



# 517<sup>th</sup> Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

## MailCall No. 2263

March 22, 2015

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

Website

[www.517prct.org](http://www.517prct.org)

Send MailCall news to

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MailCall Archives

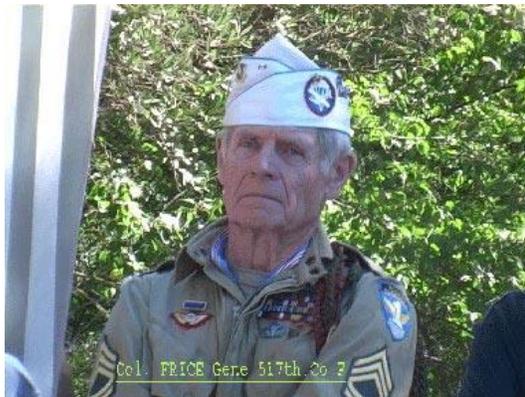
[www.517prct.org/archives](http://www.517prct.org/archives)

2015 Roster (updated!)

[www.517prct.org/roster.pdf](http://www.517prct.org/roster.pdf)

Thunderbolt (Winter 2014) [www.517prct.org/archives](http://www.517prct.org/archives)

## Gene and Margaret Frice Services – March 24



Burial services are being held this week at Arlington National Cemetery for **Gene and Margaret Frice**. Anyone in the D.C. is welcome to drop by.

Please report to origin forty-five minutes to 1/2 hour prior to start time.

Tuesday, Mar 24 2015

Name	Origin	Time
GENE M FRICE, COL, US ARMY	<a href="#">Administration Building</a>	3:00 PM
MARGARET A FRICE, US ARMY	<a href="#">Administration Building</a>	3:00 PM



## 517<sup>th</sup> Parachute Regimental Combat Team

### 517<sup>th</sup> and the Green Berets

Submitted by	Comments:
Name: <b>Joe Ruddy</b> From: Scranton, PA E-mail: <a href="mailto:jpruddy@yahoo.com">jpruddy@yahoo.com</a>	My father's cousin <b>Francis J. Ruddy Jr.</b> belonged to Company A, 1st Bat., 517th PIR. Fran was born in Scranton, PA, and proudly served in the US Army for 32 years. I've been trying to piece together a history of Fran's career starting with the great information on this website. After WWII, Fran served in Korea (187th Regimental Combat Team) and served with the Special Forces during the period of the Vietnam War. <hr/> Added: March 14, 2015

Hi Joe, I saw your note on the 517<sup>th</sup> PRCT website guestbook. I did some research, and although I did not find a lot about **Francis J Ruddy** in my (incomplete) records on the website, it did get me started and I found out a few things that I did not expect.

As you probably know, **Francis Ruddy** was an early member of the Special Forces (Green Berets), and was the soldier who placed a green beret on President Kennedy's grave in 1963. That was probably the event that finally solidified the acceptance of the green beret, which had been controversial until then. And I was further surprised when I came across the name of **Frank Dallas**, another 517<sup>th</sup> trooper, who was the Special Forces officer who had the job of selecting the original design and supplier for the original green beret. I will put these stories into the next MailCall newsletter for the 517<sup>th</sup> family. Thanks for contacting us.

PS: I do see Ruddy mentioned in a couple of A Company morning reports: Injured (NBC) on July 10 '44, Promoted to PFC Oct. 8 '44, and it appears wounded on Oct 23 '44 with a Return to Duty on 11/3/44. I have attached a copy form Oct 23 1944.

Bob Barrett

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RE: **Francis J Ruddy, Jr.**

Bob,

Thanks for the information. I didn't put a lot of info in the guestbook, but yes we do know that Fran put his beret on Kennedy's grave. Also as you mention, Fran was an early member of the SF, he also has a street named after him at Fort Lewis in Washington State.

Fran's brother, Jerry lives near us here in Scranton, PA and we do keep in contact with him. Although Fran was much older than I, I did have a chance to meet him when I was younger on various occasions. At the time I was not aware of his Army career, yet I was aware that he was a member of the Army SF. Fran is buried at the National Cemetery in Saratoga Springs, NY.

I just bought a book on the 517th and am looking forward to reading it. I also appreciate the job that all of you have done with the 517th PRCT website. The amount of information and stories is great reading.

