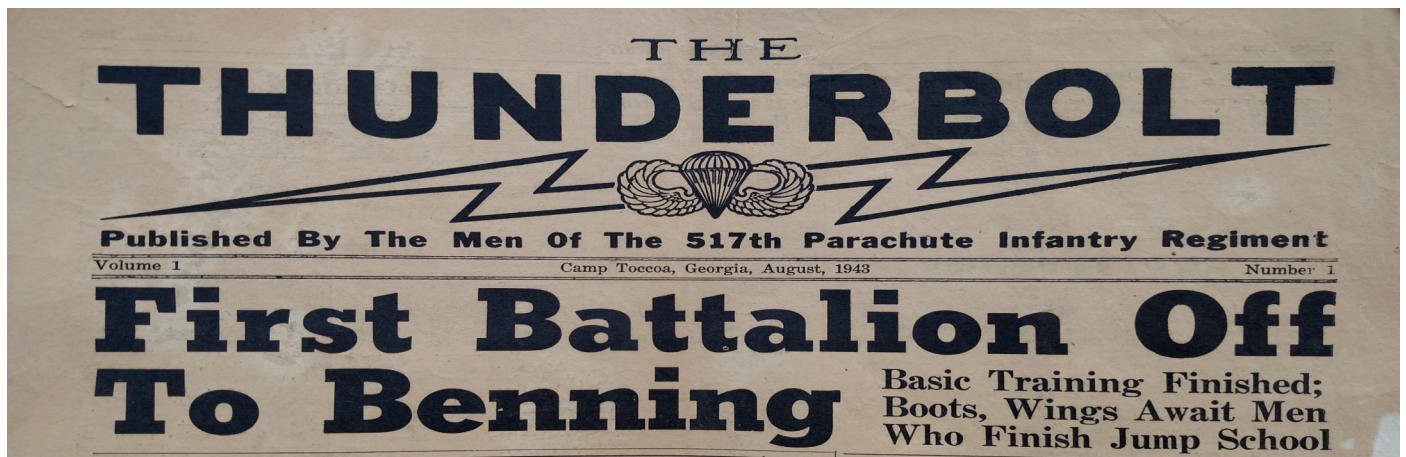


517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team (PRCT)

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



LAST THUNERBOLT EVER! Serving the Men of the 517th PRCT since March 1943

This is the final issue of the Thunderbolt. The 517th PRCT Association is being dissolved. All of us through the many, many years who have published the Thunderbolt give our sincere thanks to the men who served with the 517th. Especially, today, Claire Giblin, and Lory V. Curtis, want to express our appreciation for being allowed to published the Thunderbolt over these past few years. It has been an honor for us to be a part of the greatest generation and this great newsletter. Thanks to all for all of your kindness and support.

Editors of the Thunderbolt 2016

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Greetings from K. A. Johnson
January 20, 2016
Happy New Year!

Greetings, all.

Again, I must open with business. Thank you all for responding to the voting process to dissolve the corporate structure of the 517 Association. Even if ballots were misplaced, you contacted us to get a new one or file your vote.

As you know from recent mailings, the corporate structure will probably be dissolved early in 2016. This is almost certainly our last Thunderbolt, and this will be the most visible result of the corporation being dissolved. However, times change, and we have a great website owned and managed by **Bob Barrett**. I can't pretend to be good on the computer, so I can usually only see it at my daughter's house, but the 517 website is fantastic. Special thanks go to Bob, as he continues to maintain and improve the website every week.

Thank you all for your solidarity as we take these steps together, as we always have. Thank you also for understanding that we are only dissolving the corporation. We are not dissolving our friendships or our history.

On the contrary, we made the commitment to keep on going more than ten years ago, at a time when other outfits were shutting their doors. Look at the reunions we've had:

- Savannah in 2005
- Portland in 2006
- DC in 2007
- St. Louis in 2008
- Salt Lake City in 2009
- Atlanta in 2011
- Kansas City in 2012
- a mini-invasion of Camp Toccoa in 2013
- New Orleans in 2015

All along the way, we've also had mini-reunions in Palm Springs every single year, as well as minis in Kissimmee up until 2014. That is impressive. I am thankful that so many of the second generation have picked up the torch to facilitate these gatherings for us. **Karen and Robin Frice**, along with Wayne Wallace, aka **Team Frice**, hosted Portland with

Gene, and continue to make Palm Springs happen every year. **Helen Beddow** hosted Savannah and then took over Kissimmee with **Brenda Verbeck Mortensen** and then with **Claire Giblin**, after **Bob Christie** passed the baton. **Chris Lindner** hosted that fantastic St. Louis gathering, and **Lory Curtis** has organized what I think must be a record four national reunions for us. We troopers owe these enthusiastic family members a debt of gratitude. We so enjoyed our time in New Orleans in July, and a fantastic time was had by all. **Lory Curtis**, as I mentioned above, did a great job in organizing a meaningful trip and events for us.

So, let's keep on marching. **If you are not on a computer, then give this Thunderbolt to someone who will help you get Mail Call every week. They can either print it out or they can bring it up for you on a computer.** Some of our troopers used to mail printed copies of Mail Call to friends every week, and this is a great idea of how to help a veteran.

After the expected dissolution of the corporation, we'll no longer have officers or a board. It's been my personal honor to serve the 517 Association, first on the board and then as president. I thank everyone who has supported the Association, whether you helped a veteran, attended a reunion, or recorded an interview. It is due to all of our members that the history and tradition have remained strong through these years. Something positive that has emerged from the balloting is that many of you have confirmed your interest and addresses by returning your ballots. It's great to know that so many of us are still kicking.

It's been an honor to serve as president, but nothing compares to the honor of having served with all of my fellow 517, 460, and especially 596 troopers. To quote that famous interview, I never really wanted to jump out of planes, but I wanted to hang around with the guys that did.

Airborne all the way,
Kaare Allan Johnson, 596
Do not hesitate to call me!
908 852 1424
Or you can snail mail me at 215 Mission Road,
Hackettstown, NJ 07840.

From Your Publishers

Lory Curtis and Claire Giblin

Lory has facilitated the actual publishing of the Thunderbolt in Utah for the past few years, working hard with Bob Barrett to scrub the lists of those people receiving the hard copy. Lory replaced Helen Beddow as my partner in crime when she had to pull back from other activities a few years back. Because of the smaller mailing list and the fact that Lory was able to research aggressively and negotiate some serious savings with the printer, as well as ongoing advertising support from **Wade Gilbert's** company, we were able to publish for far longer than we initially thought. Lory has taken care of the photos and the publishing headaches, leaving me to editorial content, as it were.

I have collated the news of the Thunderbolt since early 2008, when I started doing this with Helen Beddow. At that point, our press run was over 1500; we're down to under 300 now.

Eight years can feel like the blink of an eye or a lifetime, or both. It does.

Ben Barrett used to ask me why I liked coming to the reunions, and talking to the guys so much. Why was I so interested?

All jokes aside – and I made lots of them with all of you over the years – you guys are just the coolest. I got to meet so many of you who, for whatever reason, would share a bit of your story with me. Like the time I met Adriana, who talked about meeting her husband **Floyd Polk** in the amputee hospital in Atlantic City. “I could see he only had one leg, but on the other, he had that shiny paratroop boot.” Still impressed, all those years later.

Or the times I've met so many of the second generation, fathers long since passed, who are searching for a piece of the puzzle. At the very least, it seems that they got some insight and some reasons to be proud.

Then there are times that I've literally shared an elevator with greatness, like when I met **Dick Seitz** in Savannah, or a bus ride with legends, like **Bill Boyle** and **Don Fraser**. I remember when **Mel Biddle**, Medal of Honor recipient, turned down the honor of riding in an escorting police vehicle, happy to be on the bus with his buddies. We got to see two

different reenactment jumps – I got to see them *with troopers!* The list goes on and on.

I have a picture of me and Ben on my desk, and I can see that I'm older now than then. Maybe it was 2005? But he is forever in my mind that irascible character who thought to himself, at age 80 or whatever it was, “you know what we need? We need a website.”

The men of the 517 started this journey in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor – 1942 and 1943. But the website - and Ben - is why we all still know each other. Ben established, and Bob continues, the tradition of reporting in to him and getting our news from him. Those connections spurred reunions for at least an extra ten years, and forged friendships that will last our lifetimes. It's been a privilege and an honor.

Reunion coming up!

Karen Frice Wallace and The Frice Clan

We plan on having Palm Springs reunion in March of each year as long as there is one man standing that wants to attend.

I made that promise years ago, when I took over the management of the reunion as requested by **Bill Christian**. I will stand by that promise.

Excited to see you all soon. The dates are March 7-11, 2016. It's held at Anahata Hot Springs, we take over the entire resort. It is very nice, all rooms open to pool side and hospitality room. Cost will be low as usual, hard to predict until we know numbers, I would say under 250.00 for the your room the whole week, food usually 150.00 for all meals at the resort, excluding when we go out to eat.

You can put my name and number as a contact

Karen Wallace
541-948-2486

Kaare Allan Johnson is booked!

About the webmaster

Bob Barrett

Bob has assured us that the website will be maintained as long as humanly possible, and that Mail Call will go on as long as he's able.

Bob has been getting lots of kudos in Mail Call, justifiably. He has wrestled our email

problems into submission, signed us up for a new mail delivery system, keeps us all in touch with each other and keeps the news coming. But even more than all that, he has become a relentless researcher, putting all the pieces of the puzzle together. He will get family members going on their searches, responding quickly with lots of great starter information they don't yet have. He maintains the Wikipedia entry and synthesizes a weekly mountain of information, and he does this all for free to honor the men of the 517 and their service.

