



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2348

February 26, 2017

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

Bill Hudson, 596th PCEC

I spoke to **Gloria Hudson** last night. She called to make sure that we all knew that **Bill Hudson** passed away on December 30th. (Which we reported in previous MailCalls, with his obituary in [MailCall 2346](#).) Gloria and Bill were well known among the 596th and 517th families, and attended many of the reunions over the years. Gloria is not on MailCall, but I will be sending her copies of some of the MailCall letters that mention Bill, She is planning on having a tribute ceremony to Bill in the future.

– Bob B.



Phot of Bill Hudson
from the [596th group photo at Camp MacKall](#),



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



Bill Hudson in Italy, 1944

Howie Battle
and Bill
Hudson



Verdi, Hudson, Zubricky,
Misaage, Harrell



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



Misaege, Spencer BE, Kinyson, Botts,
Hudson

Gloria and Bill
1985

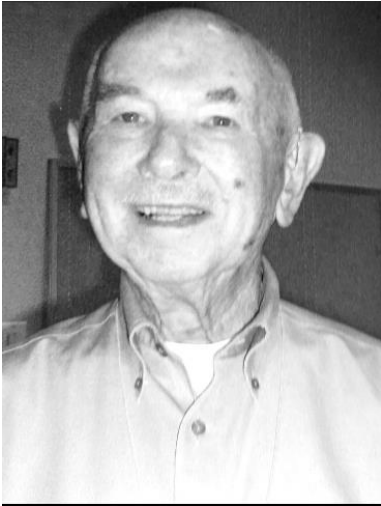




517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

George Robert (Bob) “Doc” Lecklider, A Company

Published Jul 24, 2016 at 12:02AM

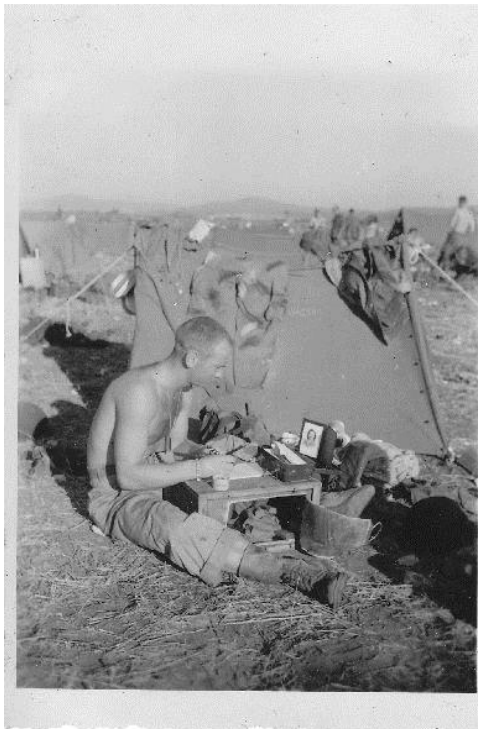


G. Robert (Bob) Lecklider passed at home at the age of 93 on May 16, 2016. He was preceded in death in December, 2014, by his wife of 61 years, Nancy. They were both long term residents of the area. Bob was an avid golfer, downhill skier and pilot throughout his life. He worked professionally as a Civil Engineer and Land Surveyor in Oregon and Alaska. He also taught Surveying and Drafting at the Oregon Institute of Technology for 17 years. As a young man, he enlisted in the Army and was accepted into paratrooper training. He would later serve as a corpsman in the medical detachment, and eventually was attached to A Company, 1st Battalion, 517th Airborne Division which was part of the European invasion during World War II. Through his stunning courage and bravery (although he would never admit it openly), Bob was awarded three Purple Hearts, two Bronze Stars and a Silver Star. His commendation stated: “Corporal

Lecklider, with complete disregard for his own personal safety, advanced to a front line position to administer first aid and evacuate the seriously wounded. His courage and cool indifference to all types of enemy fire reflects the highest credit upon himself and the Airborne Forces of the United States Army.” He is survived by his daughter Barbara, son Brad, granddaughters Megan and Caitlin, and his two great-granddaughters Kamryn and Hazel. A joint celebration of Bob and Nancy’s life together is planned for mid-August.