Thanks again for the update,

Joe Ruddy

Scranton, PA



## *517<sup>th</sup> Parachute Regimental Combat Team*

From [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Green\\_beret#United\\_States\\_Army\\_Special\\_Forces](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Green_beret#United_States_Army_Special_Forces)

### **US Army Special Forces**

In the U.S. armed forces, the green beret may be worn only by soldiers awarded the Special Forces Tab, signifying they have been qualified as Special Forces (SF) soldiers. The Special Forces beret is officially designated "beret, man's, wool, rifle green, army shade 297."

U.S. Special Forces wear the green beret because of a shared tradition which goes back to the British Commandos of World War II. The first Ranger unit, commonly known as Darby's Rangers, was formed in Northern Ireland during the summer of 1942. On completion of training at the Commando Training Depot at Achnacarry Castle in Scotland, those Rangers had the right to wear the British Commando green beret, but it was not part of the regulation uniform at the time and was disallowed by the U.S. Army.[9]

The 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) had many veterans of World War II in their ranks when it was formed in 1952. They began to unofficially wear a variety of berets while training, some favouring the crimson or maroon airborne beret, the black Ranger beret, or the green commando beret. The 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) deployed to Bad Tolz, Germany in September 1953. The remaining cadre at Fort Bragg formed the 77th Special Forces Group. Members of the 77th SFG began searching through their collections of berets and settled on the Rifle Green colour of the British Rifle Regiments (as opposed to the Lovat Green of the Commandos) from Captain Mike de la Pena's collection. **Captain Frank Dallas** had the new beret designed and produced in small numbers for the members of the Special Forces.[10]

Their new headdress was first worn at a retirement parade at Fort Bragg on 12 June 1955 for Lieutenant General Joseph P. Cleland, the now-former commander of the XVIII Airborne Corps. Onlookers thought that the commandos were a foreign delegation from NATO.[11]

In 1956 General Paul D. Adams, the post commander at Fort Bragg, banned its wear, even though it was worn surreptitiously when deployed overseas. This was reversed on 25 September 1961 by Department of the Army Message 578636, which designated the green beret as the exclusive headdress of the Army Special Forces.

When visiting the Special Forces at Fort Bragg on 12 October 1961, President John F. Kennedy asked Brigadier General William P. Yarborough to make sure that the men under his command wore green berets for the visit. Later that day, Kennedy sent a memorandum which included the line: "I am sure that the green beret will be a mark of distinction in the trying times ahead." By America's entry into the Vietnam War, the green beret had become a symbol of excellence throughout the US Army. On April 11, 1962 in a White House memorandum to the United States Army, President Kennedy reiterated his view: "The green beret is a symbol of excellence, a badge of courage, a mark of distinction in the fight for freedom." To no avail, both Yarborough and Edson Raff had previously petitioned the Pentagon to allow wearing of the green beret. The President, however, did not fail them.

In addition to being the headdress of the United States Army Special Forces, "Green Berets" is also a well known nickname of the organization.



## 517<sup>th</sup> Parachute Regimental Combat Team

From: [http://www.groups.sfahq.com/sf\\_heraldry/beret/where\\_it\\_began.htm](http://www.groups.sfahq.com/sf_heraldry/beret/where_it_began.htm)

### Where It Began by Col. John W. Frye

[...] The next episode involved then **CPT Frank Dallas** who was detailed to find a source for berets. In the short time allowed, Frank had to take what he could get - what looked like man-sized Girl Scout berets complete with a half-inch pig-tail sticking up out of the center of the crown.

The first version of the beret was sold for a few months by the Ft. Bragg Exchange for something less than two dollars. The pigtail could be easily clipped off flush with nail clippers and, in spite of their suspected origins, the berets were presentable and military in appearance.

[...] When President John F. Kennedy visited Ft. Bragg in the early 1960s he was extremely impressed by the SF's part of the demonstration and said that he wished he had 10,000 men like these who wore the green beret.

A beret was presented along with a request for authorization to wear it. The request was granted in recognition of the prowess of those who had so clearly earned it. The quest for authorization was long and difficult. Men such as Col. Raff stood up under heavy pressures and sacrificed promotion and career to enable the present generation to have this symbol.

Not until an imaginative leader, President Kennedy, had the clear vision to perceive the immense value of SF did its symbol become universally recognized in the Army. Recognition by the world of the SF's Green Beret finally came only with the tragedy of President Kennedy's assassination. **Sgt. Maj. Francis J. Ruddy**, a member of the graveside honor guard, stepped forward, removed his beret and laid it on the temporary grave - giving back for all SF men the honor that our President had given us. Television and press coverage of that terrible hour seemed to insure that the green beret would be known and respected throughout the world.

