



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



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

**MailCall No. 2124**

**September 30, 2012**

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

Website  
Mail Call  
Mail Call Archives  
Roster (from 2008)

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### *Ribbon-Cutting at Seitz Elementary School, Ft. Riley KS*



I'm forwarding several emails from my cousin John Seitz with pictures from the ribbon cutting ceremony of Seitz Elementary School. The last one I am forwarding has General Donald MacWillie's speech. It was a beautiful day from the 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders who sang and did synchronized movements, to the brass band, the General's mounted patrol, the presence of Governor Brownback, US Senator Moran, the Under-Secretary of Defense, the Superintendent of the School District, the outstanding principal and faculty (all hand-picked, many with a military connection -- former army brat, served in the armed forces, etc). This was the first new school on Ft. Riley in 50 years. The facility is LEED certified and is a magnificent site for learning. Most of the nearly 700 plus kids have one parent deployed and a lot have both deployed, so a safe, healthy, positive school environment is the one critical stabilizing force. (The kids were absolutely amazing and adorable and their teachers so sharp and enthused.) I'm



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scanning a copy of the newspaper article and will forward that to you as well. The first picture is of (L to R) Managing Director of Picerne Military Housing Mike Steiner, 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Divisions and Fort Riley Senior Cammander Brig. Ge.n Donald MacWillie, Kansas Governor Sam Brownback, Dad, US Senator Jerry Moran (Ks), Under-Secretary of Defense Dr. Joseph Westphal, and the Superintendent of Geary County Schools Ronald Walker).

### Pat Seitz







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Bob: here is the General's [Brig. Gen Donald MacWillie] speech. All the speeches were beautiful and short!

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Governor Brownback... Undersecretary Westphal... Senator Moran, distinguished guests... Students... Families.... Friends... Seitz Family and most importantly LTG Seitz... I bring greetings from America's 1st Infantry Division.

Today we dedicate our newest, most modern school in honor of a patriot—LTG Richard Seitz. That makes this a great day...a world class school...servicing world class students and world class families...taught by world class educators...dedicated to the values and principles of a Soldier...a Statesman....a Knightly Gentleman.

GEN Seitz it is nearly impossible to put into words what an honor it is to be a part of your special day... Especially since many of us are familiar with your decorated military service.

Ladies and gentlemen we are blessed to have the rare breed of man... a decorated veteran... a war hero... a man of honor.... a man of character and a man of great humility... who knows first-hand the foundation for success in life starts with a good education.

Gen Seitz they don't make them like you anymore and that is why we are here to honor you today.

For those who don't know... GEN Seitz's life and military career read more like an epic drama that could have been directed by Cecil B. DeMille.... From the time he trained as a young officer and went to Europe... only to become the youngest Infantry Battalion Commander in World War II... where he led his troops during the Battle of the Bulge... To the leadership he demonstrated while commanding both the 82nd Airborne... the XVIII Airborne Corps and Ft. Bragg.... General Seitz has lived by the right values...demonstrated the keenest intellect...while bringing forward the same from all he touched.

GEN Seitz the medals you have earned... Silver Star... Distinguished Service Medal... and Purple Heart... the honors you have earned...all lead up to this day... And now it is our task to find the appropriate words to convey our appreciation to you for your courage... your leadership... your service... your honor... and your humanitarian spirit.

GEN Seitz... you have gone above and beyond what the military expected of you and more than our Nation could ever call a Soldier to do. But the part that touches our hearts so deeply about you... and what makes you so special to us is even with all of these incredible things you have done... you still take the time to get in the car... drive down to a school to read a book to a classroom of children.

So it is fitting we honor you today by naming an institution where we shape young minds and help form the character of the next Governor... Undersecretary of the Army... or even LTG.... that we stand and salute you and say... GEN Seitz... today is a good day... Because... today is your day.

So in your honor--in the sacred land of the Big Red One, I proudly say "All the Way, sir!" Thanks for being an All American—a Dragon--- ...A Soldier....a Statesman....A Knightly Gentleman. May your school always produce students of high moral character just like you. God bless you General thanks from all of us for who you are.



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Bob: attached is the scanned newspaper article on the Seitz Elementary ribbon cutting. -- Pat Seitz

## A legacy of learning



Chase Jordan • The Daily Union

Patrons of Unified School District 475 and Fort Riley celebrate a new elementary school with a ribbon cutting Friday. The school, located in the Forsyth neighborhood of Fort Riley, is named after retired Lt. Gen. Richard Seitz (center). Also pictured (from left) are managing director of Picerne Military Housing Mike Steiner, 1st Infantry Division and Fort Riley Senior Commander Brig. Gen. Don MacWillie, Gov. Sam Brownback, kindergartners Jaheim Flournoy and Alyssa Thompson, Sen. Jerry Moran, Undersecretary of the Army Dr. Joseph Westphal and USD 475 superintendent Ronald Walker.

