



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



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

## MailCall No. 2169

July 20, 2013

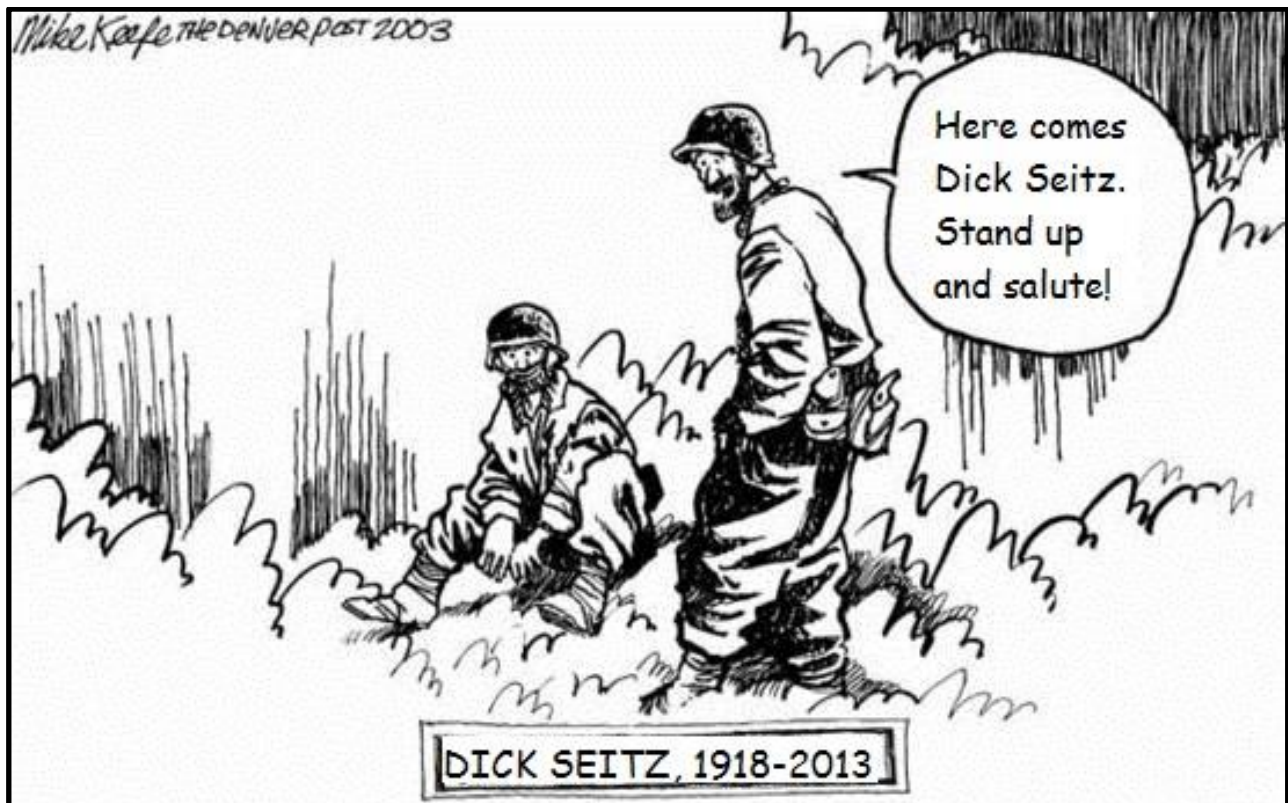
*517th Parachute Infantry Regiment  
460th Parachute Field Artillery Battalion  
596th Parachute Combat Engineer Company*

Website  
Send Mail Call news to  
Mail Call Archives  
2013 Roster (updated!)  
Thunderbolt (Spring 2013)

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## *LTG Richard J. Seitz*

Dick Seitz's vigil will be at 7 p.m. on Sunday, July 21 at St. Xavier Catholic Church on Washington Street and the funeral Mass the next morning at 9 a.m., immediately followed by the burial at Ft. Riley and immediately after that, a reception at the Marriott Convention Center (next to the Marriott Courtyard Hotel) in Junction City, KS.



borrowed from Mike Keefe, Denver Post



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I just ran across this video interview with **Dick Seitz**. The interviewer is Roger Thompson and was filmed on January 10, 2013. It is probably the last formal interview with him, done for the program called "Hey, What Ever Happened To...?" about famous Kansas state residents. What is interesting about this is that it is one of the rare times that Dick is actually recounting some of his own early career history, and how he came to take command of the 517<sup>th</sup> leading up to the events with the 517<sup>th</sup> during WWII. Part two includes some great detail about the battles near Trois Ponts during the Bulge. This is from a TV show, so each of the two clips is almost ½ hour long. – BB



[Part 1](#)

[Part 2](#)

### MailCall News

Website Guestbook entry:

Submitted by	Comments:
Name: <b>Joseph M. Peters</b>	I am the nephew of <b>2nd Lt. Maurice J. Miley 2/HQ</b>
From: Marion, Ohio	
E-mail:	Added: July 17, 2013
<a href="mailto:joepeters517@gmail.com">joepeters517@gmail.com</a>	

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Hi Bob, This was on my FaceBook this morning.

[Click here: Medal of Honor Roll Call: Melvin E. Biddle | Human Events](#)

**Don Gentry**

See the reprint on the next page.



