



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



MailCall No. 2104

April 29, 2012

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

Website www.517prct.org
Mail Call MailCall@517prct.org
Mail Call Archives www.517prct.org/archives
Roster (from 2008) www.517prct.org/roster.pdf

Melvin Biddle – from Medal of Honor Book on YouTube

Jean Michael Soldi pointed me to this video of Melvin Biddle, now on YouTube:



Uploaded by [MedalOfHonorBook](#) on Sep 27, 2011

While leading an offensive near Soy, Belgium, on December 23--24, 1944, Private First Class Melvin Biddle killed several snipers and destroyed multiple machine-gun positions. For his actions in this 20-hour offensive, Biddle was awarded the Medal of Honor on October 12, 1945.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i59LNzL7KpU&feature=plcp>

Read more about Biddle and other Medal recipients in MEDAL OF HONOR at <http://www.artisanbooks.com/products/9781579654627/>



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MailCall News

Subject: **Charles L. Kovacs** 517th Parachute Infantry Information

Hello,
I am looking for some information about my grandfather whom I have never met and recently found out about. I have found some information that he was a private in the 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment out of Ft Bragg. I am looking for some information about his service and life. I know he passed away in a train accident in 1976 and is from Fowlersville, MI. Please contact me if you have any additional information.

Thanks,
Robert Earley

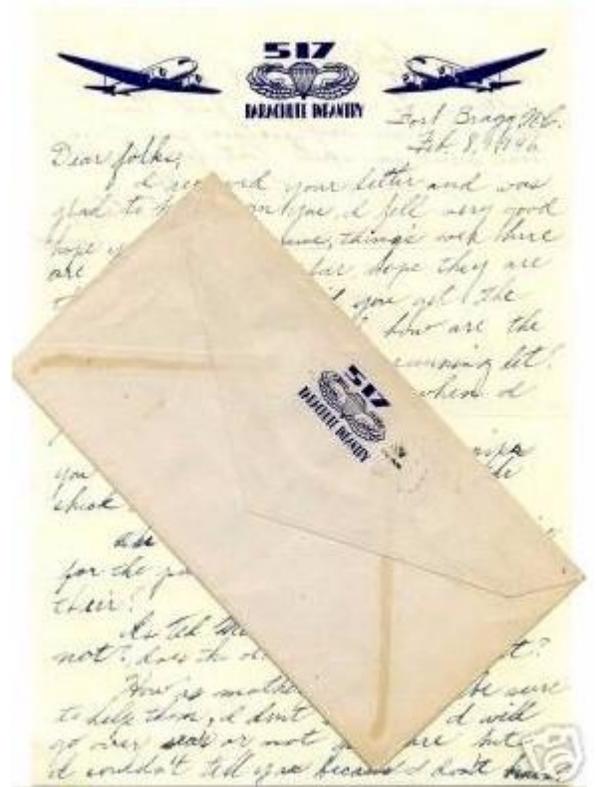
On a very quick look, I can't find a record of **Charles Kovacs** in the few records I have about the 517th. That's not unusual, as the records are incomplete.

Do you have something that shows was unit of the 517th he might have been with, or where he served? If you can point me to the specific Company, then I can do a more thorough search. Also, I will post your note into the 517th newsletter.

PS: I did find one internet reference about him – a letter from Fort Bragg in Feb 1946, after the 517th became part of the 13th Airborne. (see right)

Regards,

Bob Barrett
webmaster@517prct.org



Bob,

Thank you for your search and the post in the newsletter. I do not have any additional information at the moment regarding his unit or where he served. I will continue to dig deeper to see what I can find.

Regards,

Robert



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From: **Phil McSpadden**

Subject: Fw: River Dance with Boots and Rifles

As clumsy as I was in formation, had I been accepted into this outfit, it would soon have turned into a combination of the Marx Bros and the Three Stooges!!!

They are fantastic, but the big question is...can they jump?

This is "River Dance" with boots and rifles by the Norwegian Army! THIS IS THE DEFINITION OF PRECISION!!

Those are US made Garand M-1 rifles (WWII), and they are heavy weapons (9.5 POUNDS EACH) with the modern bayonet.

When that one young fellow goes on his own - YOU'VE NEVER SEEN A RIFLE SPUN THAT FAST - note the collective "Oooooooooo !" from the audience.



