



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2441

April 12, 2020

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

MailCall News



From: <https://twitter.com/corinne/status/1245875723841212419/photo/1>



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

On Page 7 of the April 5 Mail Call (#2440) you mentioned that **Ray Helms** is not listed in the Christmas 1944 roster of the 517th. Is that something other than the roster posted on the 517th web site titled "517th Parachute Infantry Combat Team, Christmas 1944 in France"?.. If not, then he does appear to be in the roster posted on the web site under E-Company in the section that lists Sergeants.

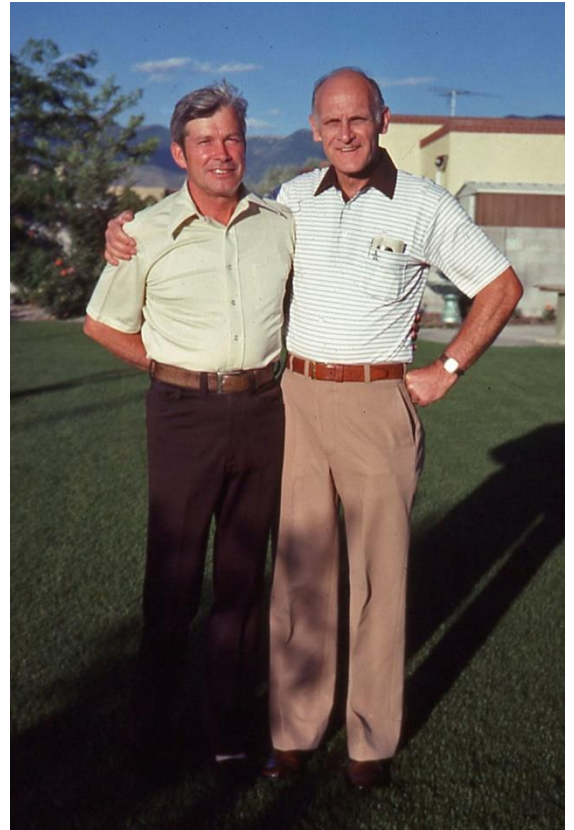
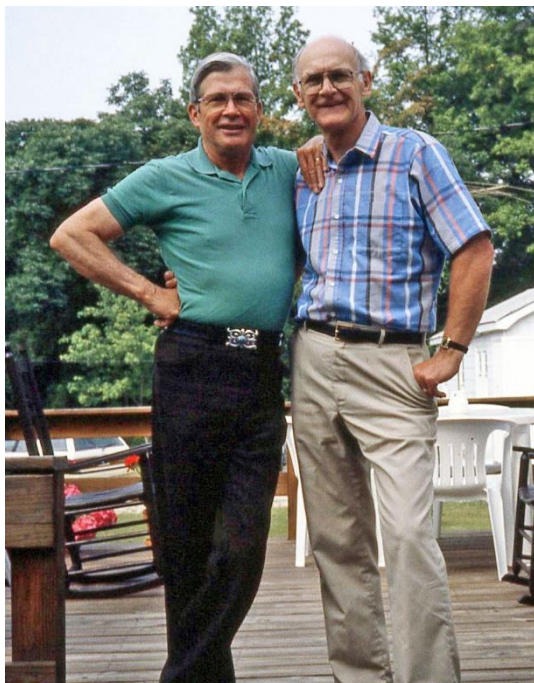
Also, on Page 5 I saw **John Krumm's** note about **Gene Brissey** being his father's squad leader. I'm going to assume his father also knew my dad. According to Gene's memoir my dad was the leader of the squad that Gene was in before he was wounded at La Roquette, and then Gene became the squad leader when my dad was wounded. According to Gene's story, when my dad came back he became the squad leader again and Gene became leader of another squad. I have no idea how often these squad leader jobs got shuffled around during the war. If John or anyone else in E-Company has any photos that might include my dad I would love to have them. He didn't have a lot of photos from his time in service.

Since you posted that photo of Gene and Edie, I found a couple photos of my dad and Gene. The first one was made at Gene's home in New Mexico back in 1978 when my parents visited on a trip they took out west. The second photo was taken at my parent's home in North Carolina, probably sometime in the 1980s, on a visit Gene and Edie made back east. The third photo was taken at some kind of 517th reunion, which I believe was in Fayetteville, NC around 1974. I can identify my dad and Gene in the photo, but I don't know who the other folks are. If there is anyone out there who can identify them I'd like get their names.

