garands, and my A1A1 Carbine for display.

I am anxious to meet you, and I have been corresponding with Fred Harmon (Co.H) for many years.

Rayma Sanford
Widow of Joseph - D 460

Enclosed is some money for the Thunderbolt and some extra to keep us in the black. It was nice to talk to you on the phone.

I can hardly wait till the Columbus, Georgia - Fort Benning Reunion and the trip to Belgium and France.

Joe's highest ambition when he was alive and well was to take me to Europe and let me see where he fought.

Now I will get to see it as he wanted.

God Bless you all for making another trip possible.

Cecil Doty
Company H

I sure hate writing this letter because we were looking forward to attending the Reunion at Fort Benning - Columbus, Georgia.

But after sending our registration fee, Arlene's brother who has terminal cancer has turned for the worse, and we feel that we shouldn't be away from the family at this time.

My heart condition has improved greatly and my Doctor had given me the OK to attend the Reunion but now we can only be there in spirit.

John J. Hayes
Company H

Enclosed Obit for Adrian Eckert (Hqs. 1st). I clipped it out of the April 4th Chicago Tribune. I did not know Adrian but I figured you might want to publish in the next issue of the

Thunderbolt as some of his buddies would like to know about it.

Enclosed...a few bucks for expenses.

(Ed. Note: Thanks for sending the information and also the donation.)

George Schnebli
Battery D, 460th

Hope you can publish the enclosed Obituary in the 2nd Quarter issue of the Thunderbolt.

1stSGT Donald Mounts was the "Top Kick" for "D" Battery thru out the 517th - 460th training and combat periods.

Hope you and Irene are well. We are OK considering our age, I guess.

"D" Battery has several very ill people. Henry Spaniak (Diabetes) had to have a large toe and ball of his foot removed.

So long ...stay healthy and be careful.

D-Battery-May 99-Ft. Benning



(Front Row) Richard Althoff, George Kennedy, George Sanford, Nicholas Warren, and Norman Pohler

(Standing) Michael Schlachter, Stephen Armbruster, George Schnebli, Jack Cason, Jerry Fryczynski and John Wilson

A George Schnebli photo

A Videotape of the 1999 Reunion is Available

The videotape includes highlights of the events at Fort Benning, including the Parachute Jump, Jump School Demonstration, Jump School Graduation, where veterans pinned the wings on the new graduates, the Memorial Service and the Dinner Banquet, which was held at the historic Ironworks Building. Throughout the videotape are interviews with veterans talking about their experiences during the war and their lives since.

The videotape is a valuable keepsake for you and a great way to pass on the story of your WWII experience to your children and grandchildren. The 3 hour videotape has been edited with music from the 1940's. To receive the videotape, complete and mail in the order form below with a check or money order, or call toll-free 1-800-654-8277 to order with your MC or Visa. If you are not completely satisfied, you will receive a full refund.

Mail to:

Raines Video Productions
 180 Golf Club Rd.
 PMB 157
 Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

Please send me _____ 517th Parachute Combat Team 1999 reunion videotape(s)

Name _____
 Street _____
 C/S/Z _____

One Tape	\$29.95
Shipping	\$ 2.00
Total	\$31.95

Allow 4 weeks for delivery

New member:

J. D. Butler
 Headquarters Co., 1st Bn.

Bill, thanks for your time and information with reference to Co. Boyle per telecon this date.

I am looking forward to hear more about the 517th. Express my thanks to your wife. Your are both very kind, and I appreciate the work you are doing.

I am, however, sorry that I did not learn about it earlier. Of course if I had

searched the sooner, I might have none sooner.

J.D.'s address is 6109 Stoneridge Drive, Texarkana, TX 75502.

Dolores Parr
 Widow of Harold Parr, Co. I

I'm sorry that I don't have a better photo to send, but we didn't take a lot of pictures. This photo shows him at a happier time when he was at this part timejob.

I know Harold would prefer we used a photo of him on the golf course, his number one love, but we haven't any photos taken while he played golf.

I have some of his service pictures but I'm having a hard time going thru the box of pictures and service items.

Hope this photo will do, it really looks like he looked the last few years.

Remember...when you go from happy to grumpy what comes next is lonely. *J. Marsinko*

E Mail ...**Tom Cross, (Hq.2, Hq.3, - E)**

Part 1 - I have not received my First Quarter issue of the Thunderbolt. A strict self-imposed I.G. Type inspection of my office did not find a copy of the latest issue. Would you please forward a copy?

A small/short ceremony for the deposit of an urn with Jack Kinzer's remains will be held at Arlington National Cemetery on July 2, 1999. John Kinzer, son of Jack Kinzer, is making all of the arrangements for this occasion.

Comrades/friends wishing to be present at this time can contact John Kinzer at the Arlington National Cemetery Administration Building at 2:30 p.m. on July 2nd, 1999.

Mrs. Jack Kinzer can be reached at telephone number (352) 376-2680 and her address is 4909 NW 16th Place, Gainesville, FL 32605-3411.

E - Mail**Oscar Berg (Company C)**

Received belt Buckle. Thank you very much for sending it Post haste. See you in Bismarck or at the Palm Springs mini in 2000.

Take care.

E - Mail**Lud Gibbons (Company H - I)**

Looking forward to seeing you and the rest of the gang at Benning. It's going to be a great party. You have done a hell of a job.

William R. Myers**Company E**

I cannot tell you how much we (my wife, Dot, and I) regret, that do to circumstances, we will be unable to attend the reunion at Fort Benning.

Our daughter was due to have a baby around May 12th, however today we find out the baby is expected to be delivered Tuesday or Wednesday, May 4 or 5.

The fact is our daughter needs both Dot and I here to care for her 4 year-old son and to do other things.

I called Roy Landreth this evening and told him how disappointed I am. (I'm really disappointed and we were so looking forward to seeing everyone, and to see Fort Benning again.)

Anyway, I wanted you to know. We hope you all have a great time.

Ray and Polly Hess**Company F**

We hope you are both fine and ready for the reunion.

We will not be able to attend again because of my wife's health. Polly is doing OK now, but too late to make arrangements.

Hope to make the next reunion, wherever it may be held. Bill, do me a small favor, give our regards to Dog & Chloe, Gen. Seitz, John Lissner, Leo Turco and his wife, all the guys and gals from "F" Company and everyone else.

Enclosed check to help the

Association and am also sending a check to the Airborne and Special Operations Museum.

Bill and Irene, we thank you both for the hard work that you both do for good of the 517th. I believe I can speak for everyone, "We all appreciate it very much".

E - Mail**Robert R. Cooper (Co. D)**

Putting registration for reunion in mail this afternoon. See you all next week.

And by mail: Enclosed is my reservation for the reunion and am also sending a little extra for back dues.

John LaRocco**Company F**

Enclosed you will find a check for dues, unfortunately, not a check for the Fort Benning reunion.

Was really looking forward to making this one, but a little ankle surgery (and a slow healing process) has put a big question on whether Marion and I can attend.

Hope that you and your wife are in good health and that you'll all have a great time in Georgia.

Always Airborne

Dave Barry**(Service Co. & Co. D)**

Dave attended the reunion with out wife, Jule. Jule suffered a stroke and was incapacitated at this time.

We hope by the time you receive this Thunderbolt Jule will be home and well on the road to recovery.

**Jack Gonyer
Company C**

I mailed my registration some time ago for my wife and me but I had to go in for open-heart surgery and I will be unable to go to the reunion.

These golden years can change your plans sometime. God willing we hope to be able to make the next one.

If you happen to see any of my buddies from Company C tell them we said Hi and we will plan for the next one.

**Nita Jolly
Widow of Ed, Reg. Hqs.**

Dear Trooper: For numerous reasons I must cancel out of the reunion of the 517th.

This is a real disappointment because I have anticipated a return to the Reunion of the 517th, the outfit my late husband, Ed Jolly, so loved.

I can understand if my registration fee is non returnable. In case it is, please keep one-half of it for my Thunderbolt subscription and/or "the cause".

**E- Mail
Bob Christie (Hqs. 2nd)**

I received a tour letter from "Command". The address was partly right. It should read 390 301 Blvd W. Unit 10C and the zip code should be 34205. We haven't had 33507 for a number of years. We are finally getting cooler weather but it is very dry. We have about 6 to 8 wild fires a day in our district of 5 counties. See you in Columbus.

**Mrs. Genevieve M. Gray
Company H**

A note to inform you of my husband's passing.

He died November 8, 1998 so you can remove his name from your mailing list.

Jim always enjoyed reading the Thunderbolt.

**Peter E. Christensen
Regimental Headquarters**

Sorry for the late hour, but there was too many unknowns for me to decide until now.

I'll commute from my son's house in Peachtree City about an hour's drive from Fort Benning, so I'll not need hotel space.

My guest will be my son Col. George L. Christensen, U. S. Army, Retired, but that is yet to be decided.

Best regards to Irene.

**Willburn Lewis
Company E**

The enclosed check is to cover the registration fee for the two of us at the Fort Benning reunion in May.

We were unable to make a firm plans about attending until now. Unless something unexpected develops we will be there.

Put the balance of the check in the "kitty".

**Richard Busch
Company D**

Just gave you 25 push-ups for being late with my dues. Getting up in years and the gray

-10-

matter is not working like it should.

I have a question is there a beret that can be worn by a 517 trooper. What color and what crest?

I know what you have heard troopers are crazy for wanting to jump out of good airplanes. I was getting touchy about it so I came up with, "Because I wasn't too keen on walking to work so I packed a lunch, jumped into a plane and dropped in unexpectedly".

I am sincerely thinking about the tour you have lined up for September. Would like to see the old barracks in Joigny. Will let you know for sure before departure date.

Keep up the good work, Bill, as you only know how. Our jump sticks are getting slimmer each and every day.

Happy Mother's Day to all the young ladies and Airborne All the Way.

**The Swans
Company A**

We are back home in Mecosta, Michigan and will be here until winter comes our way.

**Jim Houg
Headquarters 1st**

Enclosed check toward the cost of publishing the Thunderbolt. You are doing very good work.

**Gerald Davis
Headquarters 3rd**

We have moved and are located in Australia.

John Thomas Marsinko
Headquarters 1st

I wish to commend one astute gentleman, a Mr. J. K. Horne, for his ability to recognize that the epilogue published in the 517th P. R. C. T. biographical history was good enough to be read by others who may not have bought the book. Perhaps someday, I'll find out what the J. K. stands for.

