



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2419

July 14, 2019

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

Melvin J. Dahlberg, F Company



Dahlberg, Melvin John William This man was a true hero. He signed up to serve his country as an 18-year old in World War II in 1943 and received 2 purple hearts as a paratrooper in the 517th Airborne Division Regimental Combat Team. One of the things he would share about enlisting in the Army was wanting to see some action, and he did. He faced fear straight in the face and lived to tell about it. In all of his adventures, he just never stopped going. He loved being around people, talking, sharing and serving others whenever needed. He married Mae Kathleen (Nelson) Dahlberg, who preceded him in death only 5 days before him on July 1, 2019. Mel passed away on July 6, 2019, on what would have been their 73rd wedding anniversary at Central Health Care in Le Center, Minnesota. Born on August 30, 1924 in St. Paul, Minnesota to Thyra and Nels Dahlberg, Mel was an only child. Mel and Mae are survived by their only daughter, Mary McCracken (husband Jim), grandchildren April (Chuck) Wichterman, Marie (John) McKowen, Philip (Megan) McCracken & Veronica McCracken and great-grandchildren Madeline, Rose, Robbie, Ian and Clara. Funeral service Sunday, July 14th, 2019 7:00 PM @ City Hill Church, 12901



Roberts Drive, Eden Prairie, MN. Visitation 1 hour prior to the service at the church. Interment at Fort Snelling National Cemetery. washburn.mcreavy.com Eden Prairie Chapel 952-975-0400

<http://www.startribune.com/obituaries/detail/0000317328/>

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France 1944 – Elio Musianie and Mel Dahlberg (behind the gun)



Myrle Traver, Norman Wright, Melvin Olson, Mel Dahlberg (lower left) and Anderson



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From the 517th Reunion, July 2011 at Fort Benning



Mel Dahlberg, a World War II paratrooper with the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team, far right, chats with graduates of the Basic Airborne Course at Fort Benning Friday morning during a graduation ceremony.



Mel Dahlberg was among the World War II paratroopers with the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team visiting Fort Benning Friday morning.



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From *517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team*, Turner Publishing 1998

MELVIN J. DAHLBERG, born Aug. 30, 1924 is a Minnesota-born product of Swedish ancestry. Volunteered for the paratroops in June 1943 and assigned to F Co., 2nd Bn., 17th Abn. Div. After basic training at Camp Toccoa, GA and Mackall, NC and jump school at Ft. Benning. The 517th PRCT was formed. The unit departed USA in May 1944 and saw its first action of war in Italy.

PFC Dahlberg participated in five battle campaigns in Europe and made a combat jump into southern France. He received a Purple Heart for wounds in the Battle of the Bulge in Belgium, and was awarded the Bronze Star Medal. He was honorably discharged in December 1945.

He was an auditor/examiner for the First Bank System for 41 years, retiring in 1982. As a second career, he worked as a professional wardrobe dresser in Twin City Theaters. He is active in the church, and a regular volunteer for many civic and community organizations. He is currently junior vice commander of the military order of the Purple Heart. He has been married to his wife, Mae, for over 50 years, and has a daughter and four grandchildren.



Mel and Mae Dahlberg



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

A couple of WW2 stories from Jean-Loup Gassend's book, *Operation Dragoon – Autopsy of a Battle*:

PFC Mel Dahlberg, another member of F Company, remembered another casualty that occurred on Hill 1098:

We fought for over two weeks for that hill. The Germans would come up and be on top of the hill, but that is as far as they got, they never advanced down to our side. It was just mortars and mortars back and forth. I know that from my experience, I shouldn't be here today; a mortar came over and landed about four to five feet away from me and covered me with dirt, but it didn't go off. So I am thankful for that. Then, towards the end of our battle there, I remember I got the duty of trying to retrieve some of our people that got killed up on the top of 1098. I know one of my sergeants, **Arnold Ridout**, was up there for well over a week, and we knew he was dead because he never returned. I had to retrieve his body, and that was quite an experience.

He must have met the Germans. He was against a tree, so obviously he was trying to cover himself. It's hard to tell, but he still had his helmet on, so I know it had to be rifle fire that got him. If it was a mortar, it would have blasted it off of him. He had a beautiful head of hair, all red. When I got to his body his face was all gone, it was all obliterated, but I knew it was him because of the red hair. He was tough to bring back to our lines, the dead weight was really something. In fact, I just dragged his body back.

Then there was another, a 2nd Platoon guy, his name was **John Pacey**. He had put rocks all around him to protect him from the enemy, and believe it or not, a piece of shrapnel went through a little crack and got him in the head and killed him. He lay right there in his foxhole.

PFC Mel Dahlberg and **Pvt Myrle Traver** of F Company, also had a narrow escape:

Myrle Traver and I were chosen to lead D Company and parts of E Company of the 2nd Battalion down into the valley of Sospel because we had made patrols down in there. We took off about midnight, and we worked our way up to the German command post, which was a chalet. That was their headquarters and they had abandoned it. We got in there early morning and looked over the whole chalet to make sure that they didn't have any time bombs in there, and so forth. We found none. The rest of my own company was coming into Sospel from another direction, we didn't know just where or when, so we stayed overnight in one room. Then Myrle Traver and I got up in the morning, as we needed to go to meet our company. We got a block away and the chalet blew up! She went up in a cloud of smoke. We had missed whatever they had in there to blow the place up. I suppose it was a time bomb, and it killed a number of people. I remember running back, and in that confusion we could see the bodies of the poor guys that had been blown up. There were at least four or five that were killed; I remember a grand piano being on top of one of the guys. Oh, it was terrible.