<http://sorisomail.com/email/16993/exibicao-de-banda-militar--um-espectaculo-imperdivel.html>

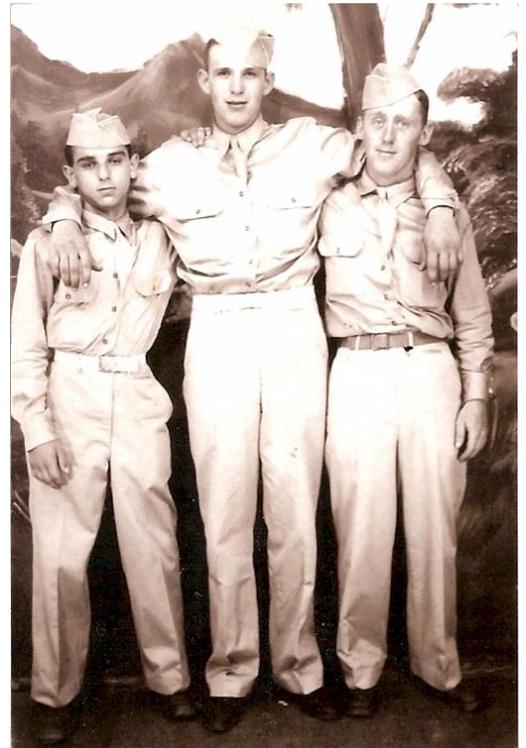
My name is **Bill Goswick**, Nephew of **Jesse Goswick - 517 PIR 3Batt, Co G**. I haven't written in a while and am still asking for any photos or information regarding my uncle. If you have any information or knows of anyone with info please contact me. HH, here is my new email poppopgos@att.net. Sorry I haven't been in touch.

Thanks, Bill

Can anyone identify when and where this photo was taken, or who is with **Jesse Goswick** (center)? Jesse was killed in St. Cesaire.



← Jesse Goswick from the G Company photo at Camp Mackall.





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Bob I was really touched by this. I hope you enjoy it as much as I did and your Dad would have.

Regards,

Darrell Egner

Many people may have forgotten about his time in the U.S. Army. He is the son of an Air Force General, and an accomplished Golden Gloves boxer, and he graduated from Pomona College with a B.S. degree, and then became a Rhodes Scholar from Oxford University. He joined the U.S. Army at the prompting of his father. After graduating from Officer Candidate School he attended and graduated from both Army Airborne and Ranger training in the very top of each class. He was selected for U. S. Army Special Forces Training but refused so that he could attend pilot training where he earned his wings, and became an accomplished U.S. Army helicopter (gun ship) pilot, and achieved the rank of Captain.

He was about to be promoted to the rank of Major, and appointed to teach at West Point when he resigned his commission from the Army to go into music and acting. You can tell in this video that his time in the military means a lot to him.

[Click here to be pleasantly surprised.](#)

Darrell,

Many people may have missed this. It was posted not too long ago in [MailCall #2099](#), but I bet many did not click to see the video. I was also very surprised to hear this tribute and hear the words of Kris Kristofferson regarding his military background.

Unfortunately, I also read this in Wikipedia article about Kristofferson:

In 1965, when his tour of duty ended, Kristofferson was given an assignment to teach English Literacy at West Point. Instead, he decided to leave the Army and pursue songwriting. His family disowned him because of this decision and they never reconciled with him.

You can see in the video how proud he is of his military background and heritage. And he accepts the award on behalf of his father and his family. I read an interview in which he said that he eventually did reconcile with his mother and father.

Bob B.



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Dear Mr. Barret,

I was searching for information on the internet about the 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment and found your name at www.517prct.org.

I live in Holland near Margraten and have adopted the grave of **PFC Leonard Dallas Stevens**, service number 35770181 at the American Cemetery Margraten.

I was searching for information about Mr. Stevens and would like to contact some relatives, so that I can provide them some pictures of the Cemetery. I read on the website that Mr. **Wayne Caudill** was searching for information. Maybe it's possible for me to get in contact with Mr. Caudill.

I hope that you can help me.

With Regards,

Pascal Prickartz <prickie@home.nl>

P.S. I would like to excuse me, if my English writing is not correct!

Hello Pascal,

Thank you for your interest in and your tribute to **Leonard Stevens**.

