



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2229

August 24, 2014

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

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Thunderbolt (Winter 2014)

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Harold Roberts – 596th PCEC



Our friend **Hal, Roberts** of 596th PCEC joined his brothers in arms airborne engineer company... While we had narrated this year its day in Provence in our speech at the American cemetery, without knowing it had he just left us... rest in peace friend...

Harold Roberts 596th engineers. passed away on Tuesday, August 12th 2014. His memorial is tentatively set for the 5th of September.

J. Micahel Soldi and Eric Renoux,
AIRBORNE MUSEUM "15 Aout 1944" Association





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The 517th Family Visits Belgium and France

On the way to France, several of the 517th family also visited with our friends in Belgium.

Here is a picture of **Merle McMorrow** with **Maria Gaspar**, in front of Maria's house (from **Joanne Barrett**).



Dear Veterans and friends,

It was an honor to meet you and your families and to hear your stories. I hope you enjoy these pictures of the 70th Anniversary of Operation Dragoon ceremonies in La Motte.

<https://picasaweb.google.com/ThisIsJulien/2014814LaMotte02?authkey=Gv1sRgCl2q3M6qqbjOjQE#>

Julien and family - Julien Harou <thisisjulien@gmail.com>



Merle McMorrow handing out 517th pins



"This is what happened when I landed in Callian..."
Allan Johnson



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Allan, Helen, Leo and I are now in Fayence for events later today. We met with the mayor last night, Jean-Luc Fabre. M. Fabre had contacted Mail Call, as you remember. Today's events will also feature British and Canadian veterans.

He is lovely and passionate about the liberation of Fayence and the history here. His grandmother was in the French Resistance, working in a shop selling newspapers and other items. At night, she would take all the ration coupons she'd collected during the day (that part wasn't exactly clear to me - was she getting them in the course of sales and "recycling"? Or people were passing them to her for the cause?) and walk to meet with other people in the Resistance effort, putting the ration coupons to the cause.

He remembers that he was not here five years ago when we delivered the plaque to Fayence, along with a copy of Paratroopers Odyssey. He was in Frejus that day for a prior engagement. However, he told us that he made sure that all the parts involving Fayence were translated by a team of French-English translators so that the history of the 517 is well-known here.

More later - but we are touched and humbled to be here.

Claire Giblin



Leo, Dean, ?, and Adrien J.



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A few of the pictures I received from **Patricia and Roland Orengo**:





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Leo et le rosé de Ste Roseline.... toute une histoire.... l'histoire !

Patricia Orengo



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DEAREST MERLE:

IT WAS A REAL PLEASURE TO MEET YOU ON SUNDAY 17TH OF AUGUST. VERY EMOTIONAL THOUGHTS CAME TO ME WHEN I THINK ON THE CRUEL WINTER OF 1944, WHEN YOU AND YOUR FELLOWS FRIENDS AS YOUNG LADS(PROBABLY THE AGE OF MY CHILDREN NOW) DESEMBARKED HERE IN THIS COLD PART OF EUROPE, TO FIGHT IN A WAR THAT PROBABLY DIDN,T MEAN ANYTHING TO YOU AS ALL OF YOU WERE SO FAR AWAY FROM HOME AND YOUR BELOVES...

HELPING IN SUCH SOLIDARY WAY TO OTHER NATIONS, BEING HUNGRY,COLD, DESPERATE,FRIGHTEN.... I CAN IMAGINE ALL THE THOUGHTS MUST HAVE RUN THROUGH YOUR MINDS....MANY OF YOU LOOSING UNFORTUNATLY THEIR LIVES, GETTING BADLY INJURED.....

AND THOSE POOR MOTHERS CRYING THEIR LOST, FOR THE REST OF THEIR LIVES..... ALL THAT, JUST TO HELP ANOTHER PART OF THE PLANET, WICH IS ,THIS OLD CONTINENT CALLED EUROPE!!!.