FYI, in the group photo my dad is the last man on the right on the first row and Gene is standing behind him.

Thanks,

Glenn Helms





517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



E Company Reunion
Fayetteville, NC 1975

Back Row: ?, ?, ?, ?, ?,
?

Middle: ?, Gene
Brissey

Front: ?? Gene "Chop
Chop" Mars, ?, Ray
Helms

Hi Glenn,

You are correct **Ray Helms** is on the Christmas 1944 roster with E Company. Sorry I missed that.

Thanks for the pictures. In the 1975 NC Reunion photo, I recognize a number of the faces, but I don't know the names, so it will be a good test for the MailCall readers. The only one I know for sure is the center front row is **Gene "Chop Chop" Mars** from WA. I remember that my father, **Ben Barrett**, was very upset when Gene stopped coming to the reunions after his wife died. Apparently, he was a quite a bright light that everyone knew. "Chop Chop" was actually in the 2nd Battalion HQ Company.

In looking through some old reunion photos, I found a set from 1983 at San Mateo, CA (http://www.517prct.org/reunions/1983_san_mateo/1983_san_mateo.htm), which includes another E Company photo with names. Unfortunately the names are in no order. http://www.517prct.org/reunions/1983_san_mateo/1983_san_mateo_20.jpg So the only one there I can identify by face is Gene Brissey.

I did find one more new picture of E Company soldiers with **Gene Brissey**, in **Loïc Jankowiak's** new book, but I don't think any of them is your dad. (Next page)

Regards,

Bob Barrett



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



Robert Morris on the extreme left who was part of the Pathfinder Platoon and **Eugene Brissey** in the center. The five paratroopers are part of E Company. This photo was taken after 93 days on the front line. (Bill Morris collection) From *The 517th's Gang*

Thank you for an exceptional Mail Call. It is hard to pick a favorite part among **John Krumm**'s note and pictures about **Gene Brissey** to the joint detective work that you and **Glenn Helms** undertook re his Dad's hospital records to the photos of the 2nd Battalion Offices (with photos of my Dad, his best man **Tom Cross** and my godfather **John Lissner**). It was interesting to learn the timing of the Toccoa Company photos.

I especially enjoyed the little story about **Tom Cross** at the end, your photo and quip about the soldier caring the donkey (Alan and I laughed out loud) and the chance to see **Darrell Egner**'s smiling face.

On behalf of all of the 517th family thank you for so beautifully and interestingly preserving and sharing the 517th's history and the stories about its heroes. You are a gift to us all. Know your Dad is beaming proudly.

Happy Easter and Happy Passover.

Pat Seitz



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



Bob at the end of the last Mail Call there was a tongue in cheek comment of it being argued by some in the Regiment if dad was the luckiest or unluckiest member of the Regiment. I think **Howard Hensleigh** offered that observation. It is true that Dad broke his leg (not his ankle) on the jump into S. France but he sure didn't consider it lucky. With the broken leg he organized a Company-sized element (comprised of mostly E and F Company troopers of the 2nd Battalion and led it most of the way to their jump objective of La Motte. When he glanced off a tree into a ditch his trench knife snapped his lower leg (tibia) as he rolled into a ditch. He managed to get to his feet, organize a Company sized element and got them headed to their objective. On the way to La Motte Dad's element met up with **Lt. Col Seitz** and a group he had gathered, and the combined column made it to the Day 1 objective. Dad said the entire way a German M42 team was following the column and firing on it. Dad mentioned he didn't want to take cover as he knew if he went prone or sat down he wouldn't be able to get on his feet again and knowing how the Germans treated captured paratroopers in Normandy it offered him a little added incentive to keep moving. So during rest breaks and while under fire, Dad would continue to move from the rear of the column to the front of the column to allow him to progress with the column to La Motte. Once they achieved their objective, Dad sat down and couldn't get up again. **Lt. Col. Seitz** ordered him to stand down and seek medical attention. Dad gave his Thompson to one of the troopers in 2nd Battalion, would not allow anyone to remain with him until Aid arrived, and he waited under a tree with his .45 in his lap while the 2nd Battalion soon moved on towards Les Arcs. Eventually he was picked up by medics and was taken to a local Chateau near La Motte that was operating as a field aid station.