Unfortunately, I do not have the contact information for Wayne Caudill, who is the relative of Stevens and was looking for information in 2006. My Dad was running the MailCall back then, and he did not save that info. But I will post your request for info into the next weekly newsletter that I send out to members, relatives and friends of the 517th. I will let you know if I hear anything back.

Bob Barrett

MailCall@517prct.org

PS: Another person that you might contact for info is **Stevin Oudshoorn**, who adopted the gravesite of Robert Woodhull in Margraten, and has done some research about those buried there.

Hi Bob,

Finally got around to reading the latest (#2101 & #2102) Mail Calls. My PC hard drive died a couple weeks ago. Sent in the 517th KC reunion registration and made hotel reservations a few days ago. Will check out the Battle of Grandmenil site and see if Co. "I" was involved. Thanks for finding it! Enjoyed the photos **Merle McMorrow** posted from Nazi Germany. Wonder if he'd be interested in some German-language books I picked up a few years ago at a church rummage sale? Can hardly read a word in any of them but a German owner of a local restaurant was "amazed" that I had the books. She asked, "Where did you get these? We were not allowed to read these in Germany!" One of the books was written about the wife (Carin) of Hermann Goring. There is even a page of his personal handwriting in 1926 as well as a photo of Hitler with his personal message in 1925. I enjoy all types of history but wished I could read German to learn what these books are all about. No, I am not a Nazi lover...just like to learn.

Kenton Floyd Immerfall

Nephew of **Floyd A. Stott, Co. "I", 517th PRCT**



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pics sent by **Vanessa Armand** ... Awesome !

Patricia and Roland Orengo
Sospel, France

Captured America in Color from 1939 - 1943



See all photos full-size at :

<http://blogs.denverpost.com/captured/2010/07/26/captured-america-in-color-from-1939-1943/>

From **Phil McSpadden**:

Subject: New Song - Awesome

You won't hear this on the radio. Gives you chills! This is awesome, hope you think so too.

Enjoy this GREAT new song! **"My Name is America"**

<http://www.youtube.com/v/6TPqJSZf5Vw?version=3&autohide=1&autoplay=1>



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Dear Mr Barrett,

As announced last summer, please find attached the pictures I managed to take in the summers of 2011 and 2010 at Monte Peloso (all pictures taken in 2011 except the last one).

With kind regards.

Flavio Laina



1) A ford on River Cornia, south of Monte Peloso.



2) A view of the dry bed of River Cornia (towards west) in August 2011.



3) The "not so dry bed" of River Cornia (towards east). If the River had the same configuration in 1944, it could give some concealment to the advancing troops.



4) One of these steel powerlines could have been the one followed by Lt Marks and his platoon. The two steel ones reach the base of the mountain.



5) Monte Peloso seen from the East in August 2011.



6) This vineyard could be on the low ridge that allowed **Capt La Chausee** to flank the mountain.



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7) A picture taken from the western flank of the mountain seems to provide a positive answer. It also shows what the Germans observers could see.



8) What **Capt La Chausee** and his men might have seen when they reached the base of the mountain and looked up



9) What the Germans might have seen (towards south).



10) A first surprise: on the southern flank of the mountain, a circular hole of about 2m diameter with stones covering the direction towards the top of the hill. Is it man made? Could it be a "fox hole"?



11) Close to the top of Monte Peloso, difficult to go ahead.



12) A second surprise: not so far from the "fox hole", what was left in August 2010 of an empty .30 cal ammo box, after 66 years.



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From **John Meis** (friend of **Phil McSpadden**)

RE; Update on Sgt John Peck

Hey all, this is good news. I thought you and you listeners would like to hear this.

Last week Dan Boring who is one of our chapter members flew out to visit John Peck and to meet with the two marines we are helping, Lance Corporal Larry Gene Bailey II and Kyle Moser. He did get to visit with John and his mother Lisa but not with the two other marines. Larry was in surgery and Kyle was out of town. During their conversation **John mentioned one of the things he had on his bucket list was to do a parachute jump**. After confirming this was something he really wanted to do Dan contacted Skydive Midwest located at the Sylvania Airport in Racine county on I-94. They are the group that does a three day tandem jump in July to raise money for the wounded warriors. With some needed additional information such as John's weight and certain measurements they said they will contact their harness makers and have a special harness made up so he can do the jump. John will be here sometime in May between the 19th thru the 2nd of June if no medical problems arise. We will be out there to help him into his harness and do whatever we can so he can enjoy this wish. I will keep you updated on this as it develops. Also the home that is being built for him in Maryland to suit his disabilities will be completed in the near future.