While I'm at it I'd like to declare this a love letter. Everyone must in a measure be alone in the world; for no heart was ever cast in the same mold as that whicy we bear with us.

Memory, wit, fancy, acuteness cannot grow young again in old age; but the heart can.

Witness the story in the first quarter Thunderbolt of Joe and Deanie Calder. Joe goes to a Mt. Morris high school reunion and finds a girl of whom he was very fond and marries her.

517th paratroopers have so much courage. And, by the way,

that is an elegant woman.

We in the 517th love each other and take joy in the success we have achieved in life. We applaud the Nita Jolly's the Sharon Lynch's the grace Hornes, the Irene Lewis's who have laid up treasures in their hearts by sticking with their chosen man for years. They have recognized the heart of a good man.

It seems the good Lord packaged so many good men and sent them to the 517th. The Art Vesco's, the Gene Stallions, the Ed Ellington's the Richard Seitz's, the Terry Sanford's, the Ralph Clink's, and on, and on, and on.

Our love extends also to the hurt we share. The loss of Janet Ehly in that terrible nightmare of a car wreck.

I would just like to say, "Never take life for granted". The thought occurs to me that what the heart once owned and had, it shall never lose, but thought should always travel to the lips by way of the heart. If you love someone, let them

know it, before it is too late, say, "I love you." as often as you can.

That tribute to Ed Ellington by George H. (Hallucinos) Jones is a real love tribute. And how about the courage of one Charles ("Doc") Keen one of our bravest medics. I always loved the man.

I was wounded three times and I should know and appreciate a medic. I know those frightened eyes, and those caring eyes. We could never give them enough credit. "Can't write long hand and now can't type. T' hell with it, I'll try." And he aways did.

And the Robert B. Fuller, Jr. letter about the Pathfinders was inspiring to me for I've known one all my life and loved him as my brother.

Rosemarie Mandio was too young to know when she got married to Tony that he not only was a foolhardy young man who wanted to jump from airplanes and volunteered for the pathfinders to lead us to a safe landing.

Randolph Coleman
Company F

I want to thank you again for your attention to my request. I can't tell you how pleased I am to find out the 517th is still "organized"

If I can, I will be in Georgia in May ... but I told you I may not be free to come over.

Enclosed is a check to help a little. You are certainly well organized and doing a tremendous service, for which I'm sure, you are appreciated.

More later. If I don't make it to Georgia, "Hello to all of F Company and a big "kiss" for John Lissner.

Thanks again.

Herb and Marie Reichwald
596 Engineers

We had a great idea that we would mail you our reservations from Florida. However, we left your address on our desk in Wisconsin. Reservation form and check enclosed.

Bob Newberry
Hqs. 2 - Company E

I am enclosing registration fee for the reunion. We are staying at the Howard Johnsons and will arrive on the 4th of May unless something drastic happens to my eyes.

Walt and Marie Rommel,
Company F

We enjoyed seeing you in Dayton and look forward to Columbus in May.

Best to you and Irene

Roselyn Bucher
Battery C, 460th

You were wondering why I didn't go to Pittsburgh or Jacksonville. I would be lost there.

We made so many friends down here in the seven years we've been coming ... six months here and six months in Ohio.

Our daughter moved to Jacksonville in April 1998. So we added 3 rooms to our 3 room house so we could bring our furniture down. We moved in July. It was hard after living in our place 57 years. But it was best for the children. More so since Gaylord passed away. We or I should say I'm very glad we did.

Everyone here has given me so much love and support. Children are very happy to leave me here. I'm so busy. Which helps me. I do plan to come to the Fort Benning reunion.

Lew Downing
Company H

Due to some health set backs I'm going to have to cancel my plans for the reunion at Fort Benning.

I was really looking forward to attending and seeing all the old troopers, but I guess it was not to be.

Hint from Kellimrise

Put your license plates on your car upside down. Makes it easier to find your car in a parking lot. John Marsinka

Albert Herink
Headquarters 2nd

I believe the statute of limitations is up after 55 years and most of the people involved are gone by now.

Looking back to the Army days I spent from March 5, 1943 to December 16, 1945 I believe I had the easiest route to becoming a paratrooper.

I got through without basic training except a couple of weeks of close order and extended order drill. Then to the firing range with the 2nd Battalion to qualify with the M1 and the Carbine. Then when we went to combat I was handed a sub machine gun.

Eat your heart out troopers: No pushups; No runs before breakfast; Nor runs up Curahee; No 2-mile hikes; No overnight bivouacs. Also never got to Fort Benning for jump qualifying.

I was one of the 50 troopers who had our training in Camp Mackall. When we went overseas we were assigned wherever needed. I was called to go on a lot of patrols as I had the Thompson for firepower.

And another thing...I got over night passes two weeks after being in the Army when the 1st Sergeant was held in camp for 30 days.

Being a cook in the Officers Mess helped a lot. In 1940 I was in CCC camp and went to Army and Navy Cooks and Baking School. That is why I was assigned to the Officer's Mess.



I squeezed through the system. It doesn't take a lot of training to learn how to hit the dirt from enemy fire. Especially when the 88's come whistling in. I got through with a small wound, bad knees and frosted fingers and toes.

Enclosed is a little to help.

(Ed. Note: You lucked out Al. Lucky you had the stamina when you joined the combat units. I wish, with your background, that you were assigned to the 2nd Battalion Mess. We did need some good cooks.)

Charles Zinszer
Company I

Sorry we couldn't attend the Melbourne mini reunion this year. June had her second hip replacement on January 27. It was scheduled for the 25th, but date and hospital changed. She is doing fine, walking with cane for four weeks. Use the balance submitted for the fund.

No man is worth his salt that is not ready to risk his body, to risk his well being, to risk his life in a good cause.

Teddy Roosevelt

Leroy "Lee" Johnson
Service Company

Sorry I didn't make it to Melbourne, you know "The best made plans of mice and men".

New century coming up, maybe my body computer will change for the better.

Bill Carney and I are planning on being in Columbus on Tuesday of reunion week.

See you there.

Bill Myers
Company E

Thank you for your letter, and the refund check. Maybe I can start a savings account for our new grandson, born on Wednesday May 12th.

As it turned out we could have made the reunion, but we had no way of knowing, and we couldn't take the chance.

Bill thanks again for your prompt letter and check.

I'm going to call Roy Landreth in a day or two and get the update on some of the details.

Edmund Jordan
Company B

Thank you for a terrific reunion in Columbus.

The Mayor of Lorgues, France sent me a medal for setting up the defense of his village, August 15, 1944.

It is sure nice to be remembered after 55 years.

See you in Melbourne.

If you want to gather honey don't kick over the beehive.

Dale Carnegie

Ed Nielsen
Headquarters 2nd

By the time you receive this I will be at the Three Pillars, Masonic Health Care center in Dousman, Wisconsin.

I will be in the center about the middle of May. Julie will go back to California to sell the house and do the numerous chores that go along with a move.

The center also has a Masonic Village and Julie will move into an apartment there early this summer. The apartment is just a short walk to the quarters I will be occupying.

Our best to all.

Ben Barrett
Company H

I want to thank you and Irene for all the hard work you did to make the reunion in Columbus such a success.

I hope you don't wear yourself out making plans for the European trip. I very much wanted to go but due to personal and recent medical problems, it isn't likely I will be able to make the trip.

Take care of yourselves. The Association needs you.

Leo and Joyce Turco
Battery A, 460th

Enclosed letter from Aime Leocard. I tried to give it to you before you left Columbus but just missed you. We really enjoyed the reunion and all the work you and Irene put into it. Wish we could join you for Europe. Keep well.

Mrs. Jon Harris
Headquarters 3rd

Grace and J.K. told me to tell you we are family.

I am Grace Horne's sister Clara, J. K's sister-in-law. Of course that makes my husband Jon a brother-in-law.

We are looking forward to seeing you, in May, at the reunion.

None but a fool is always right. *John Marsinko*

Jim Lyon
596 Engineers

Just a note to express my appreciation for your fine work and devotion to the 517th reunion. Every minute was a memorable event.

Thanks so much, best regards, and Airborne all the way.

Frank Dallas
Company I

Had a good trip back from Columbus, Georgia. Enclosed is the address I promised you of a company that does Custom Duplication from your original carvings. Enjoyed the reunion very much.

Before I departed Saturday I took Don Davis to Fort Benning to see both the Airborne and Ranger Walks. He was very impressed. The reunion meant everything to him.

Again thanks for all you did to make the reunion a successful one and a long lasting memory for all of us.

Battery D 460th Parachute Field Artillery Bn.**From the members and wives of Battery D**

During the Reunion at Fort Benning, Ga., a basket of fruit was received from Fran Incontro for Battery D, 460th troopers and their wives attending the reunion.

Fran and Sal Incontro (Sal passed away November '98) added a tremendous amount of enjoyment, hospitality, and friendship to the Battery D Family and many other members of the 517th PRCT, especially those who they traveled with on the Combat Team Battle Field tours in Europe.

Thanks Fran

George Schnebli, D - 460th - Just a few lines along with the enclosed for the Thunderbolt.

The by-stander that took the pictures (with my camera) cut out the heads of some personnel.

Other Battery troopers took pics, if I receive any and they are better, I will send them to you.

We thought the reunion was great. Hope we can all make it to North Dakota.

Thanks to you and Irene for the outstanding job you do organizing and carrying thru each reunion. You are a couple of spark plugs.



(left to right back row) Gerry Frycznski, Jack Kason, Mike Schlachter, Dick Althoff, George Kennedy, Nick Warren, John Wilson and George Schnebli.

(L - R middle row) Steve Armbruster, Faye Frycznski, Juanita Wilson, Bonnie Pohler, Norm Pohler and George Sanford.

(L-R front row) Elburna Armbruster, Dorothy Althoff, Veta Cason and Aubrey Schnebli.

Dick Seitz - Headquarters 2nd

Ginny and I want to say well done to you and Irene for another fine 517 reunion and to thank you both for all your hard work.

We know that you do so much that is not apparent to all of us both which are so very important to a good reunion. Thank you for all you did.

I'm sure most of the people enjoyed the reunion. Even being in two hotels did not dampen their spirit and their visiting with old friends.

