



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2017

October 16, 2010

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

Website
Mail Call
Mail Call Archives
Roster

www.517prct.org
MailCall@517prct.org
www.517prct.org/archives
www.517prct.org/roster.pdf

In Memoriam – Don Saunders, 596 PCEC



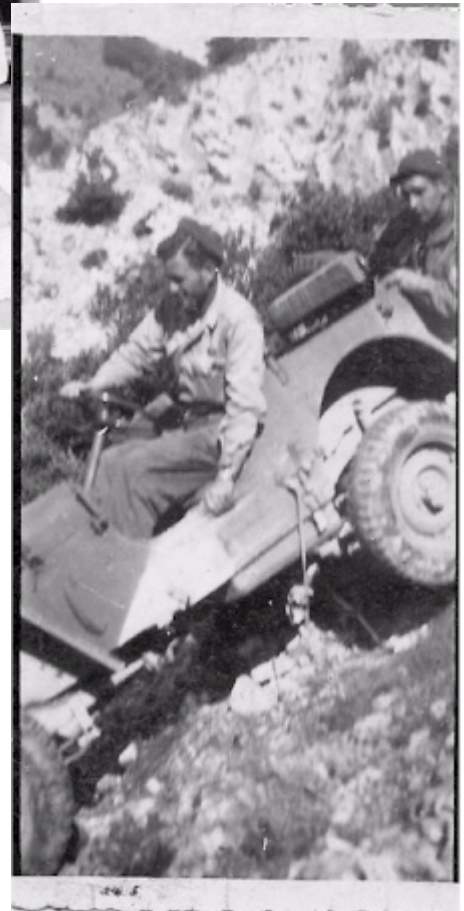
This is Don Saunders' son Mike Saunders. It is with great sadness that I announce Don's passing on 08 October 2010 from complications of his fall back in August. Don died peacefully in his sleep with wife Jan and members of his family with him. Services will be held on October 12, 2010 at St. Mary's Catholic Church, 224 Franklin St in Elmira, NY. Burial will be held afterward at the Glenwood Cemetery in Waverly NY. The US Army is providing color guard support at the grave-site.

We'll all miss him a lot. Thanks for all of your kindnesses over the years. May God bless all of you.

Regards,
The Don Saunders Family



Don Saunders, 596 PCEC



See more photos at: [Don Saunders - 596th Parachute Combat Engineer Company](#)



In Memoriam – Earnest Gilbert

My heart felt sympathy to the family of Earnest Gilbert.
Another great soldier is gone.

Donald G. Spears, 2nd Platoon F Co.

To say I was shocked to read of Earnest Gilbert's passing is an understatement. I didn't know him during the war and first spent some quality time with him at a Palm Springs Mini Reunion. In talking with him I was impressed with the fact that he raised a great bunch of kids. He didn't brag as he only told me a little about each one. At the Mini his daughter Barbara was by his side every minute except at the men's meeting and when we got out she was there waiting for him. We would sit in chairs outside the hospitality room and talk. One day his drink cup was empty and I offered to get him another. Barbara stopped me and said she makes his drinks special. I never knew for sure but I suspect there was little to no alcohol in them, probably for health reasons. The other thing I remember was he always had a smile on his face.

One more story. At our reunion in Salt Lake City I saw him sitting by himself in the lobby of the hotel. I asked him where his son Wade Gilbert and his group was. He said they were out somewhere and said they would be right back and he was not to leave the lobby. A while later I passed through the lobby to go out and have a smoke and he was still sitting alone. I decided to sit and wait with him and a short time later his group arrived.

He was a great trooper and a wonderful man and I was blessed to spend time with him. Rest in peace Earnie and god bless your super family.

Darrell Egner

Bob, we are saddened by the news of Ernest Gilbert's passing and want to extend our condolences to the Gilbert family.

Ernie and Myrle were kids together in Bell Gardens and he recognized Myrle after the war when they met again at the Orlando reunion.

Myrle and Betty Traver

This message for Wade Gilbert. Wade my belated heartfelt sympathy over the passing of your outstanding father. As his battalion commander I know firsthand what a great combat soldier Ernie was. Not only was he a great soldier, he was a great human being, highly respected by his comrades and all who knew him. May our Lord hold you and your family in his loving arms and leave you with warm memories to help counter your sorrow. you, Wade and you family are very much in the thoughts of all the troops of the 517th and in our prayers.