Regards

Nick Pulera.....Airborne!

For those who don't know the story of John Peck, read this from May 2011:

Antioch honors wounded Marine, but he denies he's a hero

Marine Cpl. John Peck doesn't remember who told him he lost his limbs after stepping on an explosive device in Afghanistan nearly a year ago.

But he remembers the overwhelming emotion he felt at the time.

"I was pissed off, I admit it," Peck, of Antioch Township, recalled in an interview Monday. "But being pissed off isn't going to do anything. ... It's going to make people around you not want to be around you."

Despite his catastrophic injuries — for which he's endured 27 surgeries and 81 blood transfusions — and continued hospitalization, Peck's outlook today is positive.



He's been home on leave since last week, and on Monday he was the guest of honor at a blood drive, an event that doubled as a fundraiser for the charitable account set up in his name. The 25-year-old Antioch High School graduate was greeted by dozens of relatives, friends and strangers who convened on Antioch's VFW hall for the event. But the celebration started earlier with a motorcade that escorted him to the hall on North Avenue.



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From his seat in a mechanized wheelchair near the front of the room, Peck told the crowd how he's met President Obama, the first lady, Miss America and other celebrities, "but the ones that are going to stick in my mind are you guys."

"You guys have been behind me the whole way," Peck said.

Peck was wounded May 24, 2010, in Afghanistan. It was his second tour with the Marines. He'd been wounded on the first tour, too, suffering a brain injury in Iraq.

When he was injured the second time, the blast took his legs and his right arm. Doctors later removed much of his left arm as a bacterial infection ate away at his body.

At Monday's event, Antioch Mayor Larry Hanson called Peck an inspiration and read a proclamation announcing May 9, 2011, as "Cpl. John Peck Day" in the village.

Another speaker was Illinois Commerce Commission police officer William White, who was Peck's first sergeant in the Marines. He spoke of the pain, suffering and challenges Peck faces, but also of the life he has in front of him.

"I am amazed and in awe of John Peck and his commitment to serve," White said.

The get-together benefited LifeSource, the Chicago-area blood center where his mother, Lisa Krutyholowa, works. But it really was about Peck, who received countless accolades and had other governmental proclamations read in his honor.

Peck graciously accepted each document with a quiet "thank you." When it was his time to speak to the crowd, he denied he was a hero.

That honor belongs to the many Marines and other soldiers who didn't survive combat, Peck said. He talked in particular of two buddies who lost their lives, one while shielding a fellow Marine from a deadly explosion.

"I think of them as the true heroes," Peck told the crowd. "Because they won't come back to their families. Those are the guys who should be honored."

Later, during a quiet interview, Peck spoke of the inner strength that has kept him going. Early on in his hospitalization, during a time in which he was sedated and it wasn't clear if he'd survive, he had vivid dreams.

"Something told me, 'You can't die yet. You have work to do,'" Peck said.

A promotion to sergeant awaits Peck when he returns to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., later this week. Then, it's more days of physical therapy and occupational therapy, until eventually he returns to civilian life for good.

Peck hopes to receive a double arm transplant. If that happens, he'd like to attend the famed Culinary Institute of America in New York and become a chef.

"I might open up a restaurant," he told the Daily Herald. "We'll have to see."



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Just for Laughs

From *Reader's Digest - Military Humor*

No Smoking

I was in our local VA hospital when a clerk began scolding a veteran who'd lit up a cigarette in a no-smoking area. "Sir!" she barked. "When did you start smoking?"

The conversation came to a halt when he replied, "In Vietnam, right after that first bomb dropped."

Top 5

After I spoke at a grade school assembly about veterans, a student asked, "Were you ever in a war?"

"Yes, two," I said. "World War II and Korea."

The girl's follow-up question: "Which war did you like best?"

Reunions – Sign Up Now!

West Coast Mini-Reunion

Palm Springs, CA

May 14-18, 2012

[Information and registration instructions](#)

Annual National Reunion

Kansas City, MO

July 12-16, 2012

[Program](#)

[Registration Form](#)

[Hotel Registration Form](#)



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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
- 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