When you capture something, you have got to be very careful about having set traps. But I remember looking in every nook and cranny of that place, along with officers of D Company. We just missed it! We don't know how it was done, but it was a good blast.



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MailCall News

My grandfather was **Harry A. Hill**, Company B. I saw your recent article about **Joe Lobit's** knife collection. My grandfather took a lot of photos during his time in WWII. I have all of his photos. There is some reference to a **Joe Loobis**, and I'm wondering if they might be the same person. If so, I'd love to get in touch with his family and share some photos.

Thank you,
Andy Hill

Hi Andy,

I looked for Joe Lobit's info a few years ago, when the knife collection was discussed. But wasn't able to find much. He isn't on the December 1944 roster. But the photo caption mentions he is with the 517th and the 13th Airborne, so it is likely that he joined the 517th later in the war. The photo was taken at the end of the war in August 1945 in Camp Pittsburg, France.

I did find just a little more about Joe Lobit, as reported in MailCall 2337:

I did a little more digging and found a copy of a 2008 Veteran's Project interview with Joe Lobit. Also known as **Joseph E. Kelley** – Lobit was his adoptive father's name.
<http://memory.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/story/loc.natlib.afc2001001.64506/transcript?ID=sr0001> In this interview, he talks about Camp MacKall and Fort Benning, but doesn't specifically mention the 517th. So it appears that he joined the 13th Airborne in Germany.

More importantly, since your grandfather was in B Company, it is much more likely that the "Joe Loobis" in your photos is a actually **Cpl. Joseph F. Lubis** who is on the B Company roster.
(http://517prct.org/documents/xmas1944/xmas_1944_company_b1.jpg) I don't have any other info about Cpl. Lubis. But I would love to have some of Harry' Hills B Company photos for the website. If you can scan them and email them to me, I'll add them.

Thanks,

Bob Barrett

Bob: what a moving Mail Call especially Mr. Bradley's description to the Wisconsin school kids of the 6 men depicted in the Iwo Jima memorial. Very fitting reminder as we approach the 4th of July — freedom is not free but achieved only by those who are willing to give their all for others including their very life. Thank you for this Mail Call.

Pat Seitz



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Dear Mr Barrett,

Hope that all is fine for you.

Very busy since several months because we organise one of the bigger event in Belgium for the **75th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge**.

It will be in Grandmenil – MANHAY on December 13-14 – 15, 2019.

Most of 250 retractor will participate at 3 shows during the week-end including several armored vehicles. We hope having most of 200 WWII vehicles and a dozen of Tanks will be present. Some germans, but we will have several US Sherman tanks (M4 – M7), Tank Destroyer M10, Chaffee, M8 etc... We will have for the evening the presence of the Manhathan Dolls from Tucson (AZ) who will be present to sing the WWII music

If you are in the area, do not hesitate to visit us ! <http://www.ardennes-history-remember.be/en/>

On the same spot, we have since a few months, a new WWII Museum called – MHM44 -> Manhay History 44 Museum ! <http://www.mhm44.be/>

It's a private museum with several wonderful decors who relate the events of the Battle of Manhay. We have a place for the 517th with a front of a house of Manhay rebuilt like in 1944 with destruction.

With our best regards from the Ardennes Forest,

Eddy Monfort

Dear, i have a helmet with a laundry number. I cant find the Person but would be great to know who he was/is. Could you help me out? Thanks in advance .

The laundry number is M6528

Regards,
Tim Hendriks

Does anyone know what a laundry number is? Or how to identify who the owner is? – BB



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From: Jean-Loup
Date: June 27, 2019 at 5:11:18 AM EDT
To: JOSEPH Figueiredo, Bob Barrett, Judith Crowe

Subject: MIA Robert Gruwell

Hi All

I have received an email from the town hall in Montauroux. They are planning on unveiling a plaque at the cemetery in Montauroux on 15 August 2019 at 11:30, in memory of missing 517th paratrooper Robert Gruwell. We attempted finding his body in the cemetery in Montauroux in 2017, unfortunately with no success.

Best regards

Jean-Loup Gassend

Objet : Re: Soldat Robert Gruwell

Bonjour,

Claude Bernard est rentré d'Indonésie. Nous avons eu une réunion avec lui; la plaque est commandée et la cérémonie aura lieu le 15 août à 11h30 au vieux cimetière de Montauroux après la cérémonie de commémoration du 15 août qui aura lieu à 11h au monument aux morts sur la place de Montauroux.

Claude Bernard a une autre adresse mail : pp@tripper.com si vous voulez le contacter

Bien cordialement

Robert Cecchinato



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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.
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- 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.

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"I just ain't worth a damn in the morning without a hot cup of coffee."