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From: <http://www.jfklibrary.org/JFK/JFK-in-History/Green-Berets.aspx>

On the day of the President's funeral, a leading member of that contingent, **Command Sergeant Major Francis Ruddy**, removed his own Green Beret and placed it solemnly upon the President's grave. This green beret is now on permanent display in the Museum at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and is displayed in memory of President Kennedy and in memory of all Special Forces soldiers, especially those who gave their lives while in service to the country.



An eternal flame at President John F. Kennedy's gravesite at Arlington National Cemetery was quickly constructed at the request of his widow. **Command Sergeant Major Francis J. Ruddy** of the U.S. Army Special Forces honored his fallen commander in chief by placing his Green Beret next to the flame.

-- Photo from Corbis Images



## 517<sup>th</sup> Parachute Regimental Combat Team

From : <http://specialforces78.com/members-pages/ltc-frank-j-dallas/>

**Lieutenant Colonel Frank J. Dallas** was born on November 25, 1924 at Mount Carmel, Pennsylvania. His father was a coal miner and he was the oldest of six children. Early in life, he developed a passion for the outdoors and hunting and fishing and as a young man helped provide food for his family during the years of the Great Depression.

While still in high school, LTC Dallas enlisted in the Army during World War II. He served with the 517th Regimental Combat Team (RCT) in Italy, France, Belgium and Germany. During this time, he made a combat jump into southern France and was awarded both the Silver Star and Bronze Star for valor.



After the war and a short break in service, LTC Dallas served in both the 82nd Airborne Division and the 11th Airborne Division. He then went to Officer Candidate School (OCS) and commanded a mortar platoon company in the 1st Cavalry Division during the Korean War.

As a Captain, he completed Special Forces training at Fort Bragg and helped organized the 77th Special Forces (SF) Group, one of the earliest SF units. After an assignment with the 10th SF Group in Germany, he was reassigned to the Special Warfare School at Fort Bragg as the Director of Logistics. His other overseas assignments included training Korean Special forces units in Korea and commanding Special Forces B and C Detachments during the Vietnam War.

In the IV Corps district at Can Tho in the Mekong Delta of South Vietnam, his unit (often called Dallas' 'Navy') successfully integrated three Navy hover boats and nearly 30 airboats into regular Special Forces tactical operations including developing specialized boat gun mounts and floating helicopter landing pads. LTC Dallas retired from the Army at Fort Bragg on July 1, 1970 after 26 years of devoted service. After retiring from the Army, he worked as a draftsman and project designer for the Fayetteville NC City Engineer. He also enjoyed more time for his lifelong passions for hunting, fishing, woodworking and square dancing.

As one of the early Special Forces soldiers, LTC Dallas was the chairperson of the committee that approved the design and purchase of the first Green Berets and the first SF unit shoulder patch. He was an original member of the SF Decade Club (predecessor to the SF Association) and was, in fact, the first club president. He holds the first membership card issued (#D-1) in the history of the organization. He also helped design the statue of the Special Forces soldier that still stands in front of the JFK Special Warfare Center at Fort Bragg.

His military awards and accommodations included the Silver Star, the Legion of Merit with one oak leaf cluster, a Bronze Star with V-device and two oak leaf clusters, the Purple Heart with two oak leaf clusters, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Air Medal with two oak leaf clusters, three awards of the Combat Infantryman's Badge (CIB), and the Special Forces Tab. He also earned the European-African-Middle Eastern Medal with an arrowhead and five campaign stars, the World War II Victory Medal, both the French and Belgium Croix de Guerre, the Vietnamese Gallantry Cross, the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, the United Nations Medal, the Master Parachutist Badge, the Glider Badge, and both Korea and Vietnam Parachutist Badges.

LTC Dallas and his wife of 65 years, Josephine (Jo) Dallas have three children and eight grandchildren. All of their children are also associated with the Army; Lieutenant Colonel retired Edward Dallas and wife Mary Jo, Nancy Dallas Boatner and her husband Colonel retired Jim Boatner, and Lieutenant General Patricia Dallas Horoho and her husband Colonel retired Ray Horoho. LTG Horoho is an Army nurse and is currently serving as the 43rd Surgeon General of the Army, the senior medical soldier on active duty.

Today LTC Dallas lives in Clifton, Virginia and remains an active member of the Clifton Lions Club and the Saint Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church.



## 517<sup>th</sup> Parachute Regimental Combat Team



(UPI/Tennant)

Sgt. Maj. Francis J. Ruddy (center), who commanded Green Beret detachment that marched as honor guard for President Kennedy's funeral, returns to the President's grave to place a wreath sent by President Johnson. Kennedy was assassinated four years ago.