### Officials join in ribbon-cutting at Seitz Elementary School

BY CHASE JORDAN

c.jordan@thedailyunion.net

FORT RILEY — In front of an audience, Retired Lt. Gen. Richard J. Seitz stood near the entrance of an educational facility which carries his name.

While addressing a crowd filled with military, state and local officials Friday, Seitz was conscious of the honor bestowed upon him and thanked everyone involved.

"It's much more than I deserve," Seitz said about having the 15th school in the Geary County School District named after him.

Seitz was the center of attention during the ribbon-cutting, but he directed the attention to another group of people — educators.

"They are the ones who will distinguish this

school," Seitz said. "Not me, not the name Seitz, but Principal (Samrie) Devin and her distinguished teachers."

After the remarks, he asked for a round of applause for all teachers.

The audience responded with thunderous claps.

The unselfish gesture is one of the examples of why his name is attached to the school. District officials selected Seitz because of his commitment and support of education in the area. Seitz had a 35-year career as a U.S. Army officer and paratrooper. He commanded the 2nd Battalion, 517th

Parachute Infantry Regiment during World War II, the 82nd Airborne Division and the XVIII Airborne Corps. He retired in 1975 from Fort Bragg, N.C.

Devin said the staff is committed to providing a safe, challenging and joyful school for military children.

"We want to start a tradition of excellence at Seitz Elementary," Devin said.

Ronald Walker, superintendent of USD 475, said a lot of work and time went into establishing the school.

"It was a hard route to get here — we persevered," Walker said.

Within one week of opening, the school was already over capacity.

"Just think, if it's overcrowded now, there is a strong need for another school on post," Walker said. "We're going to fight and we're going to try to make that happen."

He went on to say that a beautiful school like Seitz brings with it a great learn-

Please see **Seitz**, 12A



Chase Jordan • The Daily Union

Retired Lt. Gen. Richard Seitz talks with a pair of soldiers during the ribbon-cutting ceremony at Seitz Elementary School on Fort Riley Friday.





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## SEITZ

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ing environment.

1st Infantry Division and Fort Riley Senior Commander Brig. Gen. Don MacWillie talked about the school and showed admiration for Seitz.

"It's a first-class school, serving world-class students and world-class families — Army families," MacWillie said. "Ladies and gentlemen, we're blessed to have here a rare breed of a man."

MacWillie said Seitz went above and beyond serving his country and the local community.

"What makes you so special, even with all the accolades, you still take time to get into your car, drive down to a school, someplace in

(USD) 475, and read to a child," MacWillie said.

Undersecretary of the Army Dr. Joseph Westphal thanked Seitz for his service and talked about the role of students from military families. He said they make sacrifices and serve when their parents are away.

"The children of our soldiers are really the legacy our Army and our nation will depend on in the future," Westphal said. "The children grow up understanding what it means to serve and be a part of something larger than themselves. They know the meaning of commitment, dedication and sacrifice."

He said the school is critical not only because it addresses overcrowding, but prepares a student for the future.

"I take a great pride in the

fact that we're here to lift the unnecessary burden of overcrowded schools for them," Westphal said. "Our military children deserve to attend schools that are safe, functional and conducive to learning."

Sen. Jerry Moran said the necessity for the school and others is based upon the success that Kansas had in 2005 with the Defense Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission process.

"Now that many of them are back home with their

families, it means our school population keeps increasing," Moran said Friday at the ceremony. "Junction City USD 475 has worked hard to put the resources the taxpayers have contributed to new schools in this community, but they were tapped out."

Moran said the district worked with members of the congressional delegation to find sources of funding.

"The perseverance in this community resulted in a new program, a new set of dollars for military installations across the country."

Moran said the district has plans to break ground for new middle and elementary schools.

Moran said he has known Seitz for a long time and can't think of anyone more deserving of the honor of a school being named after a person.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for us to recognize someone who has made a lifetime commitment to serving this country and its citizens," Moran said.

Located in the Camp Forsyth neighborhood of Fort Riley, the building is the

Army's first Residential Communities Initiative School. Some of the features include special art and sciences rooms, autism suites and a specially constructed, FEMA-certified gymnasium, which can be used as a tornado shelter.

Construction of the new elementary school was funded by Congress through a partnership with Unified School District 475 and Picerne Military Housing, the Residential Communities Initiatives partner at Fort Riley.



## MailCall News

**Subject:** letter to N. Arnulf

Hi, Bob -

Dad just did the letter (I am often his typist and remember - I still have the 517 letterhead, so it's just easier here). This is done and Dad will mail it tomorrow and I even sent this to Nicolas -

and then I remembered that the programs are probably not compatible and a successful electronic copy would probably need to be a jpeg?