Again to you and Irene a big well done and many thanks. 517th All the Way. -14-

Bob Newberry - Company E

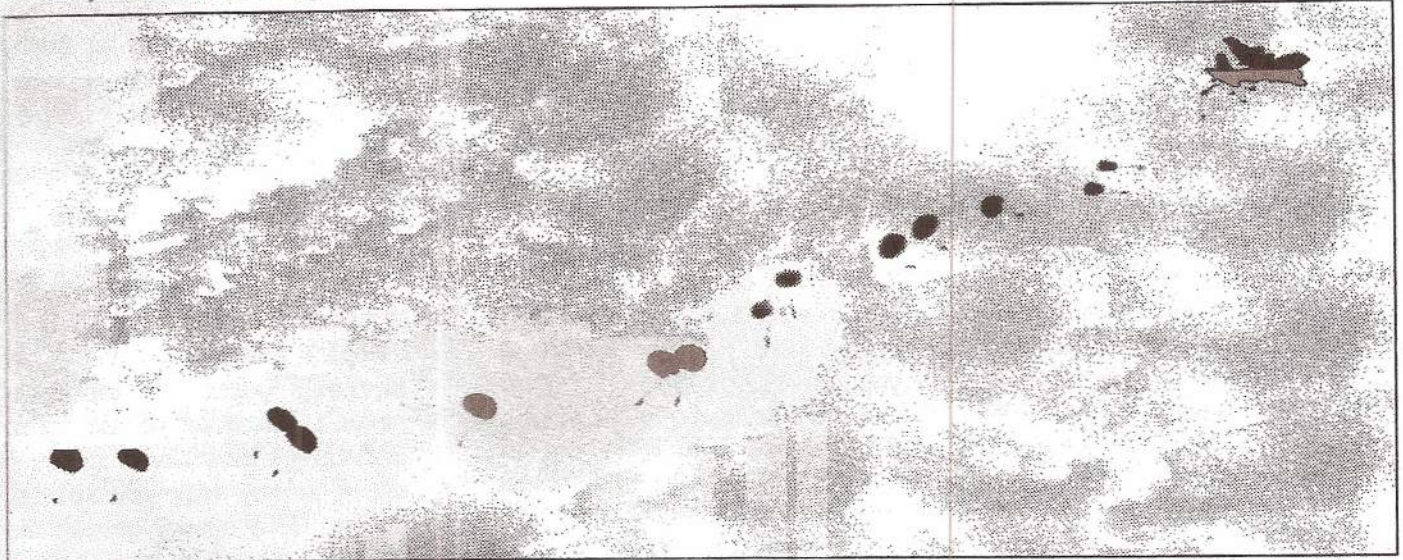
Emily and I thank you for the nice time we had at the reunion last week. I know it took a lot of hard work and we certainly appreciate it.

We enjoyed the program and in particular the graduation. It brought back memories of a long time ago.

I was sorry I could not participate in more evening activities but my eyes kind of limit my navigation.

Once again, thanks and our best to you and your family.

A Harry Saunder's (Co. E) photo



John M. Jones

Cousin of Leonard Fancher (KIA), of Company B, a Silver Star recipient.

My name is John M. Jones and I was born and raised in St. Louis, Missouri and still live here.

I am 61 years old and was a small boy during WW II, but contributed with collecting cans, etc, for the war effort.

Anyway to make a long story short, My Dad's brother's son (my cousin), Leonard M. Fancher, was a member of the 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment, second platoon, Company B and was KIA on 23 December 1944, near Soy, Belgium (See attached Silver Star Citation).

May Dad is dead, and all of his family, which leaves my sister Jeanette and I to carry on.

She is very interested in knowing more about that part of the war, if possible.

I am a history major from St. Louis University and have read on almost everything I can

get my hands on regarding WWII, especially the "Battle of the Bulge."

I got a copy of Gerald Astor's book, "Battling Buzzards" from the library. I called Astor directly yesterday to chat with him. I also wanted a copy of the book to buy. He said he no longer had any books, and gave me your name and address.

If you have an extra copy of his book, or any additional books or articles on the 517th, especially the action around Soy/Hotton in December 1944, I would be more than happy to compensate you for them.

Yesterday I mailed a contribution to the WW II National Memorial being built in Washington, DC.

If anyone of your alumni remember Leonard Fancher, from Crocker, Missouri, let us know.

John Jones can be reached via mail at P. O. Box 27651, St. Louis, Missouri 63146.

Citation accompanying Private Fancher's Silver Star.

"For Gallantry in action. On 23rd, December 1944, the second platoon of Company "B", 517th parachute Infantry was attacking through a heavily wooded area near Soy, Belgium, Private Fancher, a member of this platoon, was designated as the left flank guard. While moving along very cautiously, he discovered a squad of the enemy in well dug-in- positions, and that his Platoon was walking into their would-be line-of-fire! In order to warn his Platoon, Private Fancher opened fire on the enemy and kept their attention on him, enabling his Platoon to maneuver. While moving about, exposing him self to draw enemy fire, Private Fancher was seriously wounded. Unable to move any further, Private Fancher continued firing and died giving covering fire for his platoon.

Find earth where grows no weed, and you may find a heart wherein no error grows.

John Marsinko

Aime S. Leocard
President of the S.F.A.
962 Av. Montferrat
8300 Draguignan
France

Dear Bill and all of you,
my close friends, of the 517th!

I am to leave and I feel really sorry time flew so fast when I had the honor and great pleasure to be with you at the unforgettable reunion in Columbus, Georgia.

A great big heartfelt thanks for you hospitality and unique friendship.

Please let me know how many of you are to come in October. We will have a ceremony at the Rhone Cemetery, then well have a big reception ... the friendliest of all at the city hall in Draguignan.

Mr. Christian Marin, our new mayor, is a real friend of America. After we will have a nice luncheon at the Military Officers' Restaurant.

As President of the Souvenir Franco - American Society I need a little help.

As you know each Memorial Day we bring two Next of Kin of one of your soldiers laid to rest in our cemetery. We honor them and they are our guests during their visit.

Each year as time goes by it is more difficult to find the family members of the soldiers buried here. Please see what you can do to help:

Thanks again to all of you my Buddies! God Bless you all and families! ! God Bless America the Beautiful!!!

Ernie Kosan
596 Engineers

Again another reunion is behind us, and even though the hotel didn't cover itself with glory, we all had a wonderful time.

I honestly don't see how Irene and you can enjoy the reunions with all the problems and the other glitches you have to contend with and solve.

You are truly the glue that holds the Combat Team together.

together. I thank you for that, and I believe I speak for every other reunion attendee.

We thank you - Airborne all the Way.

Dorothy H. MacKenzie
Headquarters 2nd

Knew you would be interested in this article (M of H Tribute) that appeared in this mornings paper. I hope you haven't lost track of me! I'm enclosing a little check to you - use it in any way you see fit, please. I've missed getting the Thunderbolt. Had a nice note from Gene and Jane Mars. It made me feel re-connected. I still have many of Jim's things and hopefully one day will find the right home for them. Please greet Irene for me. (Ed. Note: Dorothy I must apologize for your not receiving the Thunderbolt. The original computer messed up and I am still trying to straighten out my mailing roster. Duvall, the curator, of the A/B Spec. Ops. Museum said Mac's 45 was a good find. A forty five with his serial number on the holster and used in combat. He was pleased.)

— 16A NEWS-PRESS, FRIDAY, MAY 28, 1999 —

Medal of Honor tribute opens today

Monument dedicated to those who received top military accolade

Gannett News Service

INDIANAPOLIS — For the first time, America's most highly decorated war heroes will have a memorial of their own.

Medal of Honor winners gather here today to unveil an etched glass, limestone and steel tribute to the 3,409 servicemen and one woman who have been awarded the military's highest honor. It is the first monument to commemorate those who went "above and beyond the call of duty" on the battlefield.

"I hope it helps people understand the true cost of freedom," says Sammy Davis of Flat Rock, Ill., who

won a Medal of Honor for combat at Cai Lay, Vietnam, in 1967.

Winning the Medal of Honor is rare. Of the 40 million men and women who have served in the military this century, just 931 have earned the award.

More than half were awarded posthumously. Only two have been given for service in the past 25 years, both to Army snipers killed in Somalia.

The Medal of Honor is a bronzed wreath with a star that hangs from a baby blue ribbon. It is the only U.S. military medal worn around the neck. Gen. George Patton once said he would give his immortal soul for one.

"This should have been done years ago," says John Hodowal, chairman of Indiana Power and Light Co. and the man behind construction of the \$3 million memorial near the city center. "Maybe this is where the kids

can go now to find their heroes."

Of the 157 medal winners still living, 96 have agreed to attend the unveiling. As far as Hodowal has been able to learn, it's the largest gathering of medal winners this century.

"Think how rare this is," he says. "America's greatest heroes all in one spot."

The memorial features 27 curved glass slabs, or sails, etched with the name of each Medal of Honor recipient. At dusk each night, as floodlights illuminate the glass, a public address system will play a tape recording of medal winners telling their own stories.

One of those stories will be Melvin Biddle's.

In the two days before Christmas 1944, he served as the forward scout for the 517th Army Paratroops in the Battle of the Bulge. Over a span of 20 hours, the draftee from Anderson,

Ind., became a one-man wrecking crew, taking out six machine gun nests and a dozen German soldiers laying an ambush.

After a day of fighting, he found himself at dusk lying face down in the snow, the dense Ardennes Forest deadening all noise as a battalion of German soldiers marched by close enough to hear him breathe. Even today, he closes his eyes and shivers at the thought. There he was, a buck private a month past his 21st birthday, freezing and praying that the Nazis wouldn't stumble over him in the dark.

"They almost stepped on me. I lay there all night. Just lay there and prayed. It was so cold, I couldn't get my fingers on the trigger to fire my rifle," he says.

In the end, Biddle found he had bullet holes in his uniform sleeve but not a scratch on his body. "That's just dumb luck," he said.

**Armond Janes
Battery C, 460th**

I would like to take advantage of your offer we talked about at the reunion.

You listened to my hard luck story about not having any luck getting my medals and said you would send me some forms that should help me.

I sure hope so because it will be my third try.

I want you to know that my wife, Reggie, and I really enjoyed the reunion and appreciate all the hard work you and the others put into it.

Thanks very much Bill for helping me out and we will see you in North Dakota in two years.

All of our love to you and your wife, Irene.

**Roger and Gloria Goodsell
Company D**

Thank you again for a very enjoyable reunion in Columbus. We are most appreciative for everything you do for the group.

Right now, we are nearing Meridian, Mississippi. We shall travel to Barksdale AFB tonight and will reach Tyler tomorrow. I have read and reread the letter in the booklet. How nice.