WE CAN NOT EVEN IMAGINED THE SORT OF TERRIBLE EXPERIENCES YOU WITNESS THAT PROBABALY STAY WITH YOU AND SOMEHOW CHANGE YOUR OWN WIV AND COURSE OF LIFE.... FOR EVER..

I WAS VERY VERY HONERED TO MEET YOU AND MY HUSBAND JOIN ME IN THIS, AS YOU ARE A MAN OF A KIND!!, THE STRONG GENERATION, FULL OF VALUES AND SELFESLESS...WICH UNFORTUNATLY THERE IS NOT MANY NOW.

YOU ARE THE LIVING PROOF OF A GENERATION THAT WE SHOULD NEVER EVER FORGET, BUT CARRY ON PRIZING AND REMEMBER.... BECOUSE THANKS TO YOU AND ALL OF YOU WE ENJOY THE PEACEFUL LIFE THAT WE CAN HAVE NOW.



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NOT TO MENTIONED, THAT I WOULD LOVE TO BE LIKE YOU IF I REACH YOUR AGE!!!, WHAT A FANTASTIC 91 YEARS OLD YOU ARE!!!!, PHYSICALLY STRONG, IN FULL FACULTIES, AND ABLE TO CROSS DURING 24 HOURS TRAVELING, THE WORLD!!!! WHAT A REMARKABLE PERSON AND MAN AND GENTLEMAN YOU ARE!!!. YOU ARE A LEGEND AND INSPIRATION!!!!, AND IF GOD GIVES ME THE SAME TIME OF LIFE THAN YOU I JUST WILL LOVE TO BE LIKE YOU, IN PERFECT FORM!!!!.

YOU ARE A TOTAL INSPIRATION !!! YOU EVEN WRITE!!! AND KNOWS HOW TO USE TECHNOLOGY!!! WHAT A REMARKABLE GENTLEMAN YOU ARE!!!, GOD BLESS YOU !.

MY husband and I we have the biggest respect and admiration in the full meaning of the word for you and all young fellows who battled here in Belgium, or gave their life or injured because thanks to them all, as I mention above, we could enjoy last Sunday the lovely dinner in your company..... and thanks to you, your courage and their courage we could enjoy peaceful life in Europe since 1945. And our generation and our children generation, and hopefully all the new generations to come will never have to endure anything like it!!!.

HOPEFULLY THE POLITICIANS OF TODAY WILL REMEMBER THE PASS, AND NOT CREATE THE SAME MISTAKES.

We wish you a safe journey back home. Well I can see, you have thanks God arrived well and safe!!! Wishing you all the very best in life, keep yourself strong as you do, and we hope to see you in any near future back here. May God bless you always .

I'm really looking forward receiving your book, which I will treasure!! . You don't get history written by people who have lived it, on the first line!!!!. I will love to read it, and I will show it to my dad as well. He is a Colonel of Cavalry in Spanish Army, he will love to read it as well.

I enclose hereby the pictures we took from you all.
All the very best.

Chevalier & Teresa

Dear Teresa:

It was so nice of you to invite us into your home and for making our stop in Stavelot special. The last time I was in your city was when we put the plaque on the bridge.

The book I promised you is on the way.

Best Wishes,

Merle W. Mc Morrow





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Gene Frice

We are shocked and saddened to hear of the loss of **Gene Frice** only days before his planned trip to Europe with family and friends. To receive this news around the dinner table in Sospel was especially moving as we were all gathered around where he should have been with us. It's nearly a week after his funeral now, and the shock hasn't worn off.

Gene was a charismatic trooper and was fiercely proud of his service with the 517. If you didn't know about the 517, you would after you met Gene. He was generous with his time and shared his experiences freely. I thought he had some of the most memorable moments in A Cut Above.

It was an honor to be with Gene and his family in Europe for events at the 60th and 65th anniversaries. Bob, I don't know if you can find our favorite picture of Gene waving to the crowds in upstairs windows in Le Muy from either 5 or 10 years ago - he looks just joyous. My husband and I always disagreed over which of us took that picture - we each want ownership - but it was probably Jim.