From: <http://www.bendbulletin.com/obituaries/4524763-151/g-robert-bob-lecklider>

Maritime Alps photos from: http://www.517prct.org/photos/george_sullivan/george_sullivan.htm





517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

MailCall News

Dear MailCall readers,

You don't know me, I do not know you.

My name is Peter Steinman, 73 years old, married to AnneMarie and living in Holland.

For years I am interested in what happened in World War II and especially in Belgium during The Battle of the Bulge. We went on holiday to Belgium many times, staying in the village of Bergeval.

During those holidays we walked a lot with our hunting dogs in the woods in the neighbourhood and so we came several times in the village of Logbierme, where the monument **for Albert Caraciolo, Hubert Ford, William Spears, Bruno Baraglia and Walter Jacobsen** is situated.

Since then I have been searching on the internet for more information about those men and found some on the veterans website of the 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment where you also can read what happened on January 14th 1945.

I know Albert and Bruno were repatriated to the US and buried in their home ground. I didn't find more traces of them on internet.

Last holiday we visited the American Cemetery Henri Chapelle in Belgium, saw the graves of Ford, Spears and Jacobsen and were very impressed because of the story and how the cemetery was looking. Enclosed a picture of Ford's grave.

The Dutch people (surely of my generation) are very thankful for the efforts the US made to free Europe (and The Netherlands).

The names in Logbierme and the story behind them gives what happened a human face and do realize that such very young men gave their lives for our freedom. I feel pity for them: they were not able to live the lives they earned.

That is what I wanted you MailCall-readers to know. Just an opportunity to express my feelings. I hope this mail arrives at the right place and perhaps you can insert it in a next edition of MailCall.

Thanks for your attention.
With best regards,

Peter Steinman,
Van Ewijckskade 2,
1741 JA Anna Paulowna.
Holland.





517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Memorial for Albert and his comrades at Lobieme



Found at Chester County Hall of Heroes:
<http://chescoheroes.org/364/Caraciolo-Albert-J>

Albert J. Caraciolo was born on December 3, 1923 to Dominic and Josephine of West Chester, Pennsylvania. Albert was one of eight children. His parents owned and operated a grocery store.

Albert was known as a quiet, but fun loving guy. His neighbor, Sam Ricardo remembers that he was a talented sketch artist and sketched the Chester County Courthouse and the "Old Glory" monument.

Albert graduated from St. Agnes High School in 1941. He then obtained employment as a welder at the John Wood Company in Conshohocken.

Albert entered the Army in late 1942. He received basic training, then trained as a paratrooper, earning his silver wings



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

in February, 1944. He returned home on a 12 day leave in March, the last time his family saw him alive. After visiting home, he was sent to Fort Benning, Georgia for advanced training, and then overseas to the European Theater in April, 1944.

Albert served with the 517th Infantry Parachute Combat Team - one of the Army's first elite combat units in WWII, and the only independent combat team that served in the European Theater during the war. It was composed of the 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment, the 406th Parachute Field Artillery Battalion, and the 596th Parachute Combat Engineer Company. These units originally came from the 17th Airborne Division. Albert was assigned to Company C of the Parachute Regiment.

The 517th PRCT entered combat in Northern Italy in June, 1944. They parachuted into combat to support the landings in Southern France "[Operation Dragoon](#)" in August capturing St Vallier. The 517th fought in a number of battles in the advancement through France.

The night of December 15-16, the Germans launched their last great offensive during that unusually harsh winter. Three German armored divisions attacked weakened allied positions in the Ardennes region of Belgium and Luxemburg. The attack achieved surprise, and they broke through our lines. Due to the severe weather, our aircraft were grounded, and air support and supplies were not available for several days. This became known as the [Battle of the Bulge](#) – as the German offensive created a huge bulge in our lines.

The 517th PRCT was sent into action along with a number of other divisions and units. There was a mad rush to stop the German advance and to reinforce our lines. Company C of the 517 PRCT was sent by trucks (poor weather prevented airlift), to Stavelot, Belgium. From there they advanced in the town of Coules, and on to Logbierme. Albert's unit then came under heavy sniper fire, It was during this battle that Albert lost his life.