Nov 23, 1967

(4 Years after Kennedy's Assassination)

### *MailCall News*

I was saddened to hear of the passing of **Bill Webb**, he was a great man, and an honor for me to have met him and talked with him at reunions. My deepest sympathies to his family

**Lory Curtis**

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I am sorry to learn of the passing of **Jim Royer**, I remember Jim being close to **Bill Webb**. I enjoyed listening to their war stories. Jim was a member of the mortar squad and his job was carrying the Base plate for the mortar. Because of his job, his Nick Name was "Base Plate" he would laugh and enjoy anyone calling him by that name. I am not sure of the exact weight, but extra weight is all you need to break something when you land under a canopy, weight is not your friend.

**Morris McDowell**

Cousin of **Layton Pippin**, Scout of 'H' Company K.I.A. Bergeval Belgium

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## 517<sup>th</sup> Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Bob -- loved the pictures of the West Coast reunion, we're looking forward to the June reunion, loved the military humor, do not know when the pictures were taken, and over all enjoyed reading this Mail Call.

Last Monday we were at Ft. Bragg for a dedication of the dining facility in the conference center in Dad's honor. An Airborne All the Way ceremony and a wonderful time for the **Dick Seitz** clan to gather together and savor the memories of the various assignments to Ft. Bragg. We also stopped by the Airborne Museum there in Fayetteville and Rick took pictures of the memorial to the 517th in front of the museum. We were grateful that we arrived as the Museum's director was walking out as the museum is closed on Mondays. He was nice enough to take us to the courtyard in the back to see the memory stone remembering Dad. The director invites everyone to visit the museum.



### Pat Seitz

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Dedication of the Seitz Dining Room at the Ft. Bragg Catering and Conference Center. From Left to right, Dr. Catherine Seitz-Steinberg, Rock Murrit, Richard M. Seitz, HON. Patricia Seitz, LTG Joe Anderson, Dr. Victoria Seitz



## 517<sup>th</sup> Parachute Regimental Combat Team

### Fort Bragg Conference and Catering Center is the post's new 'crown jewel'

By Drew Brooks Military editor

**Fort Bragg leaders called it the post's new "crown jewel."**



At the very least, they said, the new Fort Bragg Conference and Catering Center will become the centerpiece of on-post gatherings ranging from formal balls to a daily lunch buffet.

The nearly 50,000-square-foot, \$17.5 million facility already had hosted several functions before last week's official dedication.

[...]

Inside, planners have paid homage to past military leaders with connections to Fort Bragg or Fayetteville. Five rooms are dedicated to those leaders.

The largest is named for the Marquis de Lafayette, the Revolutionary War leader and French general for whom Fayetteville is named.

Other rooms are named for past Fort Bragg commanders, including Lt. Gen. Robert F. Sink, **Lt. Gen. Richard J. Seitz**, Gen. John R. Hodge and Lt. Gen. Thomas F. Hickey.

Sink is a "legendary paratrooper" who served at Normandy and Holland in World War II, according to Fort Bragg's commanding general, Lt. Gen. Joseph Anderson. He commanded Fort Bragg and the 18th Airborne Corps in the late 1950s.

Seitz also fought in World War II, serving as the Army's youngest battalion commander, and in Vietnam.

He commanded the 82nd Airborne Division in the late 1960s, sending troops to Vietnam and to Washington to quell riots after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Seitz's last assignment was as commander of Fort Bragg and the 18th Airborne Corps until his retirement in 1975.

Hodge served in World War I and World War II. He served as military governor of South Korea in the late 1940s and commanded the 5th Corps at Fort Bragg from 1948 to 1950.

Hickey served in both world wars and Korea and commanded the 82nd Airborne Division and 18th Airborne Corps at Fort Bragg.

Several members of the generals' families attended the dedication, including a large contingent from the Seitz family. They said the tribute was fitting.

"He loved this place," said Victoria Seitz, one of the general's daughters. "It's a great relationship. He loved Fayetteville and this community."

After the dedication, guests were treated to a sampling of the menu that will be offered at the conference center.

The center's \$2 million kitchen rivals any in the region, said chef Robert Gibson, and can feed as many as 1,200 at a time.