**Malcolm "Red" Evans
Company A**

Melvin Biddle was on CBS TV tonight - program on recipients of the Medal of Honor.

Regret I had to leave Columbus, as I am sure this would have been my last. Low blood pressure was the problem.

Slowly getting better but still a problem.

**A Harry Saunders (Co.E)
photo**



Loraine Caramehas and Edith Saunders enjoy a quite moment at the Columbus - Fort Benning reunion.

Mount Currahee

This may be our last chance to get to the top of Mount Currahee

High level meeting

Bill Lewis, Charles Pugh and Don Saunders conferring in the hospitality room.

Post card below purchased by avid stamp collector, Charles Pugh.



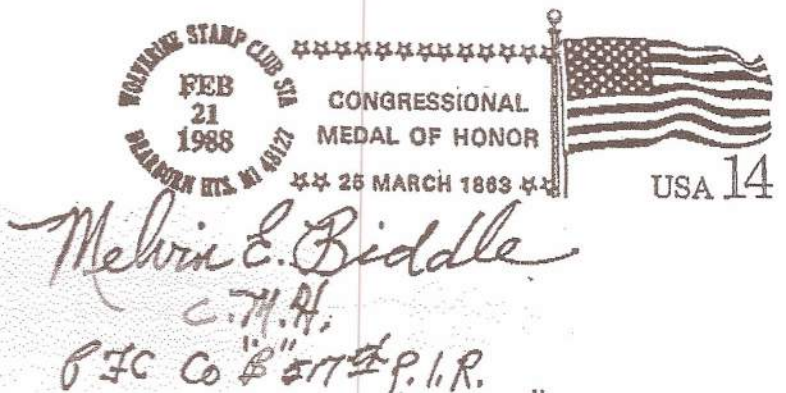
Currahee.

The United States Forest Rangers want to close the only road to the mountain. The mountain climbers are fighting this proposal.

I don't believe many of us will ever want to, and some of us are physically unable to, climb that mountain. At the present time you still can drive your car to the top.

The Forest Service may have a point. They said they are not closing it off to climbing, but are trying to control the traffic, said Peech Keller, the district resource assistant for everything but wildlife and timber.

The road has never been modernized and vehicles do tear up a mud and gravel road. I assume there is not enough funds to make the road a year round road.



Troubetskoy
3437 Taraval
San Francisco, CA 94116

E-Mail

Jimmie Moore Company A

Hi Bill Lewis: I've been out in Arizona 13 years now. My timing has been wrong to see you when I am down in Florida.

My wife died of lung cancer a year ago. I had bladder cancer but I think I got it beat. We always did things together, even cancer.

You probably should take me off your list. I don't want to outlive everybody.

I get some nice invitations to meet guys and talk about our war times. I feel bad I am unable to do that now.

I will be in Florida in September and October and I'll try to connect with you then.

Thanks for including me.

(Ed note: Jimmie I now live in Tennessee. Got lonesome for that mountain maneuvers country. Wish you will still be in Florida the end of January and join us in Melbourne. Once on our list it is difficult to get off. Keep in contact we need correspondence to keep the Thunderbolt interesting.)

James M. Foley
Company B

It is with deep regret that I inform you of the death of my father Andy Foley. Dad passed away after a two-year bout with cancer. Dad died at home the way he wanted to with the whole family present.

He was so proud to be a member of the 517th and it saddened him to cancel out on reunions because of hospital appointments. Dad never talked much about the war, but since I am in the service myself, I

would ask him questions and he would tell me things. I asked him what he thought of the 45 Cal handgun? He went into a story about how he lost his 45. Many stories like that. I can go on for pages.

Ralph Nelson
Company G

I am enclosing a check for the reunion for my wife, Inez, and myself. Use the extra for the Thunderbolt or whatever.

After the reunion we are going to Seymour and look the area over for the possibility of moving there. Hope you will be there.

The boy had a parachute strapped to his back. He failed to jump. The boy never became a man.

John Marusko

Larry Stedman
Company B

Just will not be able to attend the May reunion. Hope it is a huge success.

Had a nice conversation with Andy Murphy's nephew concerning his uncle. It appears his family knew very little of his death in Italy. I sent them the names of all the "B" Company troopers who are on the roster. So I would think he will be contacting some of them.

Sincerely wish that you and Irene are well and happy; just keep walking by that chair.

More irons in the fire now then when I was working, but really enjoying it.

Thank you for all your effort.

Yvon Hervais
95 rue Damremont
75018 Paris

Thank you very much for your letter. My health is always the same and I am very tired.

But when I read your letter that you are coming to Paris, I am feeling much better, because I am very happy to see you again.

Please can you tell me how many people are coming? Are Bob and his family coming again?

I tried to phone a lot of times, but I never could join you. Give me your private number again and the best hour to join you.

Many regards to you, your family and to the others.

Malcolm Evans
Company A

It was good to see you but sorry I had to leave. Villain turned out to be low blood pressure. I knew something was wrong but what.

We drove all the way home Monday - did not want to get caught going to a hospital out of town.

Dick Bakewell and Hu Webb of "A" called about the reunion after I got home. Bakewell had been sick with pneumonia.

Hope the reunion turned out well - the turnout sounded good.

Come see us.

Tony Esparza
Company I

I am enclosing a donation to help with the program. I wrote to Sam Mortaro (Co.I), 616 Washington Ave., Girard, Ohio 44420.

The letter has not been returned to me so I assume he received it. I sent him all the information on the reunion I hope he received it and will join us in Columbus.

(Ed. Note: Tony the U.S. Postal service returned Sam's mail, April 1991. If you luck out and hear from him please inform us of his new address. The address you used is the one we have for Sam.)

Mark Baird
Company A

Enclosed is a small pittance to cover the cost of your sending me a replacement for a "lost" Thunderbolt. I hated to bother you with this, but I save the Thunderbolts they mean a lot to me.

Rather doubt that I will make the Columbus Reunion much as I would like to. I have a condition called I.B.S., which makes it most inconvenient to be in a crowd without a bush in sight.

Thanks Bill and tell all the Company A troopers "Howdy" for me.

Lou Scaringi
Headquarters 2nd

I'm wondering why I haven't received copies of the Thunderbolt recently. The last copy I received was for the 2nd quarter 1998. I hope you have

not transferred me to your "Obit" list.

Enclosed check to help with the Association finances.

Hope you and Irene are still "hanging in there".

Best of luck and good health.

(Ed. note: Thanks for notifying us Lou. I hope we sent you the right number of copies to get your library up to date.)

Jeane Wampler
Company G

Enclosed is a check for \$30.00 to cover my husband's subscription to the Thunderbolt for another year.

I'm not quite sure I am sending the correct amount, but assume it is somewhere around the same amount as the Static Line. Please correct me if I'm wrong.

My husband, Fred, and I hoped to make the 517th reunion in Georgia this year, but due to prior commitments will be unable to do so.

Hopefully ... next time.

(Ed. note: Thanks for the contribution. We do not have a set charge either for membership or subscription. We have lived on voluntary contributions since we started. It seems to work because of people like you and Fred.)

Joe Matika
Hqs.3 and Company H

I sure would like to get to go to Fort Benning, but can't get around very good anymore. Keep up the good work. I do enjoy the paper. We all have our troubles. I never get a bill.

(Ed. Note: Read note above.)

-19-

Alvin Adelman
Company F

We trained as pathfinders for the southern France invasion in the Rome area during July and August of 1944. Training included flights around Rome, Naples Sicily and further. These helped us in the use of the Eureka, radar and radio sets.

We carried, in excess of our regular combat equipment two Eureka sets, one radio set, three lights, wet-cell batteries for the lights and identification panels and also smoke signals.

Our plane took off the evening of Aug. 14, 1944. We arrived over southern France about 1:00 a.m. At the signal to jump I left the plane with no problems only to look down and see ocean! I thought we were dropped over the water.

A few seconds later I realized with much relief that it was not water after all. I could see the chute next fade into the mist. Yes it was fog.

Fog covered the entire valley. Later thoughts were there was no shooting at us because they could not see us. We of course could not see our ground check points so we landed a few miles from our drop zone.

Our group did not get to the DZ until after the main parachute drop but did get the equipment into place in the landing zone before the gliders and re-supply came in.

There were far to many gliders for the size of the LZ. Many crashed into tall trees that lined a canal, or where forced to

Alvin Adelman Cont'd
land into or on gliders that were on the ground.

Some of the first men coming out of the gliders started to shoot at us, me in particular. After some yelling and hand waving etc., we got that stopped.

They were surprised to see us. They said rumors had it that the Germans were waiting for them as all the pathfinders were killed or captured.

We see that Fog blinds the eye as rumors blind the mind.

George Rumsey
Headquarters 1st

Oop! Got so excited about you getting me a room at the Holiday Inn for the reunion that I forgot to send you my registration fee. Sorry, just another senior moment but here it is finally. Thanks for your help and I promise to buy you a drink in Columbus.

Enclosed is my registration check for myself, it is not my first reunion and I don't plan on playing golf.

Looking forward to visiting our 517 Combat Team comrades and seeing Fort Benning again. Especially the free fall jump towers. When we went through that portion of jump school I went a couple of extra times for some that didn't feel like going.

Wouldn't you know that on the last trip I hung up in the tower, fortunately our good conditioning in Toccoa saved me from everything but embarrassment.

See you in Georgia.

During the reunion we had the pleasure of observing the qualifying jump and the graduation of the newly qualified troopers...One of ours, Charles Pugh, 596 Engineers, was the graduation speaker. His speech follows:

"We veteran paratroopers salute and congratulate all of you newly qualified Paratroopers. I can assure you that we veterans, in our mind and imagination, vicariously shared the thrill of that jump with you. It will be a pleasure and honor for us to pin on your wings.

The Airborne Concept of inserting paratroopers on top of the enemy violates the conventional battle wisdom of taking and holding the high ground and protecting the flanks against encirclement.

Airborne forces are not only immediately surrounded by the enemy but, in almost every instance, they are outnumbered, outgunned, short of ammo, have no ground transportation, and are often dropped far from the targeted drop-zone and scattered.

In spite of these real limitations and handicaps, paratroopers always feel that the odds are in their favor. I'm reminded of the WW II story of the two paratroopers sharing a foxhole in Bastogne during the Battle of the Bulge. One says to the other, "The Germans have us surrounded ... poor bastards!" That exemplifies the Airborne Spirit.