Thank you to Bob Barrett for your ongoing service to the 517!

Foreign Friends Corner

The 517th is fortunate to have friends in Europe. These crucial people make sure that the history of the 517th is preserved and not forgotten. We are grateful to our European friends!

Unbelievably, families are still "adopting" graves of 517-596-460 soldiers. They don't personally provide necessary maintenance – the American Battle Monuments Commission does this very well – but they do provide a link to the present and will place flowers on the grave periodically; some attempt to find personal information about the soldier. Especially touching is the reassurance from one writer that "we want his family to know that David (H. Vane) won't be alone in France anymore."

Patou and Roland Orengo

Sospel, France

Hello, friends of 517th -

We would like to say through this last Thunderbolt that our friendship is engraved in the stone and will continue in every possible ways. You and us.... **Ad vitam æternam** (For all eternity, in Latin).

We love you.

And when Bob runs a photo of a plaque that we can't find now, our friends reply:

Irma and Arnold Targnion

Hello dear friends of America;

This mail to tell you that the plaque dedicated to **Colonel BOYLE and Major FRASER** is on a monument built in Melines -

near Soy Hotton, not very far from the 517th monument at the cross road " Quatre Bras" - about 1 mile -on the territory of Hotton but near Soy. Colonel Bruce Chestnut came especially to choose the stones to built this monument dedicated in 1992. Colonel Fraser and Sheila Boyle + about 20 American veterans took part in this ceremony. The monument of Melines was built by Florent Lambert, he died a few years ago. Best wishes for the New Year and Love from Trois-Ponts.

Eddy Monfort

Manhay, Belgium

Dear Friends,

About the question on the monument (2305 mail call), it is situated in the hamlet of Mélines-MELINES (Between Soy and Hotton).

I [will also send in] this message to ... you my Best Wishes for 2016. This new year will gave you much joy, happiness and a good health !

Dieter Laes

Belgium

Dear friends of the 517th PRCT,

This "**Boyle-Fraser plaque**" is part of a WWII monument located in the small hamlet of Melines, less than a kilometer from the Quatre Bras crossroad (Soy-Hotton area). This monument was erected by the local historian Florent Lambert.

In the center of the monument you see the portrait of **Corporal John Shields**, C Company of the 23rd Arm. Eng. Bn. In the early morning of December 21, he was part of a patrol probing for the German advances. After leaving the small hamlet towards the south, the patrol hit the spear tip of Kampfgruppe Bayer, led by Major Gerhardt Tebbe. Corporal Shields was one of the victims of this confrontation, leaving his body in the ditch along the road still with grenade in his hand. Shields' body was only recovered in 1948 by **Florent Lambert** who was travelling along the road with his father. Unlike every other day he stopped their horse drawn cart to investigate the glim he saw along the road.

The pillar standing in front of the monument has a plaque honoring the sacrifice of the 290th Infantry Regiment of the 75th Infantry Division. This infantry regiment was

rushed into combat, arriving in the Hotton-Erezée area on December 24th. That same night most of its companies travelled through the line of the 517th PRCT between Soy-Hotton, to engage the enemy to the south. On Christmas Eve and Day, they would undertake several assaults on fortified German positions. Needless to say their sacrifice was high.

We shall never forget.

The website enjoys visitors from all over the world, including this recent entry:

Kevin Boyden

I'm an Englishman of 52 living and working on the continent within Europe nowadays and I'm prepared to admit, that I never saw active service during any time of my life, I don't want to say too much, but I have a lot of respect and admiration for those who fought and died during WWII and I'd simply like to say thank you. A lot of Americans died to liberate Europe. I have and do know a lot about Europe and its liberation and I know a lot of Americans died to liberate us all.

Justin Spooner

This weekend was the 71st anniversary of the liberation of Trans-en-Provence, the people here will always appreciate the sacrifices made on their behalves. There was a memorial service, a convoy of American military vehicles and dancing in the square!

Best wishes to all.

While editing the Thunderbolt (I started in November and am wrapping up in January), I had to report on the unexpected death of Leo P. Dean, Regimental HQ. Followers of Mail Call know that he'd broken his leg in August while in France, and that he'd had a good recovery from that. I was unsure whether to overhaul this entire issue – and I have to an extent – but some pieces remain as I originally typed them. The overwhelming kindness of so many people in France – friends and strangers alike – should be a part of the story.

**Claire Johnson Giblin
September, 2015**

I am happy to share that **Leo Dean** is back on US soil! He arrived last night and

proceeded to Albany, where he is awaiting a bed in a rehab facility to work the leg he broke last month.

So many of our French friends visited Leo in the hospital, including the Thompson family of La Motte (Felicia, Graham, and little Iona), friends from Ste. Cezaire **Elisabeth and Jean Marc Atlan**, as well as **Guy Tassin and Louis Limonet**, friends from Sospel **Patou and Roland Orenge**, and **Bertrand Prudhonne** of Salernes. Young historian **Loic Jankowiak** visited as well. Re-enactors **Jonathan** and his wife, **Fred Hermann and Adrian Soldi** visited, drawing lots of looks in their WWII clothing. There are probably more that I don't even know about. **David Fouan** visited frequently, bringing eclairs and English-language newspapers. But no one did more than the longtime friend to the 517, **Eric Renoux**. Eric helped us at the hospital, called the doctors and the nurses daily, visited as much as possible, and even met with the nurse who arrived to escort Leo on his trip home. He and his wife **Laurence** did more than humanly possible for Leo and for me during my stay with them.

Times like these really show us the goodness of people. A new friend had me for several nights in her home. The Consul General, Monique Casada, put me in touch with her special assistant for citizen services; they offered to help with translation if necessary, as well as anything else Leo might have needed. The staff at the boulangerie would ask about Leo's progress as I bought his daily eclairs. A waiter, remembering Allan and Leo from two weeks prior, gave me a break on the bill. Stefane, a friend of Eric's, accompanied me for a day and literally didn't leave my side. Leo's doctor treated me as family, making sure to spend time with me as well. Friends and family were encouraging despite the distance, messaging and emailing. There were acts of kindness, large and small, every day. Each one was appreciated.

This was a trip different from all the others, to be sure. But it was one that showed us again, in a different way, the strength of the friendship between the United States and France. That friendship isn't just about policies and politics; it's about friendships between our citizens.

Thank you to all our friends in France. Once again, I was shown the strength of this historic relationship. Welcome home, Leo!! Glad you are back on US terra firma!

November update:

Leo continues to improve and has returned to his apartment!

Here's how I reported to Mail Call in December:

It is with great sadness that I report that **Leo Dean**, Reg. HQ, has made his final jump.

Many of you might have followed his progress, as he moved from the hospital in France (after breaking his leg in August) to the hospital in Albany, to rehab, to Renee's home and eventually back to his own home in recent weeks. He resumed his routine and was driving and working, and living alone. He wasn't working quite as much as he used to, but he was going in to the office regularly.

He never said he was working; he would actually always correct me. He always called it "going to the office." He always liked going to the office, whether during the week with colleagues or on the weekends when it was quiet. And he died at the office, with his boots on. He was a successful business man in the financial services industry, a devoted husband to Helen, and friend to many. He was justifiably and fiercely proud of his service with the 517th, and enjoyed himself so much at our New Orleans reunion in July. I'll never forget him with all of the celebrants on Bourbon Street, the night that the Supreme Court decision in support of gay marriage was announced. Leo made lots of friends everywhere he went!

And so it was during our trips to France. He was celebrated, remembered, and sought out. He was genial and generous with his time, telling stories and posing for pictures whenever asked.

Just this past week, Renee - like a daughter to him - and I had started planning his return to France. He was so excited and looking forward to it. He's fought back from so many injuries, and had kicked all of the challenges associated with the broken leg - we were sure he could do it.

Let's raise a glass to Leo and celebrate a life fully lived.

Patricia and Roland Orengo

We pray that the many happy memories of Leo's life with all of us will, with time, overcome the sadness and pain that have accompanied us in these days. For his family, his 517th family, his friends in USA but also here in France, although it's difficult today to see beyond the sorrow, may looking back in memory help comfort tomorrow.

A glass of Rosé Leo ? Yes, the first one today.....

We are sure to continue to say it with Leo in our mind.

Wishing him God's peace

Adopting an American grave is a European tradition. Families do not provide care or maintenance; that is done by the American Battle Monuments Commission. Families visit on behalf of far-away families who cannot, often bringing flowers or learning about their adopted service member. It is a tribute that helps keep the memory of sacrifice alive, and also helps our cemeteries abroad be living places of education.

Pascal COLLETTE

I live in France, I sponsor Private George H. Jones, Cpl ENGR.CO 596 of 517 PRCHT, KIA January 5, 1945 near the town of Bergeval (Belgium). After over a year of research, I found the daughter of George called Julie Jones, who gave me the photo of George H Jones Finally we can put a face on his family name.

Thanks to the Belgian friends who helped me in the quest to find the family of George, I want to thank Didier, John and Henry. I joined your photo of George. Thank you sorry for my English I use an automatic translator. In friendship.

**Claude KALBUSCH
rue Paul d'Andrimont 128
4630 SOUMAGNE**

Sometimes ago my son and I have adopted the grave of these 2 paratroopers buried in the Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery in Belgium.

After some researches, my son has found a picture of Mertz (PFC Mertz Lampella,

H Company KIA Jan 13, 1945 near Stavelot) on Google. I help him and we are now in contact with Mertz's little nieces and nephews in the USA. We have received some pics of Mertz and some copies of the letters he wrote to his family during the war but not a story.

