



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



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

**MailCall No. 2135**

**December 9, 2012**

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

Website  
Mail Call  
Mail Call Archives  
Roster (from 2008)

[www.517prct.org](http://www.517prct.org)  
[MailCall@517prct.org](mailto:MailCall@517prct.org)  
[www.517prct.org/archives](http://www.517prct.org/archives)  
[www.517prct.org/roster.pdf](http://www.517prct.org/roster.pdf)

### *MailCall News*

## WWII Veteran Returns Wedding Photos 68 Years Later

Even though he is 92, Howard Hensleigh remembers 1944 like it was yesterday.

By Cheryl Hurd

| Friday, Dec 7, 2012 | Updated 8:20 PM PST



A Menlo Park World War II veteran will return photos he took from a man he killed in the war back to the man's family in Germany. The grandson of the man he killed understood they were both soldiers and is thrilled to get the photos back after almost 70 years. Cheryl Hurd reports.

<http://www.nbcbayarea.com/news/local/WWII-Veteran>Returns-Wedding-Photos-To-Man-He-Killed-68-Years-Ago-180199801.html>



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Even though he is 92, Howard Hensleigh of Menlo Park remembers 1944 like it was yesterday. That was the year the Army World War II veteran killed a German soldier during a gun battle in Southern France.

"The sergeant that I chose to fire the first shot fired and of course they hit the dirt. Firing going back and forth all the time," Hensleigh said.

Hensleigh, who was an intelligence officer and assistant platoon leader, says he knew the German soldiers were not going to give up without a fight. He says he gave them several chances to give up. But a man he later came to find out was named Georg Reick give him no other choice. Hensleigh shot and killed him during a firefight. Hensleigh said he felt it was something he had to do in order to save his men.



"When you take prisoners you get all the information off of all of them," Hensleigh said. "I hate to admit it but they don't end up with their watches rings and anything else."

In this case, Reick was stripped of personal artifacts, such as pictures of his wife and family and his wedding photo: It was common to confiscate the goods from the dead Germans at the time. Hensleigh took them, and put his enemy's belongings in his personal scrap book.

They stayed there for 68 years until a young French writer named Jean-Loup Gassend came along out of the blue. Gassend was interested in interviewing WWII veterans who served their country in Southern France for a documentary he was working on. While researching online, Gassend found Hensleigh as one of the many U.S. soldiers who had fought in World War II. Gassend flew to the Peninsula to meet Hensleigh, and during their meeting, learned of his story and started to connect the dots.

Gassend then contacted the company that developed pictures. But the company was no longer there. He then sent them to the mayor of the small German town where the soldier lived.

The mayor recognized the dead soldier and put Hensleigh in touch with the soldier's grandson whose name is also Georg Reick.

The grandson and Hensleigh now e-mail each other back and forth. Hensleigh gave Reick's grandson information he's been longing for and Reick Jr. has pictures he thought he would never get.



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Hi, The interview regarding Georg Reick ran on NBC's channel 3, Bay Area, at 11 last evening. I have not seen it, but my friends here who did say the message came across. The VA put a summary on its computer delivered message today. Without your father's and your continuing Mail Call and the 517th website, and Jean Loup's untiring efforts, this could never have happened.

HAPPY PEARL HARBOR DAY,

**Howard Hensleigh**

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Just viewed interview on MSNBC, It's front page.

**Bob Del Carlo**

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*Note: In the 2 days since the story ran on NBC San Francisco, it has been printed on other news services around the country, including MSNBC, NBC news, and the Huffington post. -- BB*

See: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/12/07/war-wedding-photo\\_n\\_2259635.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/12/07/war-wedding-photo_n_2259635.html)

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Hi Bob,

I don't know how my name disappeared from the Thunderbolt list but please make sure that I am on the list! I made sure that I paid my dues this year....I missed last year.. but paid much extra the year before! December 16th is coming up soon and was the start of "The Battle of the Bulge"! There is a picture of our guys in a convoy headed for St Vith...It's my dad ( Odas Sweet) hanging on the side of the truck looking back at the Time-Life camera man.. I saw him in another picture when they got home on the Onieda Victory Ship. He was starting down some steps dragging his duffle bag and Jim Suttcliffe was standing in front of him by the ships rail. I have seen them together in 3-4 pictures. **Bob**, if you can email me that picture I would appreciate it. I seemed to have lost it and couldn't find it in the pictures on the 517th site...It has to be there somewhere ?!?! I also want to wish our vets the Best of holidays and a Merry Christmas! **1944 had to of been the worst but still a great memory to you...Could we hear some stories about Your adventures and Christmas celebration that December? Please??**



Jean Michel is in the middle of restoring a glider that was damaged in the flood. He is a hard worker and deserves allot of respect for what he does for the 517th! God Bless the United States and our Airborne!!