Dick Seitz



We are sadden to hear of the passing of Earnie Gilbert, and on behalf of the Curtis family send our deepest sympathies to his family. I remember him well with son Wade, and his family at the Salt Lake Reunion. My Dad's last reunion was Washington, D.C. and I thank Claire Giblin for putting on such a great reunion. I will always remember the great time I had with my Dad then. I hope the Gilbert family will have similar memories from the Salt Lake Reunion. Also, thanks to Colonel Gene Frice for his great remarks about Earnie Gilbert. We as the sons and daughters sure have a lot to be thankful for because of what our father's sacrificed for us. We also need to make sure our children and grandchildren never forget what these men did for all generations.

Sincerely,

Lory V. Curtis, son of Bud Curtis, HQ, 1st Bn

MailCall News

Bob: work has kept me from looking at Mail Call until now. Please tell Mr. Schneider thank you for his report. Well done.

See: [Arland Schneider's Trip Report – The story of Richard B. Bednarz, KIA – MailCall 2013](#)

Pat Seitz and Alan Greer

Hi Bob,

I know that Ben was always careful not to include anything very political in Mail Call but I thought I should at least make you aware of this website as it seems as though many recipients of Mail Call would have lots to contribute. (As an example, my Mum who is 88 years old and sharp as a tack is fascinated by the concept of older folks continuing to contribute to society in a meaningful way. As a matter of fact,, she was a WWII navy nurse and graduate of Newton Wellesley Hospital. She was there at the same time as your mother and when I first met your Mum, she named several of the nursing instructors I had heard of throughout my life from MY mother!!)

Anyway...here is the site: <http://912superseniors.org/>

Please use it if you like or share it more discreetly if you feel there might be people who would find it interesting. (I know the "Glenn Beck" name carries political connotations with it but the site itself includes great info for seniors and I believe transcends politics to promote patriotism!)

Hope all is well with you.

Take Care.

Best,

Mary Jane Hanron



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



Hot rifle—cold steel! That's the infantry... that's Johnny Doughboy with Garand and bayonet. But that's only part of the story...



He's a SPECIALIST of specialists—trained to handle a dozen or more different weapons, including this one shown above—the rocket gun which Johnny calls the "Bazooka."



He's MASTER of the mortar too—the 60-millimeter variety pictured above... the big 81-millimeter mortar as well.



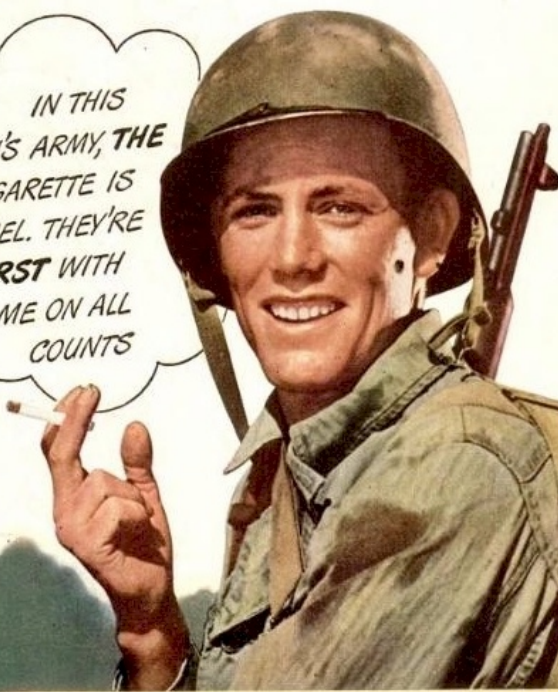
He MAY NOT be assigned to a machine gun, but every man in the infantry knows what to do with one.



He ISN'T called a grenadier by name, but he's a past master of the hand-grenade.

"I'm in the Infantry!"