We are now members of the LAMPELLA

family and we are proud of it. I have begun to write the story of Mertz so I try to have the most information I can. I have bought books, read a lot of things about the 517th I have begun to make some researches about John CASSELMAN (2nd bat E company) \but don't find a lot of things (no picture or story).

Could you help me to have more information about these 2 paratroopers? Thank you for your help.

When I go through Mail Calls for the Thunderbolt, I see how many of us have traveled to Europe in the past year or so.

Theresa Pugh, Tom Reber, Pat Seitz and Alan Greer, Steve Gomez, Alison Quinn (Howard Hensleigh's granddaughter), Nancy Hensleigh, and Scott Rossi have all been able to travel in the last year; more made the trip last August. Each trip helps sustain the memory of the 517.

Kenton "Kent" Floyd Immerfall

In the past couple of days, I've been in touch with Maxime "Max" Noel from Belgium. As a volunteer for findagrave.com, I answer online requests to search for grave markers in local cemeteries. People from all over the world request photographs of these markers. Some are for loved ones, others are possibly doing genealogy research. "Max" requested the marker for a young man who was KIA in Belgium in 1944. Darold was a PFC with the 41 Armed Inf. and interestingly enough was killed the same day (27Dec1944) as my uncle and the others from that 517th platoon as they attempted (and succeeded) in re-taking Manhay.

After I found the markers and added them to the findagrave.com web page, told "Max" that my uncle was also KIA, near Manhay, and is resting in Henri-Chapelle. "Max" emailed back that he/she just finished reading Eddy Monfort's "La bataille des

carrefours" which I also have a copy. It's in French so I can only enjoy the photos. "Max" even scanned the page of all 517th PIR casualties (which included Floyd's name) and attached it to the email. "Max" has adopted a grave of an American soldier/veteran in Henri-Chapelle and wondered if Floyd's grave was adopted. Yes, it has. "Max" wrote that he/she will, "go blooming Floyd's grave at least once a year." These Belgians! Guess we can't ever get a leg-up on them. So thankful they remember our family members...resting so far away.

FAQs

Frequently Asked Questions: France

Lots of people ask about travel to France year-round and for the memorials in August. Here are simple steps to getting started:

Start planning now for the south of France in August. Figure on arriving around 11 or 12 August; events will take place in Var/La Motte/Les Arcs/Draguinan/Le Muy for 15 and 16. We do not have any formal notices of events yet, but that is usually the last of the details to fall into place. For those that are thinking about joining us -start here:

1. Do you have a current, valid passport? Please check. Find it and look at the expiration date. Renew if necessary; sometimes you need to get a new one even if the old one is good for another 6 months.
2. Flights -Nice is the most convenient airport.
3. Dates: arrive by about 13 August for La Motte/Les Arcs/Draguinan. Depart: not before 18 or 19 August. Adjust this as you wish for you and your family. You might want a side trip -it's a long trip not to!
4. Hotels -usually our friends in Sospel (Patou and Roland Orengo) and in the Var (Jean Michel Soldi and Eric Renoux) make the hotel arrangements for us after we ask them; the websites often don't work internationally. But maybe you'd like to rent a home or stay elsewhere. Whatever -but make sure that someone is making the arrangements. Hotels are getting tight.
5. Rent a car -or make sure you've got a seat in someone else's car.

Highlights from Mail Call

May 17, 2015-January 17, 2016

Mail Calls 2271-2307

Reunion Report and Thanks

Kaare Allan Johnson

What a wonderful time we all had in New Orleans! Lory Curtis put together yet another fantastic reunion, and a good time was had by all. Rick Seitz procured Coast Guard Captain Daly to address us at our final banquet, and he was an excellent speaker.

The trips were enjoyable and the company was even better. We really enjoyed our time together in the hospitality suite! What a beautiful city.

As those of you who follow Mail Call and the Thunderbolt know, the Association is faced with once again getting its corporate affairs in order. In the absence of increased manpower, it seems difficult if not impossible to keep the corporation viable. At the New Orleans reunion, the Board passed a resolution to take a proposal for dissolution to the membership.

This does not mean we can't get together for reunions. We can and we will, even if we close the corporation. The reunions are and always have been self-financing. The Frice team is planning Palm Springs '16, and I know that the Kissimmee team would like to get together in January as well.

It doesn't mean that the website and Mail Call will go anywhere. Bob Barrett, bless him, has vowed to keep both going as long as possible. Like his father before him, he is providing the glue. We report in to Bob, and we get our news from him.

It does mean that our biggest expense, publishing the Thunderbolt, probably needs to cease. As I'm told by the treasurer, we don't get as many donations as we used to. Although Lory Curtis has found a much cheaper printer, it is still a large expense.

It's sad to think about closing down the corporation, but it was explained to me as a type of estate planning. We need to be proactive to determine the course of action, decide what we're going to do and do it. We need to consider how best to continue to preserve the memory of the 517 and its contributions, and especially to honor those troopers who never came home.

As the volunteer attorney, Cody Thornton, completes his work and draws

nearer to finalizing his recommendations to the Association, please be on the lookout for emails or mailings from the Association. This is important stuff, and we need to tend to it.

We had eight troopers at New Orleans: **John Johnientz, Gabe Delesio, Leo Dean, Merle McMorrow, Phil McSpadden, Tony Mandio, Mel Trenary** and myself. As the weekend progressed, it was great to see those friendships reignite and people connecting again.

For years, we've never known if this was the last reunion. We've said that it could be the last reunion going back to DC in 2007. But every year does bring the last one a bit closer, so even if it wasn't the last one, Lory arranged for a champagne toast to the troopers at the end of the banquet. The evening was filled with heartfelt, spontaneous toasts and was a very special time.

Please don't hesitate to contact me or any other board member with any questions.

Thank you.

Mel Trenary

I wish everyone that helped at the reunion a job well done. The last reunion I was at was in 1991. I sure enjoyed this one. I was able to come to this one because of my son who arranged everything for me. Wouldn't even let me repay him. It's been a long climb back after my wife passed away. I miss her a lot. Thank you very much for a wonderful time.

Rick Sweet

I had a great time in New Orleans. It was so good to see everyone! I want to let **Lory Curtis** know that my dad also had a Battling Buzzard card signed by **Capt. Richard Jackson**. It ran from Oct 9, 1944 to I think June, 1945. The departing date is hard to read. I also want to thank **John Jonientz** again for letting me have his hat. It has become one of my prized possessions. I have shown it to most of my friends and told them the story about who it belonged to and how I got it. John signed it for me on the inside. I enjoyed sitting and chatting with him and all of the 517th, 460th and 596th soldiers and families. I am glad that I was able to attend. My friend Tom and his father stopped by too and were glad they did. They got to see **Leo's** parachute

tattoo on his leg! What a great time! I'm glad that I didn't miss it.

Chris Liddell

Grandson of Bobby M. Liddell, F Company
checks in

Hi Bob!! I know it's been a while but I FINALLY have the OFFICIAL documents about my grandfather's Silver Star @ the Bulge!

I tried sending it to your Dad but was returned. Is this address still good?

Thanks and I hope to hear from y'all soon! (I'm the guy who contacted your Dad yrs ago looking for info. before the site was built. I was around 28ish then....42 now).

Bob Barrett replies:

Of course I remember you. As my Dad tells people, you were one of the inspirations for us building the 517th website in the first place around 1999. Ben passed away a few years ago, but I maintain the website and the MailCall newsletter for him and his buddies.

Congrats on finding the records for your grandfather. I look forward to hearing more.

Chris:

I'm so sorry to hear about your Dad.... I have also lost my Dad since we last spoke. (very unexpectedly at only 58 years old) Anyway, although I feel bad that I lost contact with Mr. Ben and really wish he could have seen the info on my grandfather, I find it amazing that I just happened to think about contacting you guys on his birthday! I'll send the following attachments to the mailcall email as well, I wanted to send it to you to read first. I'm really proud of this!! So great to hear from you Bob!!

Very happy that we were able to reconnect and, ironically, on the day that your Dad would be celebrating his birthday. Your Dad, even before the site was built, refused to give up, or allow me to give up, looking for the story behind my grandfather's Silver Star and Purple Heart from the Battle of the Bulge.

Maybe HE chose today to FINALLY get the story to you and the rest of the 517th family.

(I'm sure that he, my Dad and my Grandfather are probably sitting around and talking about it.

☺)

Tim Curtis

Marshall "Mark" Baird passed away 2 nights ago. No info other than he will be cremated with a service in March. Such a nice and kind man. Laura spoke to his daughter. I am in Mexico until tomorrow.

Lory Curtis

Marshall Baird was a great man. It was my privilege to meet him a few years ago when I was visiting Tim in Tucson, AZ.

Tim Curtis

Sadly, **Marshall "Mark" Baird** passed away December 19th. Mark was First Battalion "A" Company, and good buddies with Mel Trenary who we enjoyed getting to know at the New Orleans reunion. It was my honor to get to know Mark these last few years. Mark sat beside me for the Phoenix premier of Saints and Soldiers Airborne Creed, and I quickly discovered what a kind and generous man he was as he shared so many stories with me in such a humble manner. Mark was a proud Paratrooper, with a jump wings decal on the back of his old Ford pickup truck, and was always wearing his 517th hat whenever I saw him. I was also honored to attend his awarding of the French Legion of Honor by the Phoenix French Honorary Consul. Mark was past president of the Battle of the Bulge Association in Tucson, Arizona and enjoyed that association for many years. He was a cowboy before the war, and a cowboy after the war. For many years Mark ran cattle, and raised his family, over hundreds of acres on property which is now home to the University of Arizona Biosphere 2 in Oracle, Arizona.