It was touching to be here where Gene was repeatedly honored as a guest who had been expected here for the 70th and died unexpectedly. He was remembered at La Motte, Le Muy, the Rhone American Cemetery, Les Arcs, and Valbournes - and when I walked in to see the picture of him by candlelight in the chapel at Valbournes on August 16, which was the day of his funeral, I was so pleased and touched to see him remembered in so many different places and ways.



Words are insufficient and the loss is so great. Our hearts and prayers go out to Gene's family at this difficult time. He was so special and represented the 517 so well.

Claire Giblin



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Hi 517th members.

I just got my computer back in working order and am catching up on the news. I am so sorry to hear of the passing of **Gene Frice**. He looked so young. I am amazed by his resume and everything he has accomplished during his life. There are many 517th soldiers who turned out to be great men and I admire them all great and small. I miss the national reunions and look forward to seeing you all soon.

Rick Sweet

Oh No,

I just read that **Gene Frice** died. Our sympathies to his family.

Juliana Stonis

daughter of **John Stonis** Company A and E

Other MailCall News

From: <https://www.facebook.com/ComesASoldiersWhisper>

WAR - THE DEVIL IS IN THE DETAILS!

Dad, a paratrooper in 101st Airborne 502nd PIR mentioned that he once saw two men riding in a jeep decapitated by wire that had been stretched out on a road by the Germans.

The Jerries , as Dad referred to the Germans in his letters, were known to string tough piano wires neck-high across the roads that Allied Jeeps traveled on. The steel tension wire provided a nasty way to lop off the heads of Jeep drivers and passengers. Often the wire couldn't be seen or if seen, it was usually to late to stop in time. The GI's answer for this booby-trap was the Anti-Decapitation Device, field made angle iron bolted upright to the front bumper. The device extended above the the heads of those riding in the Jeep, and at the top it is angled forward and usually notched to catch and cut the wire. A few interesting details can be seen; on the front bumper of the jeep, the anti-wire device is fastened to the front and an American flag identification armband is fastened on the radiator. This particular jeep was named, "What A Crew".





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Ford engineers designed round recessed headlamps mounted on hinges. Why? So the lamps could pivot back and light up the engine bay! There were also handles on the back and sides of the Jeep so that soldiers could lift it out of a mud hole if necessary.

The Americans had so many Jeeps that some German soldiers believed each America GI got his own Jeep as standard issue. In France, three American soldiers walked up to a guard post and told the sentry that they were lost. The Frenchman immediately told them to surrender and found that they were German soldiers in disguise. When he was asked how he knew, he replied that Americans always travel in jeeps. Another example happened in Belgium when a guard ordered three German soldiers to surrender after he saw that a colonel was riding in the back seat. He explained later that if they were American that the officer would be driving and the infantryman would be in the backseat.

One Battered Jeep from WWII received a Purple Heart after successfully surviving two beach landings.

A Soldier Says

When the war was at its hottest
And the going got too steep.
One pal that I could count on
Was the mighty little Jeep

Through beachhead hell, through fire,
Our metal mounts would leap
With strictly GI courage;
I won't forget the Jeep.

And now the war is over.
The one thing I will keep
For farm and field and hunting –
That's my buddy, Willy Jeep.

Pvt. Jesse Wolf
Somewhere in Belgium
(Originally published in PM, October 21, 1945)



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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, or just click on the unsubscribe link on the email.
- 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 new Association Treasurer: Identify the purpose of any donation (Annual Donations, In Memory of... etc.) and make all checks payable to:

517 PRCT Association, Inc.
c/o Miriam Boyle Kelly
19 Oriole Court
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

Operation Dragoon Anniversary – August 15, 1944

Last week was the 70th anniversary of Operation Dragoon. It is a good time of year to remember to pay your annual membership donation (only if you can afford it).

Suggested donation: \$30

Enclosed is my annual donation contribution towards the 517 PRCT Association.

Name: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

Make checks payable to:

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c/o Miriam Boyle Kelly
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Saratoga Springs, NY 12866