I went into paratroop training right out of high school and served during 1943, 44 and 45 in Europe. My interest in paratroopers has continued unabated for the past 56 years.

I enjoy associating and visiting with paratroopers, both veterans and those of more recent vintage. And you men and women are the most recent vintage.

Our pride in your courage and today's achievement is almost as great as your own. Paratroopers have always been impressive as individuals and as a very special kind of soldier. They have a distinctive presence and aura, which is a self-confident look, air, and manner of carrying and conducting oneself.

Paratroopers have a highly developed personal and unit pride and sometimes appear to the outsider to be cocky or even arrogant.

Regardless of age, ex-active duty troopers never stop believing they were special. The dash and flash, the princely bearing, the swagger, the vanity, and the self-esteem are innate qualities of paratroopers.

Mentally and emotionally, we aging veterans still think of ourselves as the elite warriors we were as individuals and as a "Breed Apart". Courage has been defined by the author, Ernest Hemingway as, "Grace Under Pressure". Paratroopers of all eras still have it in spades!

**Otto M. Andersen
Company A**



Otto, age 74, passed away Wednesday January 13, 1999, at Covenant Medical Center-Cooper. The son of the late Sena (Findsen) and Ole Marius Andersen was born November 19, 1924 in Moltcalm County, Michigan. He married Vera Kade April 29 1972; she survives him. He was employed as a pharmacist working for several drug stores

**Gaylord Bucher
Battery C, 460**



Gaylord Herron Bucher, 81, of 178 Sunrise Circle, Rockingham, NC, formerly of Mansfield, Ohio died Saturday February 20, 1999.

He was born in August we, 1917, in Mansfield, Ohio, son of the late Benjamin and Hazel Heron Bucher. He was retired from Fisher body in Mansfield, Ohio, served in World War II with the 517th Parachute Combat Team. He was a member of the Golden age Lions club, Local 545 of the autoworkers Union of Mansfield,

and retiring from Hansen Pharmacy in Edmore.

He served with the U. S. Army, 517th Parachute Combat Team during World War II.

He was a member of St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Hemlock, the Sunshine seniors, the Hemlock-Merrill VFW Post #7302 and the American Legion of Breckenridge.

Surviving besides his wife are three daughters, two sons, a stepson and their spouses, Diane Nielsen, Lorain, Ohio; Wayne and Marcy Andersen, Saginaw; Steven and Tamela Andersen, Pamela and Ron Minton, all of Canton, Georgia; Gaelyne Gasson, Australia; Robert and Louise Bunterbart, Hemlock; 12 grandchildren; one great-grandson; two sisters, Viola Tuthill and Marion and John Hoehn; a son-in-law Michael Morenac; two nieces

Ohio, and the Rockingham Lions Club, Local 545 of the Autoworker Union of Mansfield, Ohio and the Rockingham Lions Club Funeral services were held Tuesday, February 23, at 1 p.m. at the first Presbyterian Church with the Rev. Dwight Williams officiating.

The family received friends in the Fellowship Hall after the service.

A memorial service also was held Monday, February 22, t 1 p.m. at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Mansfield, Ohio.

Mr. Bucher is survived by his wife, the former Roslyn (Jo) Davids Bucher; one son, Larry Bucher of Pittsburgh, Pa.; two daughters, Mrs. Nicola (Nikki) Crooks of Jacksonville, Fl. And Susanna Price of Mansfield, Ohio; two brothers Robert Bucher and Rexford Bucher, both of Mansfield, Ohio; three sisters, Mrs. Janet McKinley, Mrs. Jean McClland and Mrs. Delee all of Mansfield, Ohio.

Obituaries



and four nephews.

A granddaughter, Heather Andersen, a son-in law Richard Nielsen a brother-in-law, Burr Tuthill, has predeceased him.

**Adrian Eckert
Headquarters 1st**

By Phil Borchman
Tribune Staff Writer

For more than 50 years, Adrian T. Eckert helped distinguish his thriving family meat market in Oak Lawn (IL) by offering friendly, personalized service along with the fine cuts of meat he sold.

"He knew his customers by name," said Mr. Eckert's sister, Norma Heis.

A resident of Beverly, Mr. Eckert, 75, died Monday at Hines Veterans Hospital from complications of kidney disease.

Born in Chicago, Mr. Eckert attended St. Barnabas Elementary School and Morgan Park High School.

Mr. Eckert joined the Army in 1943 and volunteered for the 517th parachute Regimental Combat Team. During his tour of duty, Mr. Eckert fought in five major campaigns, including the Battle of the Bulge.

Mr. Eckert worked at his father's meat market at 5100 W. 95th St., Oak Lawn, and eventually took over the business with two of his three brothers. He remained active in the business until the early 1990s, his wife said.

"Anytime we would go out to a function, everybody seemed to know him," she said.

When Mr. Eckert was not busy minding the store, he ventured north to a summer cottage in Land O'Lakes, Wis., to fish. Other interests included flying model airplanes and assembling model railroads in his basement.

In addition to his wife, two sons, Thomas and Kenneth; a daughter, Kathy Eckert-Heinzel; a sister, Norma Heis; two brothers, George and Jerome; and 17 grandchildren survive Mr. Eckert.

Russell S. Henderson Company B

Letter from Robert Henderson, Russell's son who resides at 5028 River Road, Bethesda, MD 20816

I regret to inform you about another one of your fallen comrades. Russell S. Henderson of Company B died on February 9th 1999.

He was my Dad and he was always fond of your publication. The Thunderbolt and also the Static Line were one of the few things that came in the mail that he enjoyed reading.

The rest of the mail he often considered junk mail, even an occasional bill.

He was fortunate in that he was able to remain at home where he wanted to be. He has

been somewhat ill for a few years but I have been able to assist him so he could remain in his own home.

A few times he was hospitalized and they moved him into a nursing home but I have always managed to get him home. This last time, was rather interesting, and will give you an idea of his unyielding spirit.

As I was arranging for him to return home from a brief stay in a nursing home, he decided he wasn't going to wait for all the formalities and "proper" procedures to discharge from that facility.

Every time they tried to come in his room to change the sheets or in any way disturb his things he would threaten to smack em upside the head with his cane.

I hate to think of how they would have wound up if he had any of his military hardware with him.

Well, after that the nursing home decided that it wasn't worth it to fight me and him to keep him there and they reluctantly discharged him back home.

He has two children, myself and my sister, and fortunately she was able to fly in from out of town to be with us for the last few days. I think that was the most special thing of all for for him.

I don't know what else to say here as I am unaccustomed to writing these kinds of letters. I know that he enjoyed serving with all of you at a time when the world was a different time

where morals and values meant something.

Back in a time when a commander in chief was just that and not a dodger. If I may be of any assistance to you; feel free to contact me.

Charles "Chuck" Walter Company E



Charles "Chuck" Walters age 76 of Portage-Hobart, Indiana passed away Saturday April 10, 1999 at St. Mary's Medical in Hobart. He was a life long Hobart-Portage resident.

Chuck was a World War II Army veteran serving with the 517 Parachute Infantry Regiment. He was a member of Hobart Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 5365, and the Hobart American Legion Post 54 and Disabled American Veterans Chapter 21.

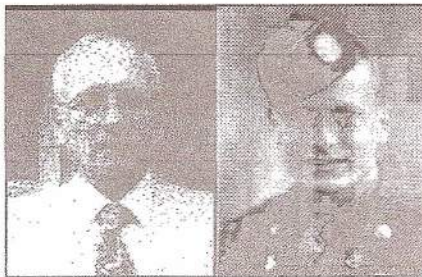
He was a supervisor at United States Steel and retired after 22years of Service.

Chuck was also a member of the Gary Sportsman Club, Hunkie Hollow, the Hobart BTOE 1152 and Life member of the 517 Parachute Combat Team.

He was a member of the Notre Dame 100 Club who honored him as the man of the year in 1978. Survivors: His special friend and companion Ruby Green; two sons Charles B. (Janet) Walter of Georgia and Scott Eldridge Walter of Bradenton Florida.

Daughter Linda Wells of Bradenton, Florida; seven grandchildren; Two brothers Thomas Walter of Hobart In., and John Walter Longview, Texas; Sisters Kathleen Campbell of Merrillville, In., Helen Pillman of Chesterton, In., and Mary Hockman of Pueblo West, Colorado.

**Marvin Osborne Hewitt
Company D**



Marvin "Moe" Hewitt Jr., 74, died Feb. 15 at St. Joseph's Hospital.

He was born in Banberg, S.C. and moved to Savannah, Georgia in 1949.

He was a World War II veteran who served with Company D, of the 517th Parachute Combat Team and also with the 101st Airborne Division.

He received a Purple Heart Medal and was a commander of the Purple Heart organization.

He attended the University of South Carolina and retired

from Seaboard Coast Line Railroad.

Survivors: two daughters, Cathy Hester of Savannah and Jane of Atlanta, Ga.; a son Marvin O. Hewitt III of Savannah; a sister, Montine Thompson of Wilmington, NC; two grand-daughters, Amber Hester and Heather Hewitt, both of Savannah; a grandson, Shea Hester of Savannah; and a special friend, Ingrid W. Klug of Savannah.

**Andrew J. Foley
Company B**



Andrew, 73, of Little Egg Harbor, NJ died Monday, May 17 at his residence. He was born in Jersey City and lived in Garwood before moving to Little Egg Harbor in 1978.

Foley was a former Port Authority Police Officer in charge of basic training, in service training and firearms retiring in 1974.

He was also a New Jersey State pistol-shooting champion several times during his Port Authority career.

He began a new career in 1974 as an investigator for the Public Defenders Offices of

Hudson, Union and Ocean Counties retiring in 1996.

Andrew was a veteran of WWII serving in the Army's 517 Parachute Infantry Regiment, fought in Italy, made the parachute invasion of southern France and the Battle of the Bulge. He was awarded the Silver Star Medal, 2 Bronze Star Medals and the Purple Heart Medal.

He was a communicant of St. Theresa's R.C. Church of Tuckerton, the P.B.A. of NJ/NY Port Authority, Port Authority police Pistol Team NJ/NY, Purple Heart Association of Ocean County, Signal 8-2 Club of Florida, Charter member of the M.I.C.A. Club, VFW Post 316 and American Legion Post 493, both of Little Egg Harbor.

His two brothers, James and Richard predeceased him. He is survived by his beloved wife, Viola, nee Mitchell, of 49 years; three sons, Andrew of Hollywood, Florida, James and Daniel of Tuckerton; a sister Ann and brother-in-law Henry Tezyk of Naples, Florida; a sister in-law Gloria Foley and three grandchildren, survives him.