Mark's daughter Maggie said a service would be held in March when the family can get together. Those who knew Mark know what a good friend and family man he was. You will be missed as you ride off into that sunset my friend.

Not a typo – it's especially appropriate for our last issue to rerun this piece from Kent Immerfall, who was especially eloquent on the subject of the legacy of the 517th:

Kenton "Kent" Immerfall

Nephew of

1st Lt. Floyd A. Stott

Co. "I", 3rd Bat., 517th PRCT

LEGACY! This is the one word I will think of when I think of Trooper Hensleigh. He came from a time when men and women went through The Great Depression. "Material things" were of ultimate importance to these folks. I believe it was important for my parents to leave "something of value" to me and my sister. Whether it be a home to sell, stocks, bonds, savings, family heirlooms, etc., this is what they treasured. And, they believed it would bring us happiness.

Howard left us WORDS. Ben left us WORDS. Dick left us WORDS. Lud left us WORDS. These 517th Troopers (and others not mentioned here) left us their spoken, hand-written, and emailed WORDS.

If all you do this year, is tell ONE person about the 517th, then the WORDS of brave Troopers will not be in vain. We are a Proud Family...Lest We Forget Their Words!

Merle McMorro was contacted, through Mail Call, to help writer Jason Morrow, who wrote a true crime book on trooper **Phil Kennamer**. Kennamer had been in prison for manslaughter when he was released to serve in the army. He was KIA in the Trans-en-Provence area on 15 August, 1944. Merle writes:

Back in March Jean Loup gave my name to a Jason Morrow as someone who knew Phil

Kennamer. Jason writes books about sensational murders that receive national attention. He sent me a copy of Chapter 27 which related to Kennamer's military training. Today I received an email from Jason saying he sent me a copy of the book. The subtitle is "The High Society Murder that Created Hysteria in the Heartland."

Merle remembers:

You probably recall I made mention of Phil's criminal charges in the two books I published about our service time.

I recall his trip home to testify at another trial. He came back with a pocket full of money; more than I had ever seen in one place. His comment was you need to know the right people. Nothing more was ever said and we

never did know what he meant by his comment.

And this last nugget from Merle:

Another little thing relating to Kennamer that I don't think I ever mentioned relates to Kennamer's money. Loading planes for practice jumps was usually done alphabetically and that usually put me and Phil in the same plane. Since Phil always seemed to have plenty of money I would borrow \$50 dollars from him the day before the jump. The next day, as we were waiting for our assigned plane to arrive, Phil was checking all my web belts and making certain all my buckles were fastened properly. All he was concerned with was protection of his money and all I was concerned with was protection of my life. The next day I gave him back his \$50 dollars.

Cheapest life insurance you could buy at the time.

Jason's questions yielded interesting and insightful answers from Merle:

Pathfinders went in 30 minutes ahead of the main force to set up radio signals and beams to zero in on.

With a couple of large bundles in front of the door to be pushed out by the first man and 16 men with all their equipment on, the plane always seemed to be full.

The red light would come on when we were three minutes from the drop zone. This was determined by the pilot. That is when we stood up, hooked our static line to the overhead cable running the length of the plane and checked the man's chute ahead of and then sounded off for equipment check. Sixteen okay fifteen okay etc.. Three minutes after the red light came on the light would turn green and the command go would be given by the number one man in the open doorway.

As to Nature's Call this was never a problem. If it was no one ever mentioned it. I think in the excitement all systems shut down.

(Editor's note: I have heard first-hand accounts referring to using the open door for this purpose).

Jason continued to probe:

What about the noise in the plane? Was it loud? And did it get cold because the side door was removed?

Also, what was your rank at the time? PFC?

I was watching some YouTube videos of paratroopers and I was amazed by how fast they got out of the plane. They actually seemed to be running out of the plane, almost. Is that how it was? You guys could get the equipment and men out in about what, 15-20 seconds?

Merle:

The noise was great enough to prevent you from talking to one another. If you had something to say you got next to the fellow and shouted in his ear.

Most men tried to sleep on the way over. It was August and hot on the ground. At 2,000 feet it was refreshing. Exit height was 800-1,000 feet to try to get on the ground as soon as possible.

PFC is correct.

When exiting the plane each man is pushing on the man ahead of him so we were probably running.

Jean-Loup Gassend weighed in from his impressive, recently published book:

Philip Kennamer's destiny, like so many others, was unexpectedly changed by the war, and in 1943, he was paroled out of prison in order to join the army. One of the 1934 articles had described Kennamer as a boy who "had wrecked cars; he had jumped from windows, he had walked around the edge at the top of a tall building, he had discussed joining revolutions." Another article told of "stunts," such as "walking around the 16th floor ledge of the Mayo Hotel and leaping from one automobile to another while travelling 50 miles an hour." In other words, Kennamer was a promising paratrooper candidate, and it was as a member of the 460th PFAB that he jumped into southern France August 15th.

In the news:

New 'Seitz Regional Training Campus' dedicated at Fort Riley

by Rod Jackson

TOPEKA (KSNT)

At Fort Riley Wednesday there was a ceremony to honor one Kansas military hero. Approximately 50 people gathered to celebrate the naming of Fort Riley's regional training Center in honor of retired Lt. General Richard "Dick" Seitz.

Seitz was born in Leavenworth and attended Kansas State University before joining the U.S. Army. He led a parachute regiment through World War II, including the "Battle of the Bulge" and then retired to Junction City after 35 years in the military.

The Seitz Regional Training Campus was dedicated to the Kansas native for his contributions to the U.S. military and the Flint Hills region.

Rick Seitz

Attached (in the original Mail Call) is a picture of me and my cousin **John Seitz** (Colonel USA ret) at the dedication of the Seitz Regional Training Campus at Fort Riley Kansas, 22 July.

As you can tell from our shirts and hats, we made sure the 517th was represented.

Pat Seitz

The Seitz clan was not prepared for how impressive the Seitz Regional Training Campus is both in size -- about 40 acres, and many buildings -- and technology inside those buildings. The battlefield simulators were simply amazing. We were awed.

Searching for information

Many of our online readers are seeking information about their fathers, grandfathers or uncles. The trail has grown cold for them. Veterans of the 517, if you have even a little information or a blurry photo, it could be much more than these families ever hoped for. Please, see if you can assist any of these friends of the unit.

Trying to get a head count

Bob Barrett (as of June, 2015)

Recently, Lory Curtis, Karen Frice, Claire Giblyn, Joanne Barrett and others have attempted to compile a list of all the 517th

troopers who are still alive. This doesn't include spouses, friends, and relatives, just WW2 troopers who are still alive and kicking. But I suspect this list is very incomplete. If you have heard from a trooper recently who is not on this list, please let us know.

My apologies to troopers who are receiving MailCall. I can't tell from the roster whether you are a WW2 trooper or a relative or friend. Ben would know better, but there are many of you that I have not met recently. If you are a trooper and you're not on this list, please let me know and I'll update my list.

Steve Armbruster, NC
Marshall Baird, AZ
Jay Castello, CA
Joseph Clark, Tucson AZ
Melvin Dahlberg - MN
Bob Dalrymple, AZ
Leo Dean, NY
Gabriel Delesio PA
Erle Ehly, PA
John Jonientz, WA
K. Allan Johnson, NJ
Ray Hess, FL
Bill Hudson, CA
Harold Lawrence, TX
Doc Lecklider, OR
Anthony Mandio, PA
John Marsinko, NC
George Meline, CA
Phi McSpadden, FL
Hunter McDonald, TN
Merle McMorro ND
Gene (Zoot) Snyder, CA
Myrle Traver, NV
Robert Vaught, TN
Manuel Ventoza, WA
Earl Wisenhunt, NC

Plus:

Robert J Amerlan
Joe Bail – PA
Willard Berdit - NC
Earl Boone – AZ
John Bradovich – MN
Bill Brannan
Fred Brown – TX
Jack Cason KY
Tom Cross – FL
John L Garvey - CA
Roger Goodsell – TX

Richard Lee Hammel – NC
Bob Hart – WA
Keith C. Hobson – CA
Richard Kachalsky (Lillian)
Geo. Kennedy MD
Chet Kochersperger – PA
DICK MILLER – FL
Joe Molina
James Frank Morris (Martha)
John Pastalenic – NY
Les Perkins
Nolan Powell
Norman Ross Jr. - WA
Mike Schlacter MI
Walter W. Smith
John Stonis
John Strojan
Mel Trenary

Franck DUGAS
330 Route du cimetière
83460 LES ARCS
FRANCE

I live in Provence in the village of LES ARCS, Department of VAR. For the Municipality of Les Arcs we are writing the story of the village during World War II, and the events of Opération Dragoon. During the liberation of our village four American soldiers were killed in our village. In the Rhone American cemetery and memorial situated at DRAGUIGNAN, I have found four soldiers killed the 17-August 1944, but I want to be sure that these soldiers were killed in LES ARCS.

Maybe can you help me to obtain this information near the military administration of the US. Their names are

CLARK JOHN W -PVT –N° 19074696 517
PRCHT INF RCT-WA
HENDERSON LOWELL JR-PFC -N°
35551738
517 PRCHT INF RCT-OH
ROBINSON ALBERT M JR-2LT –N°
O1325520
517 PRCHT INF RCT -NJ
SALMON CARL G-PVT –N° 39912080 517
PRCHT INF RCT-NV

If they were killed in les Arcs it could be very interesting for our book to have their pictures. I hope you can help us in this research.