So if so, I am sending to you.

Hope all is well with you and yours -

Claire

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Thanks for all, I'm honored !!!!  
Nicolas

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

September 23, 2012

Mr. Nicolas Arnulf  
Forty-Four Association  
2418 Chemin de Montagnac  
06440 L'Escarene  
FRANCE

Dear Mr. Arnulf,

Thank you and your members for honoring the 517<sup>th</sup> Parachute Regimental Combat Team as you gather to observe and reenact the crucial actions that occurred in the mountains of France in October of 1944, especially in Sospel and l'Escrene. This is especially meaningful – and continues to be so – because of the heavy losses that occurred near Hill 1098 and the surrounding Col de Braus area. Their names are listed on a plaque in that tiny restaurant there, and as Merle did when he learned of your activities, we ask that you dedicate your activities to the memories of those who did not come home.

I have had the honor of meeting many of you over the years now, and your commitment to the memory of the invasion and to the history associated with it continues to impress me.

Best wishes for a safe and successful gathering and reenactment.

Best regards,

Kaare Allan Johnson, 596  
President, 517 Association

[www.517prct.org](http://www.517prct.org)



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On Sep 6, 2012, at 6:58 PM

Greetings -

I just returned from France with my father (**Allan Johnson**, 596 and the current president of the 517 Association) and Leo Dean (Regimental HQ, 517). We were there for August 15-related commemorations.

Would you consider any screenings in the central NJ area? Dad would support it, I am sure, as would Leo. Leo lives in Albany. They are both still in good health; I ran them ragged in France.

We saw a screening of the film in Kansas City at the reunion, thanks to **Lory Curtis**. I am copying him since I am emailing through the generic email address for the film.

All the best - Airborne all the way!

**Claire Johnson Giblin**

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**From:** "SSAC" <[airbornecreed@gmail.com](mailto:airbornecreed@gmail.com)>

Claire - thanks for your interest in the film. We are currently looking at opening on 10/12/12 in NYC. I know it isn't NJ or likely close, but due to demand requirements by the theaters, it is our only option at this stage. I hope you can make it.

best,

Adam

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On Sep 19, 2012, at 7:46 PM

Hi, there -

Haven't seen an update on NY showings in a while. How is it looking?

I will get at least one 596-517 guy there (my dad), and maybe two! We can't wait to support the film - keep us posted.

Thanks -

Claire

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**From:** "SSAC" <[airbornecreed@gmail.com](mailto:airbornecreed@gmail.com)>

The theater won't confirm our booking until after our 9/28 openings. They want to make sure we perform well on 9/28. If we perform to a level they consider "good" they will confirm the booking for 10/12. Check with me on 10/2.



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Hi, again -

You might want to include a publicity mailing to the 517 Mail Call at [MailCall@517.org](mailto:MailCall@517.org).

The 15 or so veterans and scores of family members were able to see an early screening at our July reunion, as you might remember.

I don't think we have any photos specifically from the screening, but if we can provide anything (I see this weekend's facebook updates from an air show, for example), let us know. Lots of us brought home the posters that Lory brought. I was in Provence last month with two of the 517 vets, attending multiple commemorations of the 15 August invasion - lots of photos are available of that, as well - let me know if you'd like some.

Hope your weekend showings are going well.

Claire

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Dear Veterans, dear friends,

Like every year I was in the US cemeteries last sept 20 for the grave adoptions ceremonies. This year around 500 adopters received their official award, and like every year they were old, young , boys and girls from Europe.

Hope these ceremonies will show you how much the European people don't forgot and will never forget your buddies, father, grandfather, uncles. They are our heroes and like all the heroes they are leaving in our heart forever.

God Bless America

S/Sgt Dominique Potier  
Belgium Army







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See all the photos at:

<http://s1176.photobucket.com/albums/x322/PotierDominique/Grave%20adoption%202012/>

### Submitted by

Name: **Jon Ryckert**  
From: kansas  
E-mail:  
[j\\_ryckert@live.com](mailto:j_ryckert@live.com)

### Comments:

I am a great grand nephew of PVT Ralph Ryckert. I don't know much about my relative and so I checked out this website to find out the history of him and the unit (496th) that he served with during the second World War.

Added: September 25, 2012



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## Update on "Saints and Soldiers – Airborne Creed" Movie

**Subject** Hi Everyone,

If you go to this link you should be able to watch me on T.V. promoting my book Letters Home a Paratrooper's Story and the movie Saints and Soldiers Airborne Creed. Jasen Wade who plays my father in the movie is on the show with me.