Notified by Charles Pugh
George Ayling
596 Engineers
Died: May 26, 1999

Notified by the U. S. Postal Service:
John E. Fowler (596)
Jefferson, Georgia

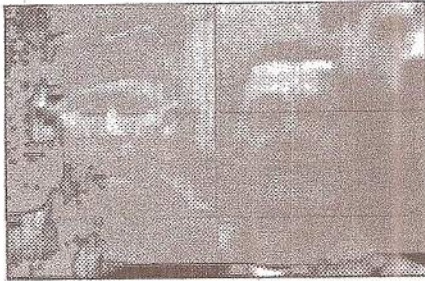
James Gray
Company H
Died: November 8, 1998

Notified by the U.S. Postal service:
Sam P. McEachern (Co.C)
Conyers, Georgia

Notified by Cameron Gauthier:
Pat Moran
Battery C, 460th
Died: September 16, 1998

Erin F. Trollinger
Company H
Died: January 30, 1999
Heart Attack

Mike Neizmik
Co. D



Letter from Sean J. Neizmik,
 Mike's grandson.

I am writing you this letter regarding my grandfather's (Nick Neizmik) death on March 13, 1999. I am sorry it took so long to write this letter but I am just now with the help of the Lord starting to think clearly again.

I would like to start off with a brief history of my grandfather's life. He was born May 10, 1921 on a farm in Tidoute, PA one of sixteen children. His parents originated from the country of Ukaine. After migrating to the United States, they bought land in Tidoute and farmed it for their source of income.

My grandfather entered the military in 1943 and served

with Company D, 2nd Battalion 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment. I want to point out that he qualified expert on all weapons for which he was extremely proud.

I also would like to point out that four out of his six brothers also served in the military with one being captured and held as a POW in Germany for over six months. My grandfather was especially proud of being Airborne.

After the war he built his own house in West Mifflin a suburb of Pittsburgh where he worked as an Iron Worker for over 35 years and a union member for America Bridge.

My grandfather was a proud member of your group along with the VFW, NRA and the National Geographic Society. I served in the United States Army as a Helicopter Electrician in the 3rd Infantry Division in Germany in the later 1980's. I will always cherish the memories of just sitting around on weekend evenings drinking a beer with my grandfather and his closest buddy Bear (the family dog) by his side and listening to all his war stories.

I personally being of the younger generation would like to say thank you to each and every veteran that served in World War II for if it wasn't for you I might not have been able to enjoy the life I had with my grandfather.

My grandfather is survived by his wife Mary Lou, son Vaughn, Daughter-in-law Terri and two grandchildren, Sean and Robert.

There is one other thing I would like to mention and that my grandfather being work-a-holic was infatuated with someday visiting Alaska. Hopefully now from where ever he is he can clearly see and experience the beauty of his dream.

Thank you Mr. Lewis for listing something in the memory of my Pap in your paper. Enclosed are two pictures, one with him taken in France during the war and the other with Bear.

Jeanne S. Schofield
Regimental Headquarters

My apologies for not informing you that my dear husband,

Everett Hoadley Schofield
CW4 - U. S. Army - Retired
Veteran of
World War I - World War II
And

The Korea War

With over 35 years, active duty and many years as a National Guard Instructor died 17 February 1993 at Eglin Air Force Base Hospital of congested heart failure and angina. He was 94 years of age.

"Scho" always had wonderful memories of the 517th and had a ring (onyx), with the emblem on it, which he wore until his death, until his death.

I wonder if you have a museum in which I can donate it in his memory.

He served as an adjutant and personnel officer in various assignments. He spoke of Joigny and took me there in 1960 as well as other places where he served with his favorite outfit.

Donald Mounts Battery D, 460th



Braceville, Ohio – Donald “Gus” Mounts, 81, of 1476 Ohio 534, died Thursday, May 27, 1999 at St. Joseph Health Center.

He was born May 13, 1918, in Warren, a son of the late Bradley and Isia Harner Mounts.

Formerly of Newton Falls, he had lived in Braceville since 1964. He retired in 1980 after

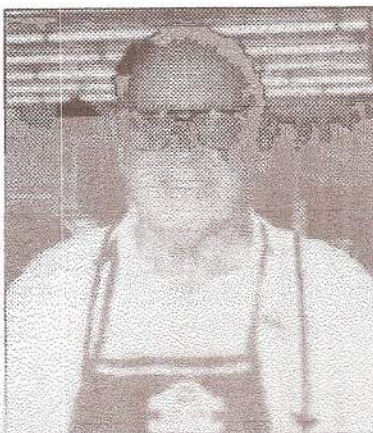
working 43 years in the maintenance department at Denman Rubber.

Mr. Mounts was a paratrooper with the U. S. Army during World War II. He served as the 1st Sergeant of Battery D, 460th Parachute Field Artillery Battalion.

He was a member of Newton Falls United Methodist Church, 50-year member of Newton Falls Masonic Lodge No. 462, Leavittsburg Fish and Game, Farm Bureau, Phaylanx Mills Farm Bureau Council, life member of American Paint Horse Association, 4-H saddle adviser and showed horses. He enjoyed hunting, fishing, gardening and playing cards.

Surviving are his wife, Martha Mounts of Braceville; daughter, Glen (Deborah) Koffel of Southington; sister, Edwards (Bernice) Penney of Windham; two grandchildren.

Harold A. Paar Company I



South Bend, IN. Harold A. Paar, 74 residing on north 29th Street, passed away of natural causes at 1:p.m., Fri., Mar. 27, at his home.

Mr. Paar was retired as a

sales representative for Kwik-Way Manufacturing, Inc. His territory consisted of Indiana.

Harold was born on June 20, 1923, in South Bend, to the late Alexander and Pauline Parr. He was a lifelong resident of South Bend.

On Dec. 23, 1977, in South Bend, he married Delores J. Trisinger, who survives.

He is also survived by two sons, Jerry paar of Indianapolis and Ernie Paar, one stepdaughter Debra Sarkisian of South Bend; two grandchildren, Brant and Kailey Sarkisian, both at home; and by two brothers, Robert Paar of South Bend and Steve Paar of Illinois.

Mr. Paar was a member of St. Patrick Catholic Church, Fraternal Order of Eagles, Mishawaka, and Loyal order of Moose #58.

He was a World War II veteran of the 517 Parachute Combat Team and was honorably discharged as a Staff Sergeant with Company a of the 508th parachute Infantry. He was awarded the Purple Heart Medal.

Robert T. Greene Motor Officer – 460th PFA Bn.

Robert , 87, entered into rest February 13, 1999. Mr. greene is survived by his loving wife of 52 years, Dorothy Jeane; sons and daughters-in-law, Robert T. Jr., Spkane; thomas P. and mary, Spokane; James C. seattle; Jon E and Kristi, Spokane; daughters and son-in-law, marijean (Mimi), San Francisco; Jonny Joyce and gary Guenther, Spokane; grandchildren Amy, Abby, Jon Gary, Alissa, Taylor, Chris, Andy, Barry jared, kaylin, Sean and nathan; brother, Johnc. Greene, Storrs, CT; 2 nephews and o niece.

Bob grew up in Vermillion, South Dakota and is a graduate of U. of South dakota with graduate work at Columbia University and U. of Colorado.

He was awarded the Bronze Star Medal.. He served in five Theaters of Operation in Europe and was discharged, a Captain from the 82nd Airborne Division, in 1946. After moving to spokane he entered the insurance and pension business and became a

Chartered Life Underwriter in (1951). He founded Greene Co. Service, Inc in 1969.

Bob was a Charter member of the downtown Exchange Club where he served as president and also Executive Secretary for 25 years.

His other Civic activities include: President of Junior Achievement, 15 year committee member for Boy Scout Troop #353, President of Hutton School PTA; Vice President of the western Division of Delta Tau Delta Fraternity; Big Brothers; 5 year Board member of the Washington State Community College Foundation and 4 year board member;

He also served as a 3 year member of State Board for Washington State Community Colleges; a member of the Spokane Club and Manito Golf and Country Club; a long time member of Manito Presbyterian Church; 6 year member of the development Fund at Sacred Heart Medical Center and was a member of Spokane Estate Planning Council.

His political career included President of Spokane County Republican Club, 1958; County Chairman of the republican Party 1959 and 1960; Republican Finance Committee and Precinct Committeeman for 12 years.

New Members:

Randolph Coleman (Co. F)
11914 Pepper Ridge Cove
San Antonio, Texas 72813

Change of address:

Cecil Votti (Co.B)
8802 Balcones Club Drive
Austin, Texas 78750-3006

Bob Christie (Hqs.2)
390 301 Blvd. W. Unit 10C
Bradenton, FL 34205

John W. Dark (A-46)
P. O. Box 591
Lone Grove, OK 73443-0591

Gerald Davis (Hqs. 3)
8 Littlecroft Avenue
Narre Warren 3805
Victoria, Australia

Sidney Felber (B-460)
2539 Linden Ave.
Slayton, MN 56172-1316

John E. Ferguson (Ser.Co.)
24462 S Dupage Drive
Channahon, IL 60410-9317

Howard Fields (Co.I)
14454 Avenue 344
Visalia, CA 93292-9548

W. L. Goforth, MD (Reg. Hq.)
599 Manor Drive
Kingsport, TN 37660-3430

C. H. Hyden
HC - 61
P. O. Box 387
Big Springs, TX 79720

Elmo Kunkel (Hq.1)
4 Gail Lane
Bella Vista, AR 72714-5635

W. W. Lanahan
1901 Ruxton Road
Baltimore, MD 21204

Elwin Leonard (Co.F)
8 Cessna Place
Rutland, VT 05701

Wm. H. Martin (Co.A)
5100 Westview Drive
Stone Mountain, GA 30083

Layton Mabrey
17970 Raven Rock Road
Bluemont, VA 20135

Dorothy MacKenzie (Hq.2)
13340 Oak Hill Loop
Fort Myers, FL 33912-3823

Con Matson (Co.F)
120 E Camille Drive
Flagstaff, AZ 86001-8305

Warn Mears (596)
823 E. 6th Street
Lumberton, NC 28358

Harris E. Miller (A-460)
21120 Iverson Ave. N
Forest Lake, MN 55025

Raymon H. Nielsen (Hq.2)
Three Pillars Health Care
400 N. Main center Street
Dousman, WI 53118

Lawrence Jack Rohm (Co.H)
303 Grimesville Road
Williamsport, PA 17701-9255

Marcos P. Ramirez Reg.Hqs.)
1364 Stevens Road
Somerset, Texas 78069

Clifford Swan (Co. A)
P. O. Box 332
Mecosta, Michigan 49332

Bull Uleman (Hq.2)
918 Grand Street
Saint Paul, NE 68873-1919

You men and women are inheriting a shining Airborne Legacy that began in 1940. I'm sure you will continue to add to its luster. Throughout the various branches of our military forces there were and are many individuals who were and are the equals and at times the superiors of individual paratroopers.