Bob Barrett: There are 42 members of the 517th buried in Draguignan, plus many others who died in the area who are buried elsewhere. May I ask what you know about these 4 and why you think they were killed in Les Arcs? It might help with my research.

We do know that Clark, Henderson and Salmon were with C Company, part of the 1st Battalion, while Robertson was with HQ Co, 2nd Battalion. In one record Clark is also listed as with HQ/2. Unfortunately, I do not have the complete morning reports for HQ/2 on those dates. Attached is the Morning report for C Company on Aug 17 which lists Henderson as KIA.

I also know that other units of the 517th also fought in Les Arcs. I think that much of the 1st Battalion under **Major Boyle** were the first to fight in Les Arcs.

I am the niece of **David P. Taylor**, who served as a 1st Lieutenant with the 3rd Battalion, Headquarters Company. My uncle died in 1994 in Cleveland Ohio. I did not know him as well as I would have liked. I spent most of my childhood overseas due to my father's service with USIA, which was then part of the State Department.

Uncle David was a quiet person who spoke with very little about his WWII service to his nieces. I know that he was fascinated with history, the Pittsburgh Pirates, was very kind to us as children, and was an excellent and graceful dancer (I found this out at my wedding!). He never married and worked in management for Stouffers, Biltmore Hotel, Commodore Hotel and Holiday Inn and later for TRW.

I am only now becoming aware of my uncle's service, and have found the 517th prct website an invaluable source of information, for which I'm very grateful.

I do not know if he participated in reunions or other events related to the 517th in subsequent years. I do know that some time in the 1970s, when my father was stationed in Belgium and I was in college, my uncle visited my family in Brussels and went to some of the places that were important to him from his service. I only learned of this recently from my father.

I am wondering if anyone who reads the Mailcall remembers my uncle and is willing to share with me any of those memories, by email is ellenodonnell03@gmail.com or by telephone (510) 397-0373. I would like to get a fuller picture of him --more as a journalist and memoirist than as a genealogist. I am interested in unvarnished recollections. I do not know how my uncle was perceived by the men he served with. Any insight I can get into his life as a young man would be most appreciated.

Also, I've included a timeline and biography based on the information I have, much of which I have questions about. If you have answers to any of those questions I would appreciate it.

My mother died two years ago, before I began asking about this. I have interviewed my father, who gave me some insight into the family dynamics and who knew the broad strokes of my uncle's service, but not too many details. Unfortunately, I don't have my mother's input which would have been very valuable.

Kylee Johnson

My name is **Kylee Johnson**, and I stumbled across your webpage the other day when doing some research on my Grandfather, **Raymond Johnson** who was a PFC in the HQ company of the 1st battalion, 517th. Unfortunately, I don't have any stories to share, but I was wondering if you or any of the guys have any information about him? Most of the stories on your page looked a little older (most are from 2001), but it's never too late to try right? I never got the chance to truly get to know him and would love any information on him.

Updates

We always love hearing even the smallest updates on our guys and their families!

Scott Ross

Grandson of **Norman Ross Jr.**, I Co. 3rd Batt. 517th PRCT

I wanted to give the 517th family some good news. I just came back from Ocean Shores, WA to visit grandpa. He is in good health and spirits, and has recovered well from his ailments that afflicted him last year. He is

looking forward to his 91st birthday in September. The pictures are of both Dorothy and I presenting him with a mini collage which we hope to add the unofficial 517th unit patch as well as the 17th and/or 82nd Airborne.

I wish to give a special thank you to **Kent Immerfall** for giving us a copy of the company photograph from Camp McCall. The picture really has great meaning to him and our family. The other is of a picture of him that his wife Betty had a copy of in his dress greens just outside his house a little more than 15 years ago.

Airborne all the Way!

Peanie Smith

wife of **Walter W. Smith**, 1st Bat.

I did not see Walt's name on the list (of living troopers). He is still living but in a facility for dementia. Broke my heart to do it but he was requiring more care than I was able to give him. He is at Sunrise in Worthington, Ohio. Getting good safe care. The VA is helping some. I want to stay in our home as long as I can. Walt will be 92 in Sept. and I will be in Dec.

I do enjoy reading Mail Call and do miss going to the reunions over the years. Great friends and memories were made. Thanks for all you do to keep us a part of the 517th.

Katherine Kramer Wheeler

I still like getting the Mail Call. I still find something to run off for the G Grandkids or my nieces/nephews, also items that need a response.

I am in contact with James Frank Morris (Martha) and Richard Kachalsky (Lillian). I send mail to Morris, but they do not respond. I haven't gotten back any returned mail either. Both Vets are 460 B.

William H. Smith

2nd Hdqrs, 517.

Still alive. Still doing calisthenics every morning just like at Toccoa. Part of what keeps me going without a cane at 90. Thanks for the great work you do for us.

Bob Hart

Received list of 517 troopers and would like to add a few.

Roger Goodsell and wife Gloria, in nursing home, Tyler, Texas. Can call at 1-903-504-5612.

Next, Joe Molina, call at 1-626-333-4767. Myself, Bob Hart and Kathleen Hart, 1-360-432-9524-Tacoma, Wash. You should have my name as I send in dues, get static line, and get weekly news.

Richard Lee Hammel

[I was in] Co. E from May 42 until Dec 44. I have retired to a Senior complex apartment with my wife in assisted living.

Address: 1880 Brookwood Avenue, Apt 503
Burlington, NC 27215

Brenda Verbeck Mortensen

I moved recently and had the pleasure of discovering and meeting a new neighbor: Tom Cross. A true delight for me. He is planning to get to the next reunion and what a treat that will be. He certainly has some great stories to tell.

If you want to contact him his address is:

Col. Thomas R. Cross
Leeward Manor 776
Atlantic Beach, FL 32233
904-270-1272

Bill Hudson

Gloria and I will be moving to a retirement facility. It is about 40 miles south of our present home. **Merle McMorrow** of Fargo, North Dakota, a vet of my WWII compabt team, called me the other day, and upon hearing of our move, remarked that we wouldn't have to shovel snow any more.

Our new address will be:

William and Gloria Hudson
The Park Lane, Apt 322
200m Glenwood Circle
Monterey, CA 93940

To all who are concerned with the future of the 517th Association, here are a few of my thoughts:

Tax deductibility of donations: I really don't care about deductibility. I never considered the checks we sent to Bill Christian for the Palm Springs minis deductible. Is there really that much money involved?

2. Longevity: In 5 years the 517'ers still left will all be over 95 years old. The plug will have to be

Pulled someday. It's a quandary to me as to when. As to the 596th, there are 8 of us left, out of the original 137, not counting the replacements. (3 are in retirement facilities.)

3. MailCall: For me, "Mail Call" is what holds us together. The load is being carried by the Barretts. Maybe they can make the judgement as to whether the amount of material they are receiving is adequate for the newsletter. At some point, decreasing the frequency to once a month might be appropriate.

4. Overall: Perhaps continuing on an informal basis is in our future. I sometimes muse that what we really need is a line to our deceased leader, **Charley Pugh**, to straighten this all out.

Bill Hudson

The eight surviving 596 troopers, not including replacements, are

-Robert (Marya) Dalrymple, Green Valley AZ

-Company Commander—

Robert (Avis) Anderson-First Platoon, with me at Manhay

-Bill (Gloria) Hudson

-First Platoon-

-Allan Johnson-Third Platoon**

Lyle (Mary Ann) Madison-Third Platoon**

Herb (Marie) Reichwald-Second Platoon

Manuel (Laverne) Ventoza-Third Platoon**

Ed Phillips-Headquarters Platoon

-

** All members of the third platoon.

Remembering the wild third platoon which:

1. broke almost every rule, and,
2. suffered, perhaps, the highest KIA rate of any platoon in the 517th combat team. Why do they still have the most survivors? Somebody else has to figure this one out.

Bonnie Amerlan Nowinski

My father **Robert J Amerlan** 517th HQ 2nd battalion is still with us. Please add him to your list of troopers. I'm able to read to him Mailcall on line so no need to send it to him. His eyesight is not good anymore. I can't tell you how wonderful it makes him feel to know these men are not forgotten.

Thanks for all your work. He will be 92 this August.

Lory Curtis

Chet Kochersperger (A Company) wrote me, so I assume he is still alive his address is 912 Woodside Ave., Secane, PA 19018

Jennifer Walker

I receive the 517th MailCall and I noticed awhile back that there was a list of current 517th troopers in the newsletter, but my Grandpa Joe wasn't on the list. I was wondering if we could get him added to it?

His name is Ignatius Joe Bail and he was in the 460th Parachute Regimental Combat Team, Battery A. Thank you!

Mrs. Lucky (Billie Hiers)

Well friends, we've lost another WWII 517th member. Lucky prayed to live until August 8th (to be like his Grandfather). He lived until the evening of August 9th. He had multiple health issues over the past several years, with issues increasing in volume and intensity.

He was told by a doctor in the mountains

of Colorado in 2008 that he MUST leave the mountains we loved. We didn't even put our home on the market there on the mountain. One day the next week we had a call from a good friend who wanted to know how soon we could leave. We scurried with family and friends and a

cherished home, family, friends, and our church home in almost no time at all with top \$\$\$\$. Those we left, especially a realtor friend, said the whistle blew as we left town and the market went flat. (That was true for our country in 2008.)