In an interesting side note the Aid Station contained both American and German casualties. A young German enlisted soldier was lying next to my Dad with a mortal wound to his abdomen. Dad noticed that the two daughters of the owner of the Chateau seemed to know the young German and were distraught with his suffering. Dad injected the young soldier with his morphine styrene to ease his pain both out of compassion and because he didn't want to use the morphine on himself in case the Aid Station was overrun, he wanted a clear head. The young soldier died in his arms as he was trying to give him a drink of water.



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Eventually **Col. Graves** sent a jeep to the Aid Station to pick up Dad and return him to the Regimental CP at the Chateau St. Roseline. When Dad got there the Glider element was still coming in and a large number of injured glider troops were being cared for at the Chateau by the **Regimental Surgeon Captain Vella**. Dad said the noise of splintering wood was sickening as many gliders hit trees and obstacles. **Col. Graves** and his new Exec, **Major Forrest Paxton** (**Lt. Col Walton** and **Major Pierce** had been severely injured in the jump) determined that they needed to get a better handle on the location and situation of other Regimental Battalion elements and before leaving the CP Col Graves placed Dad in command of the Regimental CP as Dad was one of the only Field Grade Officers left at The Regimental CP. So after Lt. Seitz had ordered my father to seek medical attention, Col. Graves ordered Dad to take over the Regimental CP in his absence. Dad took the healthy glider pilots awaiting evacuation to the beach and deployed them on the Regimental defensive perimeter. The Regimental CP intelligence officer had information that a German column had been sighted and could be headed towards the CP. The Glider pilots were very trigger happy and my father thought they might scare the Germans as much as some of the paratroopers at St. Roseline in terms of potentially taking a stray bullet from one of the Glider pilots.

Dad was nominated for the Silver Star for this action. If he hadn't been evacuated to Italy for his leg, he would have received the Silver Star in the field. Because Dad was evacuated, the citation rattled around the Regimental HQ for most of the rest of the War as the 517th was pretty much occupied on the line until the end of the War and wasn't famous for their paperwork skills! As most of you know the 517th was eventually assigned to the 13th Airborne Division towards the end of the War. The 13th was the only Airborne Division that did not see combat during the War. However, some of their Division staff officers did review the outstanding medal citations for a number of 517th troopers still had outstanding citations from S. France. In their infinite wisdom they decided to reduce the citations for a number of troopers like my Father from Silver Stars to Bronze Star with V clasp. Same thing happened to **Howard Hensleigh**. This is one of the reasons that there was no love lost between the 517th and the 13th Airborne. In any event, the point I was going to make is that Dad was not out of action when he broke his leg. He was actually about to get pretty busy!

One last comment and that concerns when Dad's patrol that got hit near Trois Points during the Bulge. The shell that hit them was probably from a tank not motor fire. Before my Dad got to the Battalion CP the Germans had bracketed the house in which the CP was located and then they shut down fire. They waited until the target started to buzz with activity as Dad was organizing and briefing the patrol he was to lead. They were going to scout the line of departure for the attack across the Salm river which was planned for the next day. A single delayed fuse shell came in, went through the roof of the CP and out the wall of the kitchen into the courtyard where my Father and his men were reviewing the patrol objectives. The shell hit within a couple yards of my Father and killed **Cpl. Archie Brown** who had just handed my Dad's map case to him. Everyone else in the courtyard was seriously wounded. Dad took shrapnel to the head, face, chest and legs. It blew away a pretty good piece of his right calf, but he later noticed that he didn't bleed badly as the shell fragment was so hot it cauterized the wound. Dad got up and staggered toward the house and the facade over the doorway collapsed on him. That was probably the little of that bad luck mojo adding insult to injury. The Shell fragments had cut his helmet off his head. So I can see the luck element as he should have never made it through that hit and it caused him to miss the rest of the Bulge and the Huertgen Forrest. However, if you asked him he would rather have been there with his comrades. He came back to the 517th twice from wounds so you know where his heart was.

Thanks,

Wayne Cross



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



From:

<https://www.instagram.com/ww2.marketgarden/?hl=en>

Every history buff has this problem

Subject: Paratroopers' Odyssey

Hi, I am writing stories for our family genealogy, and those who served in WW II. I would like to add an excerpt in it to honor my cousin **Albert Caraciolo** who was with the 517th and was mortally wounded in Logbierme during the Battle of the Bulge. The "Paratroopers' Odyssey" states that it is copyrighted, and written permission is required to reproduce any of it. I would like to copy the map and a few paragraphs that describe the mission where he gave his life on January 14, 1945.