IN THIS
MAN'S ARMY, THE
CIGARETTE IS
CAMEL. THEY'RE
FIRST WITH
ME ON ALL
COUNTS

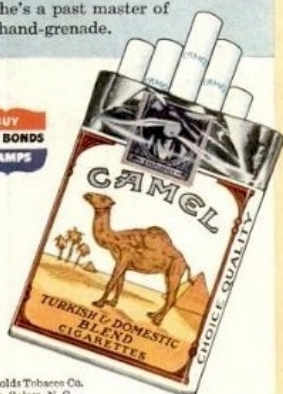


He CAN BLAST a path through tangled enemy barbed wire with this T.N.T.-loaded "Bangalore Torpedo."



He DOESN'T LUG this 57-millimeter anti-tank gun around on his back, but he knows how to handle it.

BUY
WAR BONDS
STAMPS



"G. I. Joe"... "Johnny Dough"... no matter what he calls himself... if he wears the crossed rifles of the infantry, you can be sure of this: He's got what it takes!

And... when he tells you that *his* cigarette is Camel, he's talking for thousands and thousands of other soldiers like himself. For the fighting man's favorite cigarette... not only in the Army, but in *all* the services... is Camel—the richer, milder brand with the famous "I'd walk a mile" flavor. If you yourself are not already smoking Camels, try them today on your T-Zone—T for taste, T for throat.

FIRST

IN THE SERVICE

With men in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard, the favorite cigarette is Camel. (Based on actual sales records.)

Camels



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



Hi everyone,

I just wanted to let everyone know about a radio show I will be on tomorrow, Oct 14th, at 4 p.m. Mountain Standard Time. This radio show will interview me for 30 minutes about the book I wrote about my Father, Letters Home, A Paratrooper's Story. Ecco Publishing is now publishing the book and has arranged for me to tell listeners about the book and the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team. If you are interested in listening in go to this website:

Blogtalkradio.com

Once at that website look over to the upper right hand corner and you will see a search box. Type in Ecco authors radio and it will present a screen that shows all of the radio shows. Click the "On Air" box and you should be able to listen to the show. It will be archived so you could go to the site later and listen to it. If you have problems telephone 1-800614-3578, and speak with an Ecco House Publishing representative to help you find the show.

Lory Curtis

Lory's radio interview is archived [here](#)

Bob:

I ran across this attachment (*see next page*) in the process of cleaning out file material. I kept it because it was my last hostile act in WW II and it took place on my twenty-second birthday.

I was in the Instrument Section and assigned to a position relating to the laying of the artillery pieces. This was accomplished using a survey instrument called an aiming circle which was calibrated into 6.400 mils rather than 360 degrees. It had to be declinated every time we moved more than 25 miles. In addition to moving that distance it also had to be declinated after a severe electrical storm or a sudden shock such as if the instrument fell from a truck to the ground. The magnetic needle is a delicately balance mechanism and any type of shock may cause a significant change in the declination constant.

Because of local magnetic attractions, any move of the aiming circle may result in appreciable change in the relationship of grid north and magnetic north as measured by the instrument. A minimum of once every 30 days to determine if any changes in the declination have occurred because of the annual shift of magnetic north or because of accidents involving the instrument that took place and were not reported.

I don't know if you needed all that but the attachment does contain input that is not commonly known to the average person.

Back to the attachment. We were sitting on the on the west bank of the Rhine River. The Forward Observers noted that each morning after breakfast eight to ten enemy soldiers gather at the same location. It was assumed it must be a slit trench area. We were given the coordinates and spent the rest of the day surveying in the target. Normally the FOs would call for a smoke round and adjust their firing from there. However everyone felt it would be more fun scaring the ---- out of them.