Approximately five months ago, five doctors sat together discussing his case. Lucky's primary doctor gave us their decision that there was nothing more that could be done for him. His heart and kidneys failed rapidly. He was a trooper, kept his laughter and spirit alive until a few days before he died.

We who loved him are so proud of the man he was. He never stopped telling everyone he met just how important Jesus is and how good Jesus was treating him. He said he was just a farmer, planting seeds for Jesus.

I thought about buying him a pair of overalls to wear into the presence of our Lord. He thought that would be fine.

The service to honor him [was] Saturday, August 29th @ 9:30 AM, with a military send off.

Please pray for me.

If you remember anything about him, funny or whatever, I would love to have you write a little about your memory. It will help me cope when family members travel back to their widely spread homes. My address is:

18304 Gulf Blvd., #103

Redington Shores, FL 33708

AS TO OUR VOTE ABOUT THE 517th PRCT Association:

There seems to be a good core of workers who have kept it going in spite of their fatigue, and in spite of the dwindling numbers who could attend. We haven't been able to attend. We "felt good" that it was still continuing. But we were not the ones paying the price. We admire you people!!!! We have read your names and discussed all of you. We love you for what you have done for so long. We didn't, and I don't think so few should ASK for you to continue. You are HUGE in my eyes, as you were in Lucky's eyes. God bless each and every one of you.

Mrs. Lucky, it's a privilege and an honor to know and help all of our vets! Thank you!

Tim Curtis

Son of

Harland "Bud" Curtis

Last Saturday I had the pleasure of visiting **Earl Boone** at the Arizona Veterans Home in Phoenix. Thanks to Jim (sorry did not catch last name), who we all got to know at the New Orleans reunion, I had found out Earl was in Phoenix and finally had a chance to stop in to say hello.

Earl was a sergeant in F Co. 2nd Bn. Earl retired to the Tempe area in the 90's, and he told me his wife is still living there and doing well. Earl said he was one of the first to get the Palm

Springs reunions organized. Earl has some issues with dementia, but when we talked about the exploits of the 517th, he had story after story to share with me and all with a big smile. Those days remain very strong in his memory.

Earl's room is decorated with Airborne memorabilia including the Silver Star, and was so happy to get a 517th hat to wear with pride and show the other vets in the home where he belonged. If you are in the Phoenix area stop by to say hi to Earl and the other vets at The Phoenix Veterans Home. It may tear at your heart, but we can't forget the respect and admiration these men deserve. I will look forward to my next visit.

Marian Brannan

I wanted to let you know that Bill Wayland

Brannan passed away on July 16th, three days after his 92nd birthday. He was a proud member of Combat team A Company. Was he the last survivor of Company A?

Bob Barrett: I am pretty sure that we still have at least three A Company troopers left: Chet Kochersperger, Gene J. (Zoot) Snyder, and Melvin Trenary. Please let me know if I missed anyone else.

Mel Trenary

RE: **William Wayland Brannan**, A Company

Marshal W Baird was in Co.A 1st Btl.

Also. I'll never forget what Bill said to me after our first jump. I was the first one to jump out of the plane for our squad. He said if you froze at the door, I probably would have done the same thing. Of course it never happened. After what we went through, training & all, I wasn't about to quit. I was proud to be a Paratrooper. The average person wouldn't do it. By the way, Bill's last name was Waylan or Wayland during the war.

Bob Barrett: Bill is on the 1944 Christmas roster as PFC William S. Wayland.

Tony Mandio

I am sad to report that my buddy, **John Marsinko**, died at age 91 in July of 2015 at his home in Laurinburg, NC. John served in the 1st Battalion of the 517th from Toccoa to its last day of combat.

John was Col. Boyle's radio operator and followed him until the Colonel was badly wounded in the "Bulge".

TAPS

Marshall "Mark" Baird
Bill Wayland Brannan
Leo P. Dean
Grant E. Doherty
Ludwick "Lucky" Hiers
John Marsinko
Ernest Olson
Walter Smith
John Stonis
Donald Walker

Please note that names appear in TAPS when we are notified and that sometimes this notification is quite a while later.

I would like to echo her recommendations. My book about southern France, *Autopsy of a Battle*, is mostly based on interviews I conducted over the phone during me free time between 2004 and 2014. Some of them are extremely detailed and interesting, and most of this information would now be lost forever if I had not taken the initiative of interviewing the veterans.

Writing is a difficult task, and I don't think it is appropriate to ask most veterans now to write down their stories. Even if they do have the energy to do so, written accounts will probably be very short and lacking in detail. Such accounts hold little historical or informative value. This is why I encourage any people in contact with veterans to do recorded interviews. These can be done in person, or over the phone. An oral account is much easier for the veteran to produce, and will also be much more detailed.

Such interviews can be done in a couple of hours, and leave a very precise and valuable trace of the veteran's experience. At a later date, it can be written down.

The secret is to let the veteran do most of the talking without interrupting, and to keep detailed questions for the end. Interrupting usually causes the veteran to stop talking naturally, and then to just answer questions by short answers, which is not what we want.

So pull out your camera or tape recorders and interview your veterans before it is too late. If I managed to interview several hundred who were not related to me, surely relatives can find the time to interview their one veteran.

How to help a veteran or someone else stay in touch, now that the Thunderbolt won't be coming

Hand this Thunderbolt to someone, right now.

Greetings, friend, and welcome. Thank you for helping a veteran.

Tips on writing from a 517 friend:

Jean-Loup Gassend

I noted the following note from Claire Giblin in the last Mail Call:

"It's always an honor to get together with these guys and enjoy the history and the stories. If you're a second or third generation member lucky enough to know a WWII vet, get the story while you can. If you're a veteran yourself, please make sure you document your story! Don't wait."

- Never heard of the 517? No surprise and don't worry. We're happy to have you.
- Heard all about the 517 growing up? Excellent. Happy to have you.
- Maybe you're somewhere in the middle. No worries. Still happy to have you.

The Thunderbolt – this publication – is ceasing publication. Our circulation used to be in the thousands, and we're now down to about 250 veterans and their families. This was how we stayed in touch and shared history. We've been publishing several times a year since 1943, and that is not a typo.

Fortunately, we have an excellent website with a weekly (roughly) mailing list, and this is where you come in.

- Go to 517prct.org and click to enter the site.
- Click on "517th Mail Call" on the main page.
- Sign up!