Thank you,

Raymond Lopez
Newtown Square, PA

Hi Raymond,

The *Paratroopers Odyssey* is indeed copyrighted. But since the 517th Association has freely given permission in the past to use sections of it, including on the website, while I cannot speak for them, I'm sure no one will mind. I expect that's the purpose of this journal, to save the 517th history for families and historians.

There are a number of mentions about **Albert Caraciolo** in the website and in past MailCall newsletters. You can find all those notes by doing a website search: <https://www.google.com/search?q=Caraciolo+&sitesearch=517PRCT.org>

The battle where he was killed is mentioned briefly on Page 36 of the "Record of Company C" http://517prct.org/documents/c_co_history/c_co_history.htm

Also there is a page about Cpl. Caraciolo in the Chester (PA) Hall of Heroes website: <https://www.chescoheroes.org/364/Caraciolo-Albert-J>

By the way, I did visit Belgium with my dad in 2009, and the locals took us to visit the memorial in Logbierme. To this day, our friends in Belgium still honor the soldiers and American troops who helped liberate them in WWII.

Hope this helps,
Bob Barrett



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



Monument to the 5 GI's killed in action on 15 January 45 of the 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment, C Company

Cpl. Albert J Caraciolo
PFC Hubert B. Ford
Pvt. Bruno P. Baraglia
Sgt. William F. Spears
PFC Walter E. Jacobsen

"Ne Les Oubliez Pas"



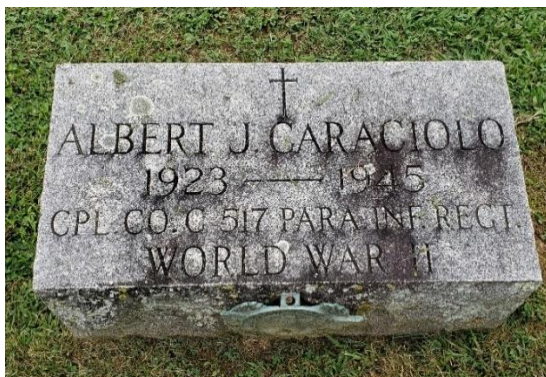
Thank you for the quick response, I thought it would be ok, but wanted to ask anyway. I'll insert the information in our family history and credit the source. I did see some previous contact where my cousin Albert's wife contacted you, he was the namesake for his Uncle Albert who was killed. I imagine there are not many members still alive as we are approaching the 75th anniversary of the wars end. I was invited to a local Marine Corp picnic last year and commented to a friend how small the present group was from past picnics, he just commented that they were all dying, and these are Korean and Viet Nam vets.

I live only a few miles from the cemetery where my cousin Albert was reinterred after the war; I have visited the grave.

One letter sent into the 517th from a man in Belgium stated that he visited the memorial and that it was in the woods. I tried to look on Google maps but could not find it when I zoomed in as far as I could. Was the memorial that you visited with your father within the town limits, it is not a very big town even today?

Thanks again,
Ray

I see the cemetery images on Findagrave.com, from the cemetery in West Chester, PA. -- BB



It also says that he was originally interred at the Rhone American Cemetery in Belgium.



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

And now you got my interest. I visited the Logbierme memorial myself in 2009. It is not a big town, and all I remembered is that it was in a triangle intersection. Since it is a small town it actually did not take me too long to find it on Google maps. Just a bit southeast of Trois Pons and Wanne:



<-- See that triangle in the lower center? Zoom in. Hmm...



Then Street view, and yep, there it is!



You're too good, thanks for the recon mission. My AF unit were forward air controllers, there's nothing like boots on the ground.

I went by the MailCall #2348 letter by Peter Steinman stating that he walked his dogs in the woods, so I thought he meant the woods surrounding Logbierme. I'll add the images that you attached to my narrative in the genealogy book.

Ray



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Dear Sir,

I am a military collector/historian and doing research on a grouping I have. Coming across your website, I found a bio on **Capt. Joseph Broudy** submitted by **Dr. Bruce Broudy**/May 2019 where he attached quite a number of photographs.