During World War II, many of us found out this fact the hard way when we went in to town on a pass and mixed it up a bit with a Leg or Marine. The line we had been fed in training about the individual trooper being the equal of five Leg outfit men was a gross exaggeration ... three was more like it. You know I jest.

However, most knowledgeable combat experienced high level military leaders of that period and of today is in agreement that, at the unit level ... company through division ... the paratroopers have few, if any, peers.

This is not to belittle any of the many outstanding units that have distinguished themselves in combat. Yes, it is meant to be self-congratulatory, but through the eyes of dispassionate non-airborne military leaders of yesterday and today, as well as through the research and writings of present day military historians. They have corroborated and annotated that which we paratroopers have always known and loudly proclaimed to the world. To paraphrase that immortal sage, Mohammed Allie, we are

Are the greatest". Congratulations again and Airborne all the way! **Hooah!**

E-Mail

Ben Barrett (Co. H)

Just got the reunion video tape. Viewed most of it and I think it is very good.

Raines Video Productions did an excellent job.

More on the reunion: We had over 500 in attendance. Many brought their families, children, grandchildren, great grandchildren. You name it they were there.

The J. K. Horne's brought 12; the John Lissner came in with 8. These two families were the champs.

The Esparza's first son was born on August 15, D-Day and of course Tom and Bette Cross almost bested this record. Their oldest son Tom, Jr. was born on D plus 1.

Using three hotels posed a few little problems but the Combat Team always did overcome adversity.

We tried to have two registration desks for the convenience of our members. We had one in the lobby of the Howard Johnson and the other in the lobby of the Holiday Inn. We soon learned a lesson.

After a week of separating the files according to hotels, you probably noticed either a yellow mark or a blue mark on your name-tag, we thought we were going to be efficient.

However the best laid plans ... Troopers came in and we

couldn't find their file.

Then we discovered they were from the opposite hotel. When told they could register in their hotel they answered, "But I want to register here".

They were politely told to return after lunch. When I said they were politely told, I must mean, Irene informed them. I got in the van, got volunteers at the Howard Johnson and in about 15 minutes set up the one, and only, registration desk at the Holiday Inn. This worked well. We had a nice alcove for our set-up but it did have some drawbacks. To our right was the hospitality room and across the aisle were the mens and ladies comfort rooms. This set up caused a little congestion but we did get over that little inconvenience. Informal polls told us that the Howard Johnson had the best food. At least our troopers mostly complimented it. The Holiday Inn had true southern cooking and I guess many of our Yankee guests were not used to good old-fashioned plain food.

Buses could have been a problem. It took 5 bus companies to give us the proper number of buses. We have the Chamber of Commerce and Tourist Bureau to thank for us getting the buses we need. Amanda Horne (no relation) told us early, "Don't worry about the buses I'll get them for you". And she did. But trying to convoy 10 buses through town and down the highway posed another problem. Of course getting our troops to hurriedly board is almost an impossibility. Cont'd next page

An Artilleryman and his Lady were a big help leading the buses to their proper destination. Mentioned earlier we had 5 bus companies involved. We had to have someone who knew the routes to the various demonstration areas on the post.

Although I served at least 5 years at Benning I could not remember the road net.

Battery A, 460th Charles E. Cook and his navigator Patsy guided us from town to all the places on Post. Volunteers are always appreciated.

Of course the MASH operation was in effect even without Trapper John and Alan Alda.

Jack Smothers, almost immediately after arrival, had a heart attack. 911 was alerted and he was rushed to the local hospital. After undergoing a heart operation consisting of 5 bypasses he seemed to be doing OK.

After a few days he wanted to head for his daughters home in Florida. They would not release him until they were assured he would have a doctor available to treat him if needed.

He spent 12 days in the Hospital then went to Florida. After a period of rest he and Maxine flew to Florida.

His daughter and son-in-law will drive their RV back to California this summer.

Called Jack and he said the operation took a lot out of him. He sounded good and is still the same old Jack. He mentioned that in no time he would be able to go to his corner and sell pencils again.

Then a few days later while Tom Holten was in a bull session with his Co. F stalwarts he said he got a pain, which felt as though someone shot him in the stomach. 911 again, then off to the local emergency room.

He was diagnosed as having a ruptured ulcer. He has two daughters living in the Atlanta area so he, after undergoing an operation and 5 days in the hospital, spent 10 days with each of them. He flew to Texas; his son met him, and drove him to his home. We were lucky. Two emergencies and both successful operations.

Who passed the rumor that the Ladies Luncheon was cancelled? The hotel checked with me and when I told them it was still scheduled they passed the word to who ever queried them. They said they thought they had at least 100 people asking the desk clerks for a clarification.

When I headed over to the Howard Johnson's for the luncheon business meeting, I noticed Jane Mars sitting on the bench in the driveway.

I asked why? She said she was told to wait and Gene would pick her up and take her to the Men's Luncheon. I informed her that there must have been some mistake so she went to join the ladies.

When I arrived at the Howard Johnson's Black Jack and Barbara Fraser, with Gene Mars were on the tarmac waiting for Jane Mars.

The only information they had was they were to be at the

Men's Luncheon for some kind of presentation.

When we went into the building two retired Master Sergeants were waiting.

It seems, earlier, The Mars and Frasers entertained them at dinner. They couldn't let this go without thanking their hosts.

They explained what and why, presented each person with a carved wooden jump boot, and presented a plaque to our President honoring the men of the 517th.

CSM (Ret) Robert A. McCoy, president of MCCoy Environmental Technicians and 1SG (Ret) David Wilmot Vice President of the same company wanted to show their appreciation. And they did.

It was necessary for us to make an announcement; the public address system wasn't working. The "ole" 1st Sarge volunteered and belted out the message. Almost made me wish to be back with the troops.

The hotel rushed out and got us a new P A System, one which worked. We were crowded, the men ate then we conducted the business meeting.

Recommendations made by the Board of Directors to the General Membership:

The Slate of officers recommended by the Nominating Committee for President - Merle McMorrow (460); Vice President - Allan Goodman (596).

Nominated to serve on the Board of Directors for the next two years are John Knoph, Jim Royer, Frank Dallas (517); Gene Markle (596); Leo Turco and Bill Masha (460).

The Board recommended we make a contribution to The Airborne and Special Operations Museum foundation in the amount of \$3,000.00.

The Board also recommended we authorize the installation of a Combat Team Memorial to be erected and when approved by the General Membership the Board also authorized the amount of \$4,000.00 to cover its cost.

The Board recommended Certificates of Appreciation for services rendered to outgoing Board Members Walter Locker, George Shull, posthumously to Salvatore Incontro, 1st Battalion, 507 Airborne Infantry Ed Jordan our clock maker, and to Daniel Harris, who has dual citizenship, the United States and Great Britain. Daniel, a citizen of Whales, United Kingdom, served with us during World War II and traveled the farthest to join us in this assembly.

Vice President Merle McMorrow requested we come to Bismarck, North Dakota for our Biennial Reunion in the year 2000.

No other reunion presentations were made so the Board decided to present Merle's request to the General Membership meeting.

Winner of the Golf Tournament was Bob Dalrymple of the 596 Combat Engineers. Bob, for this endeavor, was presented with the Golf Clock crafted by Ed Jordan of Company B.

(Ed. Note: All recommendations presented by the Board of Directors to the General Membership were motioned, voted and carried.)

Farewell Banquet The Old Iron Works Columbus, Georgia

We pledged our Allegiance and remained standing while the Reverend Marvin Miller gave the invocation.

President J. K. Horne welcomed the group and introduced (from right to center) those sitting at the head table; Irene Lewis, Rev. Ralph Clink, Alice Goodman, Grace Horne, Mrs. Marvin Miller and Merle McMorrow.

(From left to center) Bill Lewis, Rev. Marvin Miller, newly elected Vice President Alan Goodman Donna Pfaff, Mrs. Ralph Clink and J. K. Horne.

He then recognized past Presidents in the audience: Bill Boyle (70-73), Cameron Gauthier (79-81), Clinton Lowe (81-83), Charles Pugh (83-85), Thomas Cross (87-89), Roy Landreth (89-91), Joe Miller (91-93), Bob Dalrymple (93-95), Fred Brown (95-97)

Also introduced were friends from France, Ami Leocard, Draguignon, Michel and Lidy Soldi and Eric and Liz Renoux. Soldi and Renoux are curators of the Airborne Museum in LeMuy.

First Timers presented were Bill Short (Reg. Hqs.), Kara Allan Johnson (596) and Joe Holten (Co.F).

Winner of the Golf Tournament was announced ... Bob Dalrymple, 596 Engineers.

The newly elected Officers and Board of Directors were asked

asked to stand when their name was called and to remaining standing until all members were introduced.

They are: President Merle McMorrow (460), Vice President; Allan Goodman (596), Vice President. Directors: John Knoph (517); Frank Dallas (517); James Royer (517); Gene Markle (596); Leo Turco (460) and Bill Masha (460).

J. K.'s closing remarks: This is the time I have worked and waited for - it's time to pass the President's traveling cup on to your next President. It's been a wonderful two years - my hope is that you were not disappointed in my efforts as your president. I have learned more about you - the 517th Combat Team - in these two years - than I did while we were together in 1943-44-45.

General Mathew Ridgeway, Commanding General, 82nd Airborne Division, during WWII, said in his Memoirs; and I quote, "On the field of battle all men's lives are equally precious, as they are in the sight of God, and each man's job, no matter what it is, is as important as another's, for it is the sum of the efforts of many men, doing their jobs, that determines the success of an army's mission.

The men of the 517 Combat Team did their jobs...mostly without any real recognition. The men of the 517 Combat Team came home ... Heroes ... One and all.

We did our job!!!

President J. K. presented the President's cup to the New President Merle McMorrow.