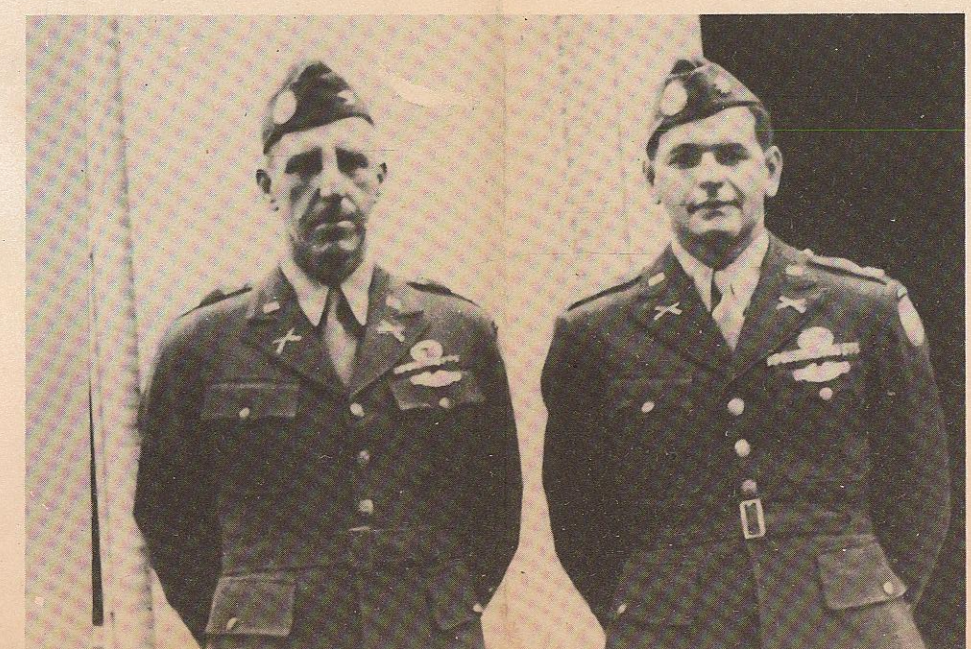
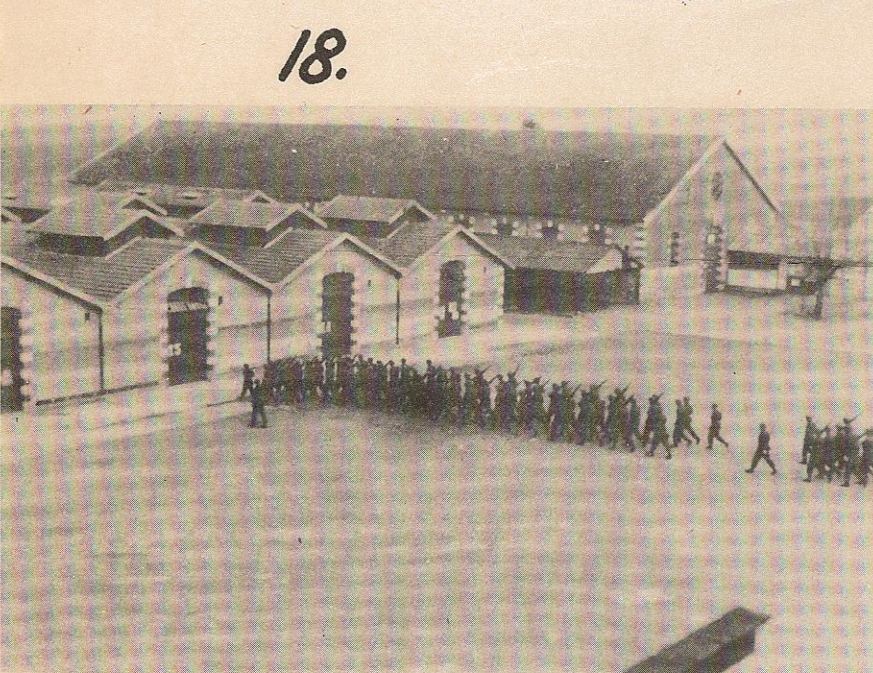
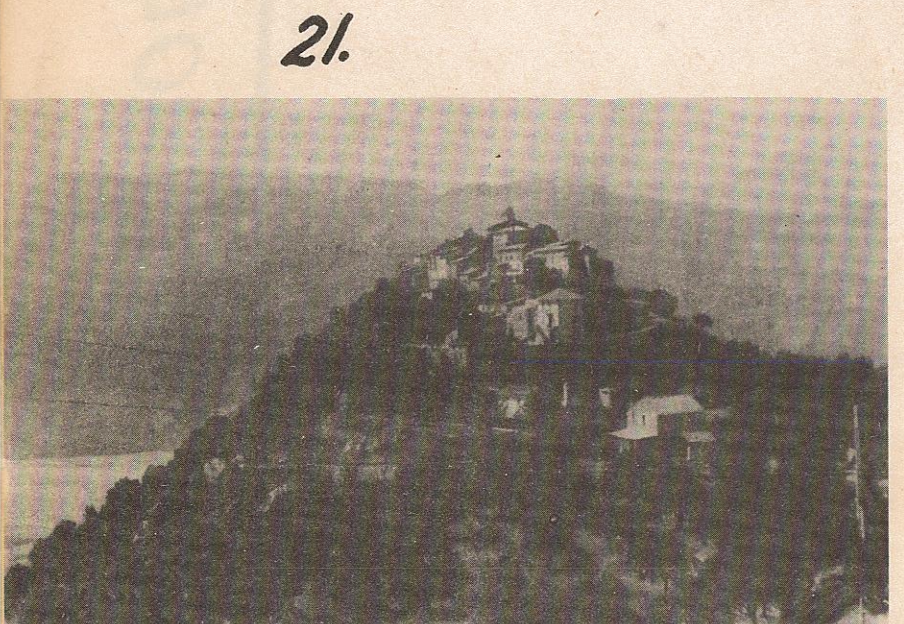
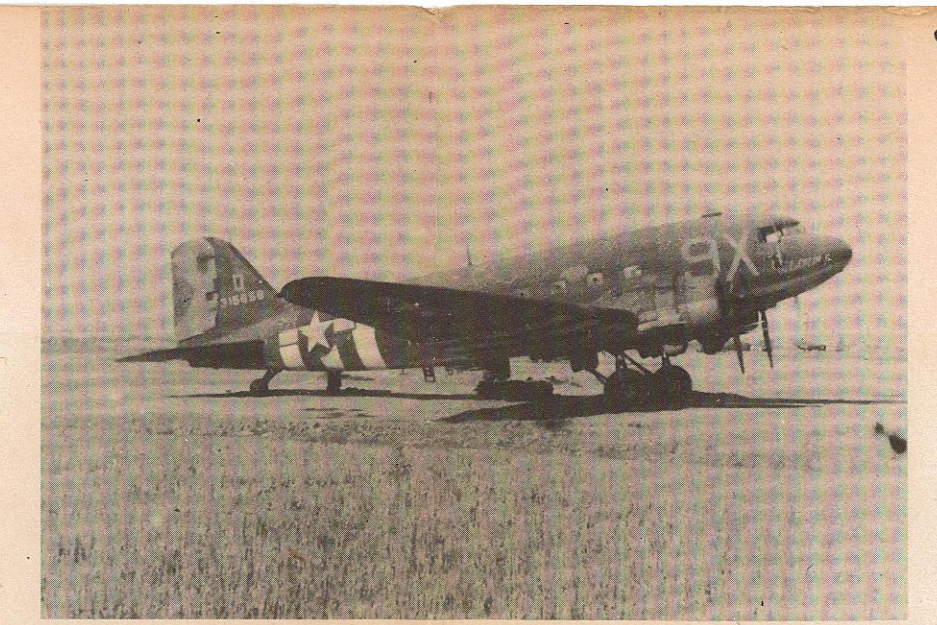
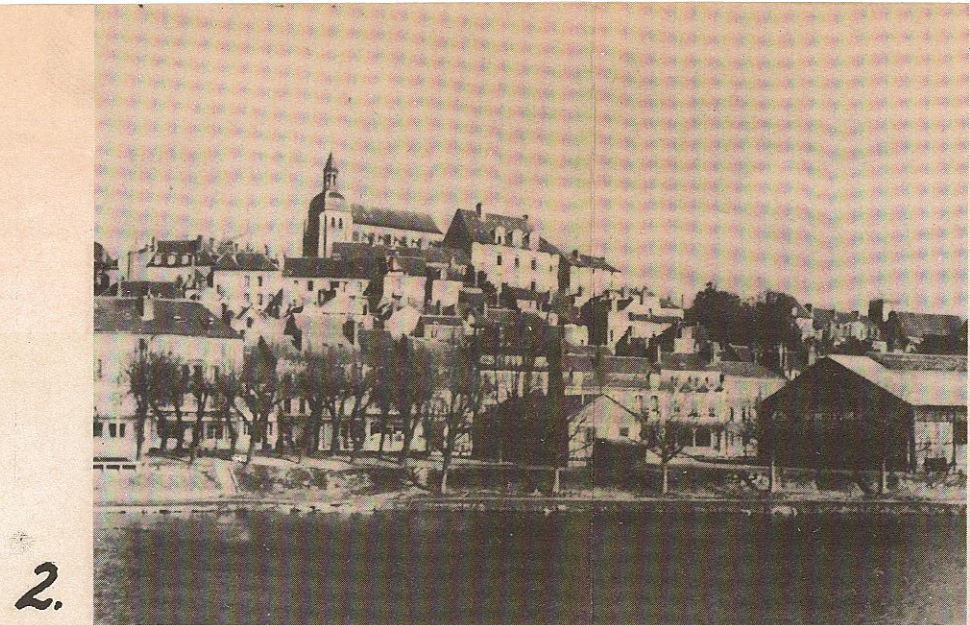
Now decide how you'll help your veteran or family member with Mail Call.

- Will you visit and log them in?
- Will you print and give it to them?
- Will you print it and mail it to them?

Whatever you do, you are providing service to a veteran, and we – his friends – are greatly appreciative.

Still having problems? Email the webmaster at mailcall@517prct.org.

Thank you!



- LEGEND:**
 1. Walk, Belgium
 2. Joigny
 3. B-54
 4. Walk, Belgium
 5. B-54
 6. Return from Germany
 7. B-54
 8. Paris
 9. Lucerame
 10. U.S.S. Santa Rosa

- LEGEND:**
 11. Bergstein
 12. Tank
 13. Maj. Armstrong
 14. Col. Graves
 Lt. Col. Zais
 15. Lt. Col. Seitz
 16. Roma
 17. Nice
 18. Joigny
 19. Liberators
 20. "Hit the silk"
 21. La Roquette









06 **OPERATION DRAGOON PLANS**
© 2004 USMC

During Operation Dragoon on August 15, 1944, the attack transport USS Henrico (APA-45) landed men of the 3rd Infantry Division on the beach at the Baie de Pomelonne, near Saint-Tropez. This is the Henrico's Plan of the Day for the invasion of Southern France. After the initial landings, the Henrico made additional trips carrying cargo and troops to the Dragoon beaches, then returned to the US to prepare for action in the Pacific Theater.