S.O.B ( son of a buzzard)

**Rick Sweet**

I also want to let everyone know that I owned a poker set ( pictures attached ) that belonged to Lt Dick Spencer. I purchased it from his daughter B J on Ebay...He used it during WWII during times when there was a lull in battle... maybe even took some of our dads money ha ha. I have donated it to Jean Michel Soldi so that it will be displayed in the Airborne Museum in France, where it belongs! I also sent him a copy of Lory's movie "Saints and Soldiers-Airborne Creed". They are moving the museum to avoid future floods and



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We're still working on updating the Thunderbolt mailing list. When I am done (soon, I hope), I'll post the updated list. -- BB

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Although MailCall carried an obituary notice for **Donald E. Walker, B Company**, who passed on August 23, 2012, contact information for **Virginia Walker** was not included. I have recently learned from her that she has not heard from anyone in the 517 and clearly, this was the reason. This has been and remains a very difficult time for her and those who knew Don and Virginia (Ginger) might like to drop her a note. Your prayers are also appreciated. She is not on email. This is her address:

Virginia Walker  
2209 Shepherd St.  
Wichita Falls, TX 76309

Thank you,  
**Brenda Verbeck Mortensen**

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Just a quick note

On Nov 28, 2012 the IRS approved the 517th request for an *expedited processing* of the retroactive reinstatement of the tax exempt status. The application will be assigned to the next available determination specialist. They did go on to say that this not guarantee the approval of the application for exemption.

Bobby and I worked on the address roster this past Sunday but did not finish. Bobby took the remaining addresses home and hopes to get the addresses off to Lory in a week. Still trying for a Thunderbolt before Christmas.

Bobby, could you scan and send Claire the letter from the family (forget the name right now) whose father passed and requested he be recognized in the next newsletter

Joanne Barrett

*[I'll get the soldier's story into next week's MailCall. – BB]*

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### ***Where's Lory?***

For those who have watched *Saints and Soldiers – Airborne Creed*, You may have noticed that **Lory Curtis** gets credit at the end not only as an advisor, but as an actor. Has anyone spotted him yet? Yes, he does have a cameo in one scene.

**Answer:** I'm at the end where Rossi is at the aide station with the French girl. There are soldiers pushing a line of Germans. I am the last soldier on the right. Put the DVD on slow mo and you will see me.



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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.
- 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 Dues, etc.) and make all checks payable to:

**517 PRCT Association, Inc.**

c/o Joanne Barrett  
70 Pleasant Street  
Cohasset, MA 02025

517 PRCT Florida Mini Reunion 2013  
Ramada Hotel & Inn Gateway, Kissimmee, FL

Reunion Registration Form  
January 18 – 21

Name\_\_\_\_\_ Spouse\_\_\_\_\_

Guest Names\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_\_\_\_\_

City\_\_\_\_\_ State\_\_\_\_\_ Zip\_\_\_\_\_

Phone (Home)\_\_\_\_\_ Cellphone\_\_\_\_\_

Unit\_\_\_\_\_ Arrival Date\_\_\_\_\_

Registration Fee - \$45.00  
(Includes Banquet Dinner and Hospitality Room)

Banquet Dinner: Roast Beef\_\_\_\_\_ (# of people)

Chicken Marsala \_\_\_\_\_ (# of people)

Fresh Catch of the Day\_\_\_\_\_ (# of people)

Please send this registration form with your **check made out to**  
**517 PRCT Reunion by December 15<sup>th</sup>** to:

Brenda Verbeck Mortensen  
13046 Race Track Road #220  
Tampa, FL 33626  
Phone: 813-335-8002  
Email: bverbeck@gmail.com

## **517 PRCT FLORIDA MINI REUNION, January 2013**

### **WHERE:**

Ramada Hotel & Inn Gateway  
7470 Hwy 192 West  
Kissimmee, FL 34741

800-327-9170

**WHEN:** January 18 – 21

(Hospitality Room Opens Evening of January 18)

### **RATES:**

A double room is \$65.00,, Tower rooms \$75.00. They will provide these rates for the period +/- five days of the actual reunion to allow for early arrivals and stay-overs.

### **MAKING YOUR RESERVATION:**

**CALL 800-327-9170**

***Identify yourself as attending the 517 PRCT Reunion to get this special rate, WHICH INCLUDES BREAKFAST.***

### **SCHEDULE:**

The hospitality suite will be open 5pm to 10pm on Friday  
10 am to 10 pm on Saturday through Sunday  
10 am to 5pm and after dinner on Monday

Registration: Saturday morning

Rides to Services on Sunday can be arranged

Monday: Memorial Service 6:30 - 6:45 pm; Banquet 6:45 – 10pm

Hospitality suite open following the dinner

For further information contact

Brenda Verbeck Mortensen, 813-335-8002

bverbeck@gmail.com