Enjoy  
Lory



See the full interview at:

<http://www.abc4.com/mediacenter/local.aspx?videoid=3765795&navCatId=20002>

Upcoming showings of Saints and Soldiers – Airborne Creed:

Orange Stadium Promenade 25 + XD	10/12/12	Orange	CA
UA Olympus Pointe Stadium 12	10/12/12	Roseville	CA
Heartland Film Festival	10/21/12	Indianapolis	IN



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### *Pvt. George A. Meyer – HQ/1*

From Gary Bedingfield's [Baseball's Greatest Sacrifice](#), a new website dedicated to baseball players who lost their lives in military service:

## **George Meyer**

<b>Date and Place of Birth:</b>	May 24, 1924, Blackduck, MN
<b>Date and Place of Death:</b>	January 15, 1945 Coulee, Belgium
<b>Baseball Experience:</b>	Minor League
<b>Position:</b>	Outfield/Shortstop
<b>Rank:</b>	Private
<b>Military Unit:</b>	Headquarters, 1st Battalion, 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team U.S. Army
<b>Area Served:</b>	European Theater of Operations

George A. Meyer was born in Blackduck, Minnesota, and when he was two years old the family moved to Elk River, a village about 30 miles northwest of Minneapolis, where his father opened a shoe and harness repair shop. George Meyer was shorter than his high school teammates, but he was strong and powerful and captained the school football, basketball and baseball teams at Elk River High School. Baseball coach Milt Salk, who was also the shop teacher, had made a warm-up bat out of maple, and Meyer was the only one who could use it.

Meyer could always be called upon to make Elk River's ball games exciting, and one game against neighboring Anoka was a prime example. The first time Meyer was up, he hit the ball out of the park in the trees in left field. The second time he hit it out of center field and they found the ball two houses down the street in the gutter. The third time he got on base and stole second and third. He challenged the pitcher by standing between third and home, and then broke for home. The pitcher threw to the catcher, and Meyer bowled him over, but the catcher came up with the ball. Elk River lost the game by one run.

Meyer was all-district in football in 1940, all-conference and team captain in 1941. In baseball, the Elk River High School team won the District 16 championship in 1941, and he captained the team in 1942. Meyer also played shortstop with the Nowthen town team and helped them win amateur league titles in 1940 and 1941. He signed with the St. Paul Saints of the Class AA American Association following high school graduation in 1942. Playing professional baseball, however, was subject to his father's condition that he would continue his studies during the off-season. Meyer was assigned to the Grand Forks Chiefs of the Class C Northern League, where





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he played 68 games between the outfield and shortstop, and batted .228 with 22 RBIs. At the close of the season, in line with his father's wishes, he enrolled at Hamline University in St. Paul, and created a lot of interest with his sparkplug style of play as a freshman fullback on the football team.

Meyer's athletic pursuits were put on hold when military service beckoned in March 1943. His family was of German origin and his father wanted him to go into the Merchant Marine as he did not want his son to have to fight in Europe. Nevertheless, George enlisted with the paratroopers and took basic training at Camp Toccoa, Georgia. In May 1944, he was sent overseas and served in Europe with Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion of the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team.

When the German Army launched its offensive against American positions in the Ardennes on December 16, 1944, the 517th was in France. A week later it was on its way to Belgium where it was attached to the 82nd Airborne Division. In the bitter cold weather of January 13, 1945, the 517th launched an attack and captured various German strongholds.

During a brief lull in the fighting around Coulee in Belgium on January 15, 1945, Meyer and a number of men took a five-minute break in a barn. It was a rare opportunity to get a reprieve from the cold weather. When it was time to move on, Meyer was the last one to leave, making sure everyone else was out. Moments later the area was hit with mortar fire and Private Meyer was killed.

Meyer was buried at the American Military Cemetery at Henri-Chapelle, Belgium, but in 1947 his body was returned to the United States and rests at St. John's Lutheran Church Cemetery in Twin Lakes, Minnesota. The American Legion post in Elk River was later named Davis-Darrow-Meyer Post 112 in honor of the three soldiers from the village who gave their lives during the war. On Memorial Day, May 30, 1999, the Nowthen ballpark was dedicated in memory of George Meyer and a granite plaque stands at the entrance to the park in his honor. In 2005, Meyer was a charter member of Elk River High School's Sports Hall of Fame.

Date Added: February 1, 2012

### *Military Humor*

**Officer:** "Soldier, do you have change for a dollar?"

**Soldier:** "Sure, buddy."

**Officer:** "That's no way to address an officer! Now let's try it again! Do you have change for a dollar?"

**Soldier:** "No, SIR!"



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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

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This past August 15<sup>th</sup> was the 66<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Operation Dragoon. This is a good time of year to remember to pay your annual membership dues. Suggested donation: \$30

Enclosed is my annual dues contribution towards the 517 PRCT Association.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to:

517 PRCT Association, Inc.  
c/o Joanne Barrett  
70 Pleasant Street  
Cohasset, MA 02025