Dragoon Historical March

13 août 2015

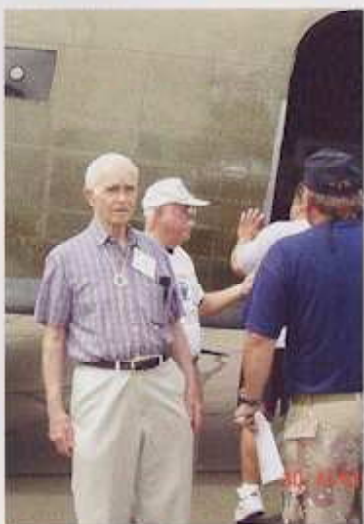


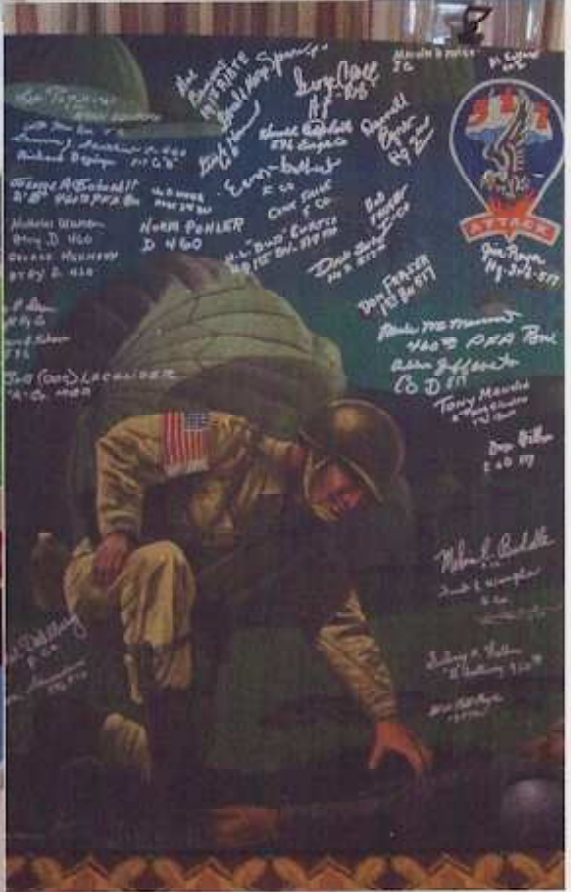
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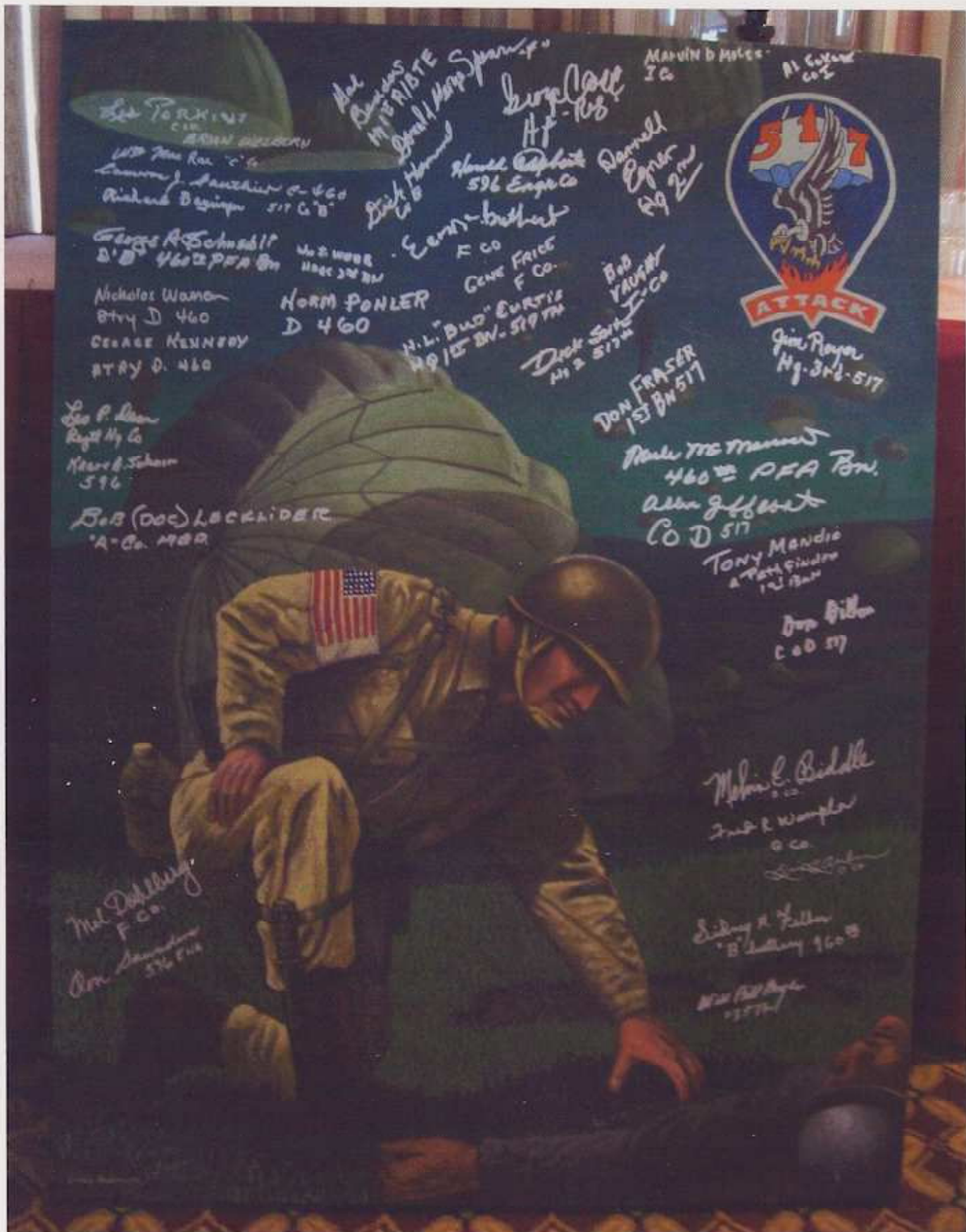
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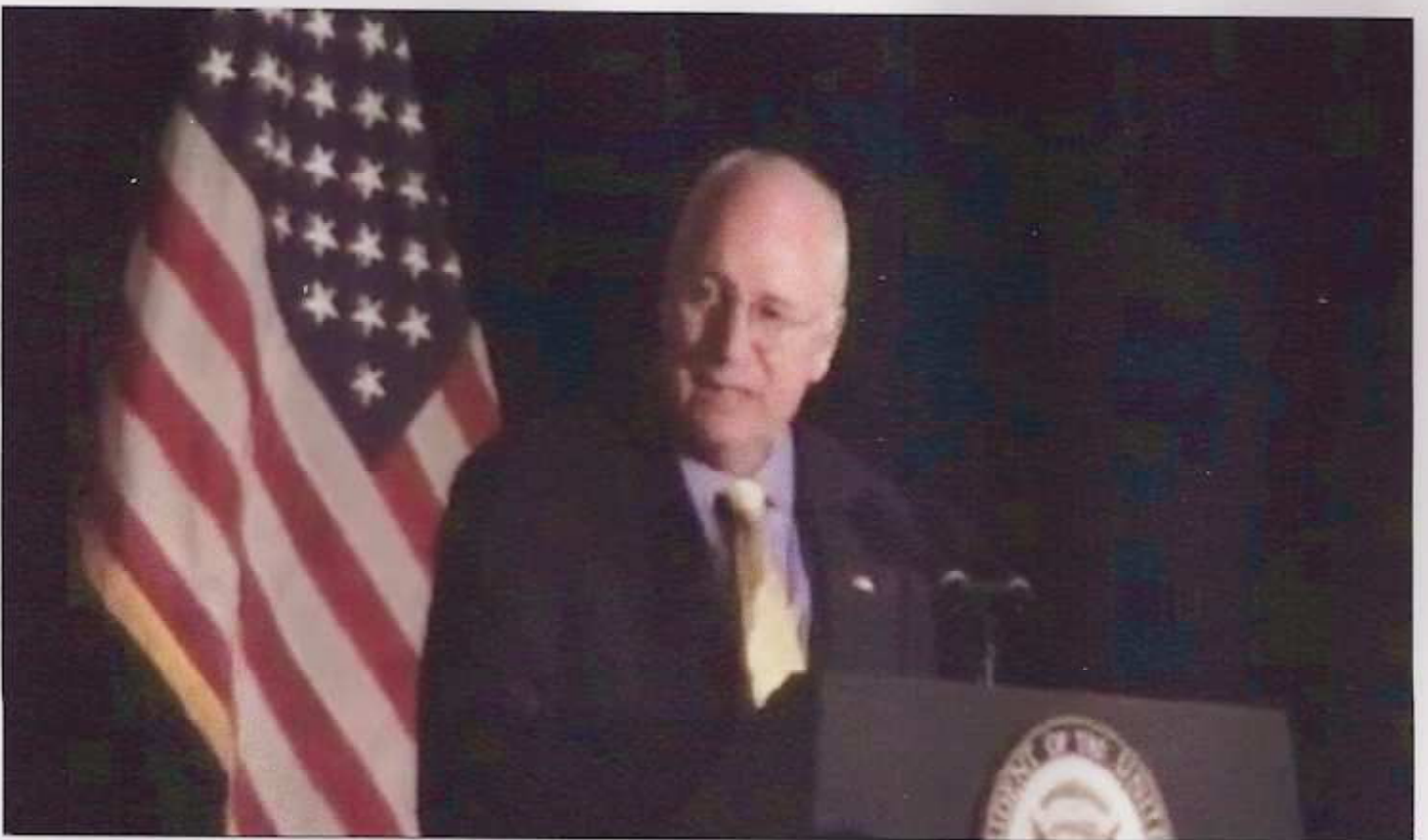


Paratrooper Picture signed by 517th troopers at the 2007, Washington, D.C. Reunion





Vice President Dick Cheney speaking to the men of the 517th PRCT, National Reunion 2007



Vice President Dick Cheney speaking at the 517th National Reunion, Washington, D.C. July 2007



Melvin Biddle, 517th receiving Medal of Honor from President Truman





Sam Cross

Allice Gould

Bob

Betty →

Col. Graves





The Thunderbolt Newsletter

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This is the last Thunderbolt to be published by the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team Association, Inc. 15303 Indian Paint Circle, Bluffdale, UT 84065, in the interest of the men who served in the Combat Team. The Association was a non-profit organization incorporated under Chapter 180 of the Massachusetts General laws. The Association will forever has as it's objectives to preserve in patriotic reverence, memory of those men who served in the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team; to support and enhance the fame and glory of the Combat Team; to provide for the gathering and dissemination of information concerning these men. Please continue to view the 517th information at our email address: MailCall@517prct.org. The website and email site will continue to perpetuate the heritage and tradition of the men of the 517th PRCT and the Airborne Spirit.

The Thunderbolt issue at Camp Mackall, N.C. March 1944

