

CPT Amelio Bruno Palluconi

(1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division)

1915 – 2002



Palluconi in jump school

Amelio Bruno Palluconi was born in 1915 in Iron Mountain, Michigan. A graduate of Iron Mountain High School in 1935, was graduated from St. Norbert's College in DePere, Wisconsin with a degree in General Science and Biology. In 1940 with an R.O.T.C rating of 2nd LT at the age of 25. He was first assigned to the 2nd Infantry Division and eventually was sent to the Infantry School at Fort Benning Georgia where Palluconi witnessed his first planeload of paratroopers jumping from a plane and thought it looked pretty exciting, so he signed up. After learning there was an extra \$100/month jump pay, he thought it was an even better deal! Once he passed the physical requirements, he began airborne training in January 1942.

Palluconi married Jeanette Louise Vielgut of Milwaukee, Wisconsin on 8 August 1942. The ceremony was conducted at the Fort Benning Catholic Chapel with Jeanette's mother the only family member in attendance. The wedding was a typical WWII social event. COL George P. Howell gave the bride away and the wedding reception was held at Major General Hogan's house. He was commissioned Captain on his wedding day.



Mr. & Mrs. Palluconi.



1st Battalion, 505th PIR

In April 1943, Palluconi was sent overseas with the 82nd Airborne Division to North Africa. On 9 July 1943 he flew from Tunisia with the division to open the invasion of Sicily. He was a Captain at the time and commanded "C" Company, 1st Battalion, 505 Parachute Infantry Regiment. His plane was off course and his company was dropped near midnight far north of Gela, his intended drop zone. The plane was too low and going too fast when he jumped. On the second swing of his chute, he landed on his back on top of a barbed wire entanglement. He was immediately brought under fire by two enemy machine guns. Palluconi managed to cut loose the parachute harness and roll off the wire with just minor scratches. Crawling towards the nearest machine gun nest, he knocked it out with a hand grenade. The second machine gun continued to fire accompanied by a mortar barrage. Still uninjured, he was able to crawl from the area to attempt to locate his men. He encountered the medics from his plane along with several troops from "A" company who he instructed to head for the drop zone while he



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and the medics tried to find men from his aircraft. Palluconi was continually turned back by machine gun fire which prevented him from reaching his intended drop zone, or finding any of his men. Failing this, his group cut every cable line they encountered, disrupting German communications who were trying to bring reinforcements to use against the American troops now coming ashore. Evading the enemy during the night, Palluconi and the medics were forced to surrender the following day after being surrounded by elements of the Hermann Goering Panzer Division.



Airborne Glider Command



CPT Palluconi in the Fall of 1942.

Palluconi and other Americans were flown from Sicily to Naples, Italy as prisoners of war. He was then packed into a small boxcar with other prisoners and would eventually arrive at Oflag 64 on 10 August 1943. After 2 weeks there, he was transferred to Luckenwalde, a major POW camp known as Stalag III-A, where Russians and French prisoners were imprisoned. He remained at Luckenwalde for 1 month, with half of that time spent in solitary confinement while being interrogated by the Germans.

Palluconi was then returned to Oflag 64 where he contracted rheumatic fever and lost 60 pounds. While recuperating, he received three photos of his daughter born after his capture. Fortunately, the guards at Oflag had stamped "Gepuft" (checked, examined) and he carefully secured and carried these for the rest of his POW status. In a Red Cross parcel which he received in February 1944, Jeanette included a package of 750 toothpicks which the Oflag 64 Kriegies found humorous since most of their daily meals were a watery soup. In early January 1945, Palluconi was transferred to Oflag 64-Z because he was fluent in Italian and there were many Italian POWs interned in Oflag 64-Z.



Jeanette Palluconi with their daughter Patricia in 1944.

In January of 1945, due to the advance of the Russian Army, the prisoners were marched back towards Germany in 10-20 degree below zero temperatures. Eventually the prisoners were abandoned by the Germans and liberated by the Russians. The Russians moved the prisoners to Odessa where Palluconi boarded an English ship headed for Naples. He arrived back at Fort Benning Georgia in April of 1945. He separated from the Army in May of 1946 with the rank of Major.



Returning to his hometown of Iron Mountain, Michigan, Palluconi became a high school Spanish and history teacher in the neighboring city of Kingsford, Michigan where he earned a reputation for being a strong disciplinarian, respected by his toughest students. He retired from education in 1976. He died in 2002 and is buried in Cemetery Park in Iron Mountain, Michigan.

Biography written by Kriegy Research Group writer Ann C. Rogers