Corporal Albert J. Caraciolo died on January 14, 1945 in Belgium. His parents received the telegram on January 29th, but it included very little information. His mother tried in vain to find out about her son's death. She published notices in September that she would gladly pay expenses or telephone charges for anyone who could provide her with information on her son's death.

Albert was initially buried in France, at the Rhone American Cemetery, in Belgium, but was returned home in November, 1947. On November 8, 1947, a military funeral was held at his parent's home followed by Solemn Requiem Mass at St. Agnes Church in West Chester. Albert was buried at St. Agnes Cemetery with full military honors.

Corporal Albert J. Caraciolo received the following medals:

- Bronze Star for exemplary conduct in ground combat
- Good Conduct Medal
- American Campaign Service Ribbon
- European–African Middle Eastern Campaign Service Ribbon with two bronze stars
- Distinguished Unit Emblem
- Victory Medal
- Combat Infantry Marksman Badge with Rifle Bar
- Purple Heart



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

His brother, Private Anthony Caraciolo, served in the Aleutians.

His mother published a verse titled *To my Soldier Boy* to honor the loss of her son.

To My Soldier Boy

by Josephine Caraciolo, mother of [Hero Anthony Caraciolo](#)

I've been grieving about you dear Albert
And shedding so many tears.
Tears, my boy, I shed in silence
During the last two lonely years.

The telegram came so sudden,
Right out of a clear blue sky.
Oh, the shock was so terrific,
For you were too young to die.

But this is my greatest sorrow,
And how can I help but cry.
You never got the chance, my boy,
To bid your loved ones goodbye.

When just 18, you volunteered,
Without a fear of the enemy's gun.
Never, never thinking, my dear son,
You would lose your life at twenty-one.

On that bitter cold day, in Belgium,
January the 14th, nineteen forty-five,
You went out on a mission, smiling,
But you didn't come back alive.

A letter tells me you went suddenly,
With no time to realize, of course.
We would get that awful message
And shed tears of blood over your loss.

So only God knows the sorrow,
Only God knows the ache,
That is always in my heart
With every breath I take.

But there's still one consolation left,
That kind of eases my sad heart.
I know we'll meet again some day,
Never, never more to part.

Some day, I hope to see you, son.
Some day, I know not when,
To hear you call me "Little Mom"
When we shall be together again.

Then as we clasp each other's hand
The Lord will make me understand
Why on earth we had to part.
Then He will heal my broken heart.

All my tears will turn to joy my boy,
As we go walking, side by side
With Angels singing, joy bells ringing.
Then your "Little Mom" will be satisfied.

And if by some miracle, dear, Albert,
To your loved ones you should come back.
Why you wouldn't know your "little Mom"?
Who is always dressed in black.

Dressed in black for you, dear,
For life will never be the same
But I never miss a day dear Albert,
That I don't mention your name.

So I won't say good-bye forever, Son,
For I know that it's just for a while
It may be days, or it may be years.
But through my tears I'll try and smile.

So "Little Mom", my boy, will try her best
With God's help to get along.
I know it's true, I'll be seeing you.
Until then, "So long, my boy", so long



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Subject: **Capt Robert Woodhull** and **Howard Hensleigh** not forgotten

Dear Sirs and madam's

For your I adopted the grave off **Cpt Robert Woodhull** nick named Woody. I still tend the grave but I'm also interested in his story and that of others of the 517th PRCT. Last weekend I visited Bergstein were the 517PRCT and attached units saw some of the heaviest battles in their history.

Here is the story,



Jump off point for the 1st battalion of the 517th PRCT to attack hill 400 and later also for the 508th PIR who took over from the 517th.

It was from the hill on the right that the 2nd and 3rd battalion of the 517 PRCT attacked hill 400



They tried to come down the hill into the Valley and up the hill on the left which was very steep and long



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



Hill 400 would be at our back

The terrain the 2nd and 3rd battalion of the 517 PRCT had to clear before reaching Hill 400 on our left hand.



On top of the hill on the right was a minefield placed by the Germans. On Hill 400 Machineguns had a good view and open shooting field. From HH we learned the Germans were furious and the concentration of Artillery, minefields and machinegun fire worse than ever.