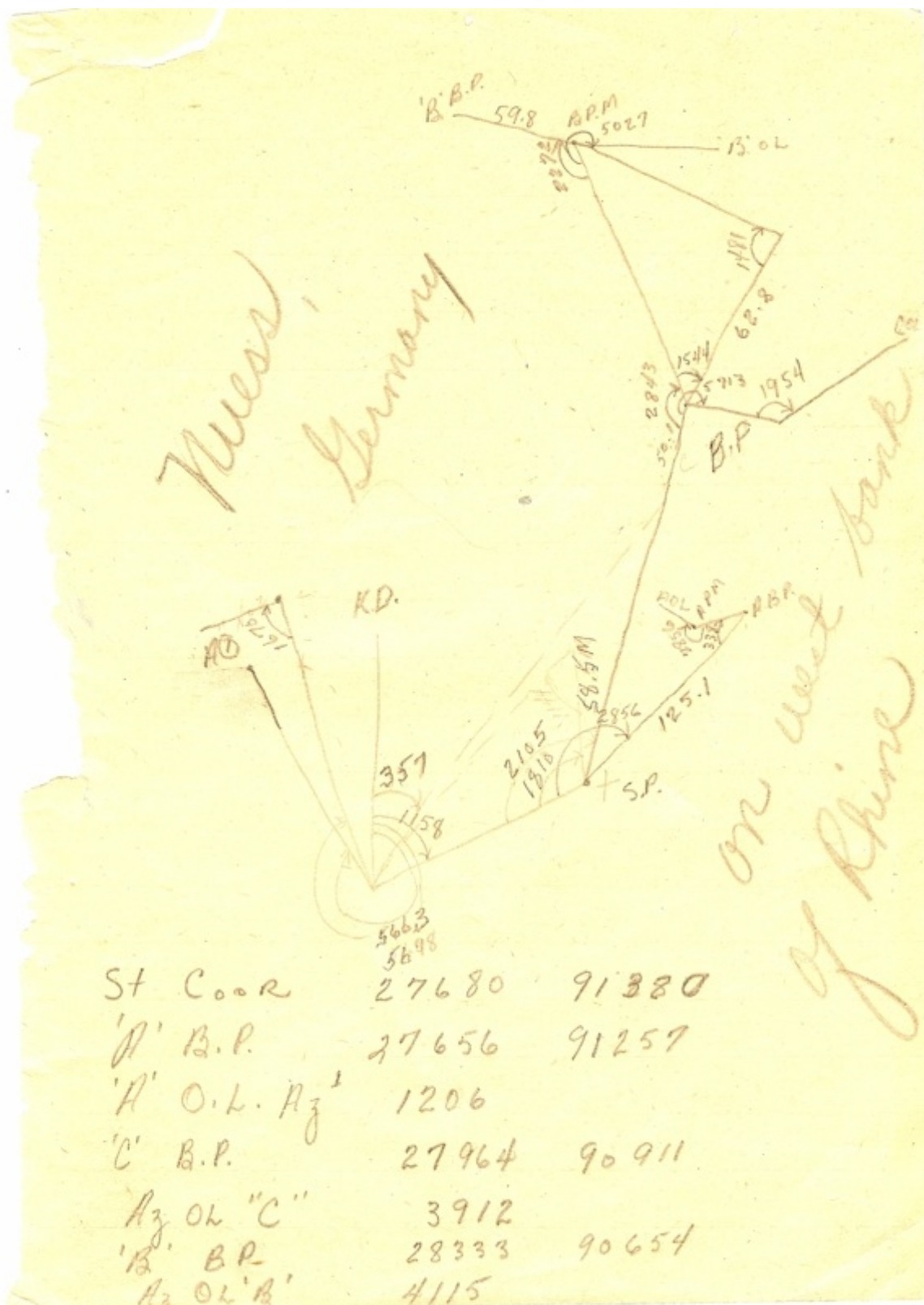
Merle Mc Morrow



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



Merle McMorow spends his 22nd birthday scaring the enemy:





Name That Trooper

Answer to last week's Name That Trooper ([MailCall #2016](#)):

Sgt. Allan Goodman. Served as President of the 517 PRCT Association 2002 - 03



Allan Ross Goodman, Sr.
596th Combat Engineer Company
See Allan's bio [here](#)

Administrivia

- If you miss any MailCalls, they are all available online at <http://www.517prct.org/mailcall/>
- At any time, if you want to be added or removed from the MailCall list, just let me know.
- Send any news, stories, or feedback to: MailCall@517prct.org
- If you send me email that you do not want included in MailCall, just label it as FYEO.
- I now understand how Ben could get confused about what he already posted and what he didn't. If I miss something, please just send it again.
- Donations for any programs involving the 517th should be sent to our treasurer:
Leo Dean
14 Stonehenge Lane
Albany, NY 12203

Save the date!

Annual 517th Reunion (probably the last one)

**July 13-18, 2011
Atlanta, GA**

with visits to Camp Toccoa and Fort Benning