Full Story: [http://www.fayobserver.com/military/fort-bragg-conference-and-catering-center-is-the-post-s/article\\_3c3ff9a7-bc3a-50b4-8c52-5256c8e5f37b.html](http://www.fayobserver.com/military/fort-bragg-conference-and-catering-center-is-the-post-s/article_3c3ff9a7-bc3a-50b4-8c52-5256c8e5f37b.html)



## 517<sup>th</sup> Parachute Regimental Combat Team

On 9 March, the Seitz Clan "deployed" to Fort Bragg, North Carolina to attend the dedication of the new Fort Bragg Conference & Catering Center. The event included the dedication of the **new Lt Gen Richard J. Seitz** (2BN/517th PIR) Dining Room. In attendance were **daughters Pat, Cache, Tori**, son **Rick** and nephew **John Seitz**. Lt Gen Joe Anderson, 18th Airborne Corp Commander presided over the dedication of the new facility.



The attached picture shows from left to right Cache Steinberg, Retired CSM Rock Merritt (former 18th Airborne Corps CSM), **Rick Seitz**, **Pat Seitz**, Lt Gen Joe Anderson, **Tori Seitz**.

Afterwards the Seitz Clan redeployed to the Airborne and Special Operations Museum in Fayetteville, North Carolina where we visited the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team monument at the museum. All in all a great day for the 517th!

### **Richard Seitz**

Medium Range Surveillance Program Manager, CG-9312 US Coast Guard Aviation Acquisition





## 517<sup>th</sup> Parachute Regimental Combat Team

### *What is it?*

Q: What's this? Who can identify what this is?

Answers received:

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an opener can

I have nearly the same that I use in my kitchen....

**Patricia Orenco**

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That little tool was called a P-38, it opened C-Ration cans. I have one from when I was in the military.

**Lory Curtis**

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The second photo is a "John Wayne" – a can opener you could carry in your pocket.

**BJ McCauley**

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From: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/P-38\\_can\\_opener](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/P-38_can_opener)

The P-38 is known as a "John Wayne" by the United States Marine Corps, either because of its toughness and dependability, or because of an unsubstantiated story that the actor had been shown in an as-yet-unidentified training film opening a can of K-Rations. The can opener is pocket-sized, approximately 1.5 inches (38 mm) long, and consists of a short metal blade that serves as a handle, with a small, hinged metal tooth that folds out to pierce the can lid. A notch just under the hinge point keeps the opener hooked around the rim of the can as the device is "walked" around to cut the lid out. A larger version called the P-51 is somewhat easier to operate. The handle portion can also double as a makeshift flat-blade screwdriver, with limited ability because of the rather soft sheet metal used.

Official military designations for the P-38 include "US ARMY POCKET CAN OPENER" and "OPENER, CAN, HAND, FOLDING, TYPE I". As with some other military terms, e.g., "jeep", the origin of the term is not known with certainty; the P-38 opener coincidentally shares a designation with the Lockheed P-38 Lightning fighter plane, which could allude to its fast performance. The P-51 can opener, while larger and easier to use than the P-38 can opener, also has a fighter plane namesake in the North American P-51 Mustang. One technical explanation for the origin of the name is that the P-38 is approximately 38 mm (1.5 in) long. This explanation also holds for the P-51, which measures approximately 51 mm (2.0 in) in length. However, use of the metric system in the US was not widespread at this point, and United States Army sources indicate that the origin of the name is rooted in the 38 punctures around the circumference of a C-ration can required for opening.





## 517<sup>th</sup> Parachute Regimental Combat Team

### *Where is it?*

Q: Can you identify where this picture was taken?



It is either Toccoa, Mackcall or Benning. I recognize the photo from descriptions of stateside barracks, especially the coal/wood stove in the middle of the squad bay, whole #2 is a P-38 can opener. I've used them to open many cans of C rations during by Boy Scout days. Hope you are well!

**Mark Landreth**

Answer: I'm not entirely sure. This is from the photos of Warren Caulfield, F Company.

[http://517prct.org/photos/warren\\_caulfield/warren\\_caulfield.htm](http://517prct.org/photos/warren_caulfield/warren_caulfield.htm)

This is the only picture that I can remember taken inside one of the barracks. I think it is MacKall, but the description is unclear and the order of pictures may be wrong. He is another picture that appears to be from the same timeframe and you can see the outside of the barracks in the background which could be the same type of building.



Can someone confirm if this is MacKall?



# 517<sup>th</sup> Parachute Regimental Combat Team



**2015 National Reunion**  
New Orleans, LA  
June 25-28, 2015  
[Program](#)  
[Registration Form](#)  
[Hotel Registration](#)

## *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](mailto: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

**Col. Gene M. Frice**  
**F Company**