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

From a personal friend of mine and Woody we learned the following

Lt. Hensleigh: "During the next few days, the 517th would encounter some of the most violent fighting of the war, under the severest of weather conditions. During this period in the Bergstein- Schmidt area of the Huertgen Forest, the 460th Fire Direction Center coordinated their heaviest concentration of artillery fire of the war. 14 battalions of division and corps artillery, FO Captain Robert Woodhull was killed while directing fire and FO team member, Battalion Operations Sergeant, Tech Sergeant George Hubbard was seriously wounded.



Now, to that morning. We were new to the terrain around Bergstein having just arrived there before the attack. The Germans had been there for several months defending that terrain. They had laid extensive mine fields and had machine gun, mortar and artillery zeroed in to protect well organized defensive positions. From the outset, our attacking infantry units were in serious trouble. When they hit the mine fields, the supporting enemy fire came in with devastating effect. What Woody and I were attempting to do was to give G, H and I Companies artillery support in their attacks. We got too close that morning.

Woodhull was killed by a burst of machine gun fire not more than three feet from me at Bergstein. We were doing our "damnedest" to assist the attack with artillery, probably a little too far forward for an OP, which was usual with Woody. Red Meline and I directed artillery fire to wipe out the machine gun nest after his death. His radio man, I believe a **Sgt. Riddle**, previously was wounded in the lower leg by a burst of the same gun. That burst went between my legs miraculously not even nicking me. He was standing just behind me and was evacuated. We remained in that position all day serving as a communications link between the rifle companies and higher headquarters.

Bergstein was a heart rending diversionary attack – our last taste of combat and a bad one. A diversionary attack is just that though – an attack to fool the enemy into thinking your main thrust is from one direction, when you really intend to get him from another. If you tell the attacker to put on a good show and not take too many casualties, it probably won't fool the enemy and won't be successful. In an attempt to remove some of the bitterness we feel in our enormous losses at Bergstein, personal as well as organizational, we must credit ourselves with the fact that it was a successful diversionary attack. When that outfit swept in from the right with tanks and artillery, they rolled. They rolled because of what we did in that diversionary attack.

I often wonder how we could have done things differently to save Woody's life. He was a prince of a man.



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



The hill which the 517th came over to attack hill 400. if they passed the mine fields and the artillery, then they left the tree lines and came into open fields. Woody kept going and was in the front line center to radio back coordinates to HQ battery of the 460th PFAB

Woodie was promoted from 1st Lt. to Captain in Southern France and was assigned to the 3rd Battalion 517th Parachute Infantry as artillery liaison officer, where I was the S-2 (Intelligence). He and his radio man, Herb Jeff, (who passed away recently) accompanied us on all our patrols which we performed 2 or 3 times a week during the 90 days we were on the lines in S. France. We worked as a team and Woodie would call in artillery to take care of targets of opportunity, to slow down enemy forces who were coming after us when we got too deep into enemy territory, and to destroy targets we spotted after we made it back inside our own lines. He was a graduate of Princeton University and we shared many discussions on the War strategy in general as well as our personal objectives in life. We were all a band of brothers, but in addition he was a strong personal friend.

After turning the Bulge inside out, the bloodiest combat we faced was in Bergstein, Germany where we were given a diversionary attack order (an attack in one direction to fool the enemy when the main attack is coming from another). Woodie was killed by a burst of machine gun fire in that attack right beside me as we were directing artillery fire in support of our attacking troops. Question could be raised as to whether we were too far forward, but that is where we always were so that we could know what was going on in the attack and support the troopers who were taking the ground.

I remember him frequently, not just on Memorial Day, and am gratified that a good resident of the Netherlands (are there any other kind?) has adopted his grave. Although I find the name Woodhull as one of the fighters in our Revolution in the Book "1776" Herb Jeff told me that Woodie was the last of his family line, one of the great losses from WWII.

We express our appreciation from the entire 517th Combat Team for honoring one of our finest fallen

An excerpt from a personal letter to me sent by Howard Hensleigh CO 3rd battalion / 517th PRCT a very good friend of **Cpt Woodhull** and with him every step of the way during the fights, Bergstein was no exception.

God bless you all my friends of the 517th PRCT!