Cont'd next page

President McMorrow accepted the President's Traveling Cup then gave his Acceptance Speech [Published on page 1]. After the speech the President announced the site of the next reunion, his hometown, Bismarck, North Dakota and the dates 18 - 20 May 2001.

He then presented the President's cup to J. K. Horne.

Benediction was given by Reverend Ralph Clink then Merle adjourned the reunion.

Memorial Service

May 6, 1999

Fort Benning, Georgia

President J. K. Horne presided: Please stand for the posting of the colors and remain standing for the invocation.

Reverend Marvin Miller gave the invocation.

J. K. introduced Major George Shuplinkov, Operations Officer of the 1st Battalion, 507 Infantry [The Jump School].

After major Shuplinkov's welcome J. K. continued the service.

"It is hard to realize that 56 years ago, we were here at this very same spot ... doing push ups. Running, calisthenics, training and Yes, Jumping; first from these same 250 foot towers then from the well known C-47 work horse planes.

We came here as mere boys, mostly 18 and 19 years of age. But when our military life was over, we came home as seasoned Veterans ... real men, real heroes ... but of course at a real price. You and I lost some of our closest friends and some of our best leaders.

-30-

The price was high but the men of the 517 Combat Team did prevail.

All gave some ... some gave all.

"This Memorial Service gives us the opportunity to pause, to remember, to mourn for those lost in Battle, to cry, yes, even to laugh, remembering, that despite the sorrows of combat, there were moments of joy that helped ease the tensions of fear and the ever present dangers that surrounded us each hour of each day.

The ones we remember and honor with our presence would not want us to grieve unnecessarily, and we will not. This is a living Memorial. We pay respect to the ones gone on to their final rewards and embrace our buddies here at our sides. We are the lucky ones.

As Tom Brokaw says, "Ours" was the greatest generation. We had the opportunity to accomplish what no other generation ever had the chance to do. And that was to Save the World, and that we did. We saved the world from Germany's Adolph Hitler and Japan's Hirohito. They wanted to conquer the world.

Today we have assembled here and paid homage to those who died for the future, our children's their children's and ours. And we can with a full and loving heart, move on to the joys of this reunion.

(He then recited "Freedom is not Free", which was published in the 1st quarter issue of the 1999 Thunderbolt)

Gene Frice and Bob Vaught read the names of our members who have gone

"Airborne" since our last reunion.

Rev. Ralph Clink gave the benediction.

The Color Guard consisting of Gene Frice (Co.F), Bob Vaught (Co.I), John Rupszyk (Co.I) and Sidney Felber (B-460) retrieved the Colors.

I thank you all, and God Bless.

Lew Downing, Company H

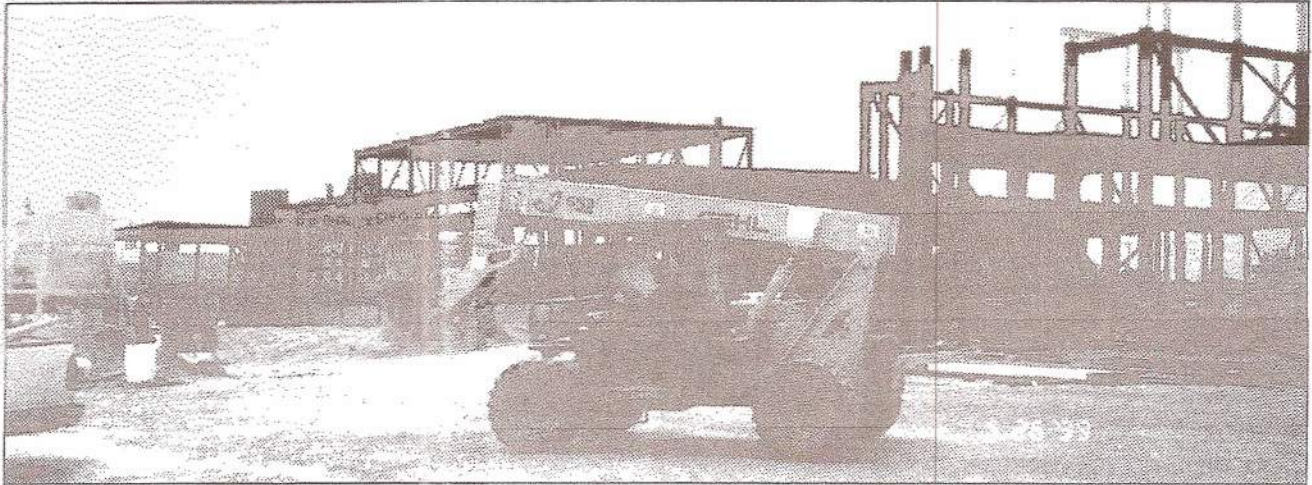


It was with great sorrow that I heard of the passing of John Chism. He was a wonderful person. We went into the service in California at the same time and then to the 517th.

When my leg was shattered during the "Bulge", he was the one who took care of me and made sure I was sent safely back to the rear. Here are a couple of pictures of us in Nice in 1944. I'm on the left. The other photo was taken in the same spot in Nice during our 40th year return to France.

My best to all my old buddies and enclosed is a check for expenses.





Museum construction is ahead of schedule

Bill Jenne, Beers Construction Company project manager, reported that steel, foundation and infrastructure are nearing completion.

Floors have been poured for the exhibit and artifact conservation area. Plumbing and electrical rough-in work is complete, with additional installation work to follow in later phases. As of the end of May 1999, the project is some three weeks ahead of schedule.

Weather conditions have been nearly perfect over the last four months. If the building can be closed in before the late summer rain, future construction delays can

be minimized.

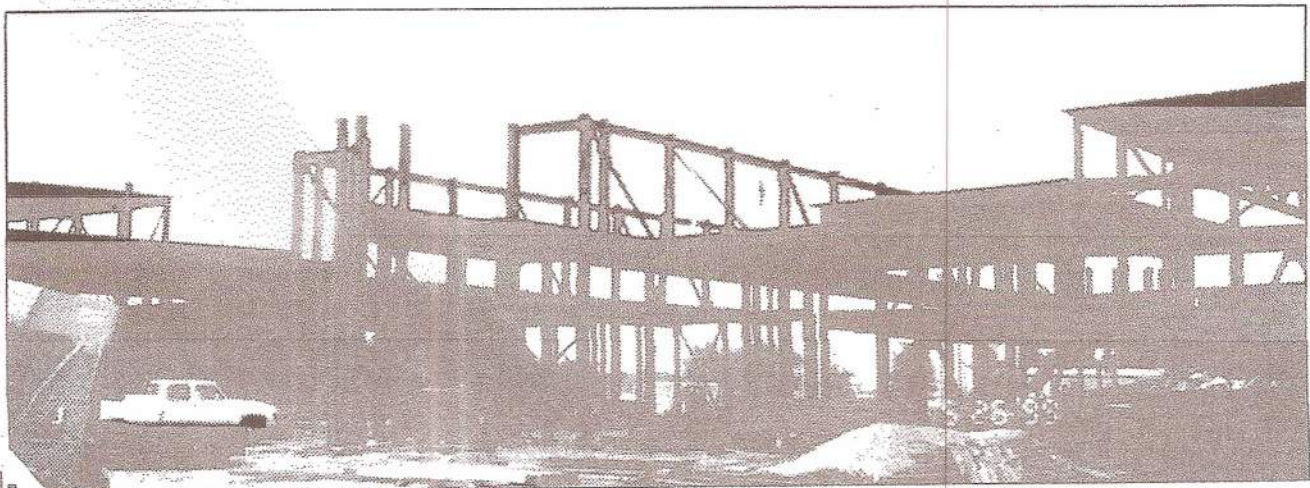
Doug Hofer, project architect of Calloway Johnson Moore and West, noted that the North Carolina department of Transportation (NCDOT) will take over design and construction work in the streets around the museum building. The foundation had received permission to proceed with this work, but NCDOT is now able to move their work schedule forward. This should result in a simpler, more efficient way for getting the streets completed.

The Public Works Commission (PWC) will assist NCDOT by moving major power lines off the museum site.

General James Lindsay reported Ross Perot will donate \$1,000,000 in 1999 - 2000.

This is the largest donation from an individual. To date the Foundation has raised some \$15.6 million to cover the cost of the project. The Cannon Foundation and Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, both of North Carolina, have provided \$50,000 and \$25,000 respectively for the Terry Sanford World War II Memorial Exhibit Gallery.

Fayetteville New Car Dealers Association have pledged an additional \$50,000, over and above the \$200,000 already pledged. \$500,000 is pledged from the state of North Carolina. Museum operations will cost \$350,000 per year, an amount which will be provided by Fort Bragg and Cumberland County. The Museum will be an official U. S. Army Facility.



517th P.R.C.T. HISTORY BOOK

The history of the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team has now been preserved in this handsome hardbound book. This publication features hundreds of photographs, recollection stories, medal recipients, veteran's biographies and a membership roster. If you are a member of the 517th P.R.C.T. Association, then you should have this book in your personal library!

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Message to our President, Merle McMorrow, from Yola Bambeck, 1590 S. Atlantic Ave. Cocoa Beach, FL 32931. Reference to our "Tour of the Battle Fields".

Dear Mr. Mc Morrow: I tried to reach you by phone, but after talking with Col. Lewis I realized you were out of town. I just wanted to let you know that I have sold my travel agency.

However, I will personally finish the 517th trip from my home.

I have enclosed a self-addressed, stamped envelope for you to use to enclose your final payment. Your Balance is due by July 8th.

Please do not hesitate to call me collect at 407 783-2339.

Sincerely, Yola Bombeck

P.S. We could use 5 to 10 more people for this group. If you know of any interested parties, please give them my home phone number. They are also welcome to call collect.

The Thunderbolt
The Thunderbolt is published quarterly by the 517 Parachute Regimental Combat Team Assn., 178 maple Ridge Lane, Seymour, TN 37865 in the interest of the men who served with the combat Team and honor those lost in the service of our country while serving with the combat team, to preserve the comradeship established in the service, to provide for the dissemination of information

of these men and to promote periodic reunions.

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Vice Pres. Allan Goodman
Past Pres. J. K. Horne

Directors

John Knoff - 517
Frank Dallas - 517
Jim Royer - 517
Bill Masha - 460
Leo Turco - 460
Gene Markel - 596

Message to the troops: Our mail has decreased to the point where "Junk Mail" is becoming predominant. We have over 1,400 members, many have not seen their name in the Thudnerbolt. Send letters...we need interesting words to fill pages.