My grouping is of T/4 William (Bill) S. Chapman - 101st Parachute Maint. Co. and his wife, Lt. Helen Crawford – Nurse (WAC). With the grouping are photo albums. One of the photo albums contains the exact photographs as what Dr. Broudy submitted to your site. When I obtained the grouping, Ms. Crawford noted that she had dated Joseph Broudy at the time and her soon to be husband Bill (Price?) Crawford were close friends. There is also a letter envelope from Lt. Joe Broudy to Lt. Helen Crawford dated May 1944 (envelope only – no letter). The photo album has about 75 (all original) photos

Is there any chance for me to contact Dr. Broudy or their family? Perhaps they may be interesting in corresponding. I am also interested in researching Bill Chapman's military service as well.

I can be reached at:

Email: craig.a.myhre@nasa.gov

Thank you kindly.

Regards.

Craig A. Myhre

Assistant Director, Technical Engineering Operations

NASA Ames Research Center

Hello Craig,

Thank you for reaching out to our family. The photos that you mentioned are part of the collection that can be viewed from the 517th parachute infantry Regimental combat team website. There are pictures of Price among that collection. That letter in May 1944 must have been written just before they embarked on ships to Italy. I wonder what happened to the actual letter?

My father died in 1981. We would be very interested in any recollections Ms. Crawford has of that time with our father.

Bruce Broudy

Hi Bruce,

Thank you for reaching out. I will take some pictures of the album I have. Hopefully tonight. From what I understand, there was interest at the time between the two of them. I am not totally sure if William is Mr. Price, but I can send you a photo of him during the time to see if William is who I think he is.

As for the letter, I recall that Ms. Crawford mentioned she destroyed the letter once she started getting serious with William. Hmm...

Just wanted to get a quick note out to you.

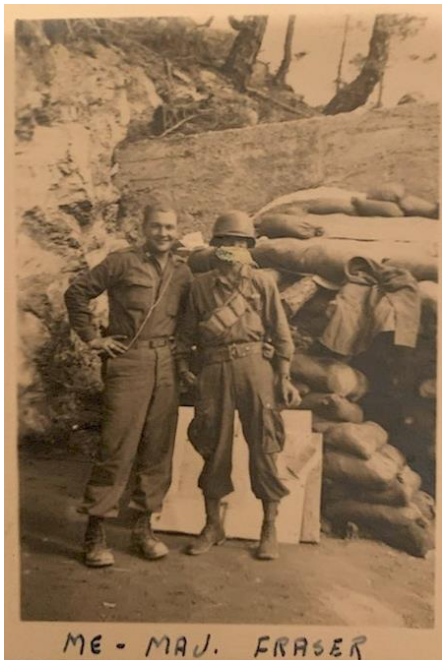
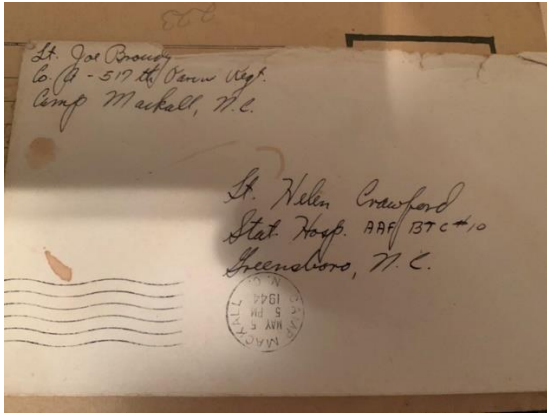
Thanks.

Craig





517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team





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.

Website	www.517prct.org
Send MailCall news to	MailCall@517prct.org
MailCall Archives	www.517prct.org/archives
2018 Roster (updated!)	www.517prct.org/roster.pdf
Thunderbolt Archives	www.517prct.org/archives

THE 517's GANG

Pvt. Gale R. Swarthout

GALE SWARTHOUT WAS PART OF HQ-2/517. AFTER THE JUMP IN SOUTHERN FRANCE, HE PARTICIPATED IN SEVERAL COMBAT PATROLS AND WAS WOUNDED IN THE HAND.

AFTER A FEW DAYS, HE NOTICED THAT HE LOST HIS SIGHT TO THE RIGHT EYE. HIS VISION WORSENS BUT STILL REMAINS TO FIGHT.

AT D + 8, HE IS FINALLY EVACUATED.

SEEING ONLY FROM ONE EYE, HE WILL NOT JOIN THE 517TH AND WILL BE DISCHARGED

HE DIED IN A TRAGIC CAR ACCIDENT IN 1950.

www.1stabtf.com

The 517th's Gang is available at: <https://1stabtf.com/en/boutique/the-517ths-gang-us-eng-version/>