Best regards

Ronald Stassen
The Netherlands

Subject: Remembering "Dick" Seitz

Want the 517th Family, and especially the Seitz Family, to know we are thinking about "Dick" on his Birthday today, 18Feb1918. Many Troopers became MEN because of this fine man!

Kenton Floyd Immerfall

Nephew of **Floyd A. Stott**, 1st Lt., Co. "I", 3rd Bat., 517th PRCT

Hi Bob,



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

I saw the email from **Jeff Rossi** about his dad **George Rossi** and the fact that his mom passed away last year. I know my dad, **Warren Caulfield**, was close with George and my mom was very friendly with his wife. My mom said they spent a lot of time together at the conventions.

She'd like me to send her condolences because she said she spoke to her over a year ago and I believe it was Jeff that got them together on the phone.

It would be much appreciated and maybe he has some pictures of the 4 of them together.

Thanks so much-as always I enjoy the MailCall and appreciate all your hard work and dedication

Shelly Caulfield Azeff

Shelly, I am copying Jeff on your email.

Bob Barrett

Thank you so much Bob,
Have a great weekend

Shelly

I wanted to let you know that my father, **Marvin Moles**, is # 8 in the I Company picture.

Diane Lynch

Saw this today. I put both videos. The first is the people on the plane that had gotten word that they had to wait because one of our fallen had to leave the plane first. So they broke out in song.

The second is the family greeting their fallen soldier.

It is good to know that there are still young people out there that realize how important our men and women in service are. and of course, I cried and cried.

Over 200,000 hits on you tube, as of this writing

Blessings to all,

Anne Justice

<http://ijr.com/2016/07/660673-choir-sings-battle-hymn-of-the-republic-after-remains-of-wwii-soldier-are-brought-on-their-flight/>



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Dear Bob, As you know, I work on several projects including a book on the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team. Thanks to you, I got a contact with several families of the 517th PRCT and also from other who, I think were not in the mailcall. They gave me lots of documents, photos and stories.

However, I am still looking for many things. Like pictures of the Combat Team taken on the front line in Italy, the Bulge and in Hürtgen, there is a lot of stories and testimonials, but the photos (although very numerous sometimes) are rare in some cases. Thanks to **Claire Giblin** I was able to interview his dad and other veterans and I have telephoned a dozen others of different units having fought in Southern France

As I write this mail, a veteran named John Devanie is on a hospital bed. John was not part of the 517th but of the 509th Parachute Infantry and was a pathfinder during Operation Dragoon. He was the first veteran I spoke to by mail 5 years ago and we have built a solid friendship hundreds of miles away. In 2014, he met a friend of his pathfinder stick that he had not seen since then... And I could have a contact with him also.

The history of these men, this unity, deserves to be known and I ask the help of all the families who will read this message. I have to say that until then I can thank many, including **Mike Wells, Bonnie Nowiski**, and many others as well as collectors from the south of France.

I am looking for a contact with **George Lecklider** for example and men of the 3rd Battalion and the E Company. It's getting harder to get one but I'm trying to persevere.

Best regards,

Loïc, from Southern France.

www.1stabtf.com



From the 517th website guestbook:

| Submitted by | Comments: |
|--|---|
| Name: Ray C Scheesley From: Alfred Station, NY E-mail: schees1@gmail.com | My Uncle, PVT Vanderpool, Walter 517th RCT Co. D 17th Airborne Div. K.I.A. 04 Nov 1944 Sospel, France |
| Added: February 26, 2017 | |



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

I would like to submit my great Uncle

PVT Vanderpool, Walter

517th PIR Co. D

17th ABN Div.

who was killed in action on 04 Nov 1944 in Sospel, France I am still researching what medals (if any) he received. He was my Grandmothers baby brother and she took this very hard the rest of her life. When her only grandson (me) enlisted with the XVIII Airborne Corps Dragon BDE. she went into a serious depression.

Respectfully submitted.....

Scheesley, Ray C

XVIII ABN CPS Co. C Dragon BDE

Joint Task Force South

Long Range Recon Patrol Det. C

Op. Just Cause, Invasion of Panama, 20 DEC 1989 - 20 JAN 1990



PVT Vanderpool, Walter
517th PIR, Co D,
17th Airborne Div
KIA 04 NOV, 1944
Sospel, France



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

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

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