# Human Events<sup>®</sup>

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TODAY IS: JULY 20, 2013 | 10:23 PM



## Medal of Honor Roll Call: Melvin E. Biddle

By: **Robert J. Laplander**

7/14/2013 11:06 PM

*This paratrooper hero hails from Indiana. When he died in 2010, Biddle was the last living MOH recipient from the state.  
Make the most of your day! – RJL*

**Rank and organization: Private First Class, U.S. Army, Company B, 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment Place and date: Near Soy, Belgium, 23-24 December 1944 Entered service at: Anderson, Ind. G.O. No.. 95, 30 October 1945**

Citation: He displayed conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action against the enemy near Soy, Belgium, on 23 and 24 December 1944. Serving as lead scout during an attack to relieve the enemy-encircled town of Hotton, he aggressively penetrated a densely wooded area, advanced 400 yards until he came within range of intense enemy rifle fire, and within 20 yards of enemy positions killed 3 snipers with unerring marksmanship. Courageously continuing his advance an additional 200 yards, he discovered a hostile machinegun position and dispatched its 2 occupants. He then located the approximate position of a well-concealed enemy machinegun nest, and crawling forward threw hand grenades which killed two Germans and fatally wounded a third. After signaling his company to advance, he entered a determined line of enemy defense, coolly and deliberately shifted his position, and shot 3 more enemy soldiers. Undaunted by enemy fire, he crawled within 20 yards of a machinegun nest, tossed his last hand grenade into the position, and after the explosion charged the emplacement firing his rifle. When night fell, he scouted enemy positions alone for several hours and returned with valuable information which enabled our attacking infantry and armor to knock out 2 enemy tanks. At daybreak he again led the advance and, when flanking elements were pinned down by enemy fire, without hesitation made his way toward a hostile machinegun position and from a distance of 50 yards killed the crew and 2 supporting riflemen. The remainder of the enemy, finding themselves without automatic weapon support, fled panic stricken. Pfc. Biddle's intrepid courage and superb daring during his 20-hour action enabled his battalion to break the enemy grasp on Hotton with a minimum of casualties.



*President Harry S. Truman with  
Army Cpl. Melvin E. Biddle*



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

Dear Joanne and Bob,

Beautiful Wedding Dress, daughters and son-in-law! Congratulations on your developing family.

Would you please make sure to add my email to mail call again. I haven't received it for such a long time. I will keep an eye out in all folders. Thank goodness to have online access. Your time and support is greatly appreciated.

Airborne All The Way!

**Clare Erber**

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I do not even have you on the distribution list for MailCall. I'm not sure when you fell off the list, but I will add you back on now. You can always read the past issues at: <http://517prct.org/mailcall/>  
Thanks for letting me know.

Bob Barrett

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Yes, I have been reading them online. Once I start, I find myself on for hours at a time. Thank you for all the heartfelt feelings of family.

Clare Is there a way I can bet a Thunderbolt for my Dad? **John Stonis**, Company A and D?

Thanks,

Juliana Stonis

*We have added **John Stonis** to the Thunderbolt mailing list. – BB*

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I received a phone call from **Lory Curtis** that **Rick Sweet** (son of **Odas Sweet** of H Company) was recently in a serious accident and is now in the hospital.

Rick was in a motorcycle accident while riding in the Smoky Mountains in North Carolina. He suffered seven (7) broken ribs, 2 fractured vertebrae in the neck, one in the upper back. His wife Carolyn says he is doing well now, recovering and sitting up in a chair to eat. He is still hooked up to oxygen.

Please keep him in your prayers for a speedy recovery. He is in the hospital in Knoxville, TN if anyone in the area wants to drop by and say hello.

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

In last week's MailCall, we listed the passing of **Paul Skovera** (HQ/3) and **Al Kunzer** (596<sup>th</sup>). I did manage to find some photos and stories of **Al Kunzer** from the pages of **Jim Moses**, **Don Saunders** and **Steve Markle**:



**Al Kunzer**



**Al Kunzer and Henry Simpson in Italy**



**Al Kunzer in France**

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From MailCall #1438, November 2007, entry of **Don Saunders**:

Just a note to let you know how much I enjoy MailCall and all of the mail the folks are sending in. **Claire Giblin** and all of those helping her have done a great job. I first found out about the reunions at a campground in Myrtle Beach when I saw **Al Kunzer** walking through the park one afternoon. He asked me if I was going to the 517th Reunion in August and that was the first time I had ever heard there was a reunion. He gave me **Charlie Pugh's** phone number and I went to the pay phone to call him. We had a great talk and he added my wife and myself to the list. That was in 1979 and the first reunion I had ever been to. I attended all of the bi-annual until 2006 when they were changed annual reunions and missed that one due to a 20 day cruise we had booked to Europe and Greenland, Iceland and Newfoundland. We sure plan on going to St. Louis in 2008. I also want to thank you for the info that straightened out our reservation in DC this past summer.

Thanks again,  
**Don Saunders**, 596th PEC [November 2007]



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

What do we have to do, or contact who? To see if we are eligible for the French legion of honor?

**Mel Trenary** A co. 1st btln. Thanks!

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Hi Mel, I don't know the details of how you apply for the Legion of Honour. My Dad, **Ben Barrett** received his in France in 2009, so that was helped along by friends in Le Muy and was a bit rushed. I know that we did have to write a paragraph on where Ben was in France and what locations and battles/events that he was part of. My understanding is that it is not that restrictive, and that France is showing appreciation by offering the LoH to any WW2 vets who helped to liberate France.

I think that the simplest way is to contact the French consulate in your own state and they will take care of it. But I will post your question in next week's MailCall and get some real answers.

I am also forwarding copying this message to **Hoyt Kelley** and **Merle McMorrow**, both of whom recently went through the process and may have more information.

Bob Barrett

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Greetings,

The French Embassy in Washington, DC is complemented by ten General Consulates in major cities throughout the United States. If Mel still lives in Texas he would contact the General Consulate in Houston, which handles the States of TX, OK and AR. The address is 777 Post Oak Boulevard-Suite 600 Houston, TX 77056. Telephone 713-572-2799 or 572-0654. I started by contacting the Consulate for my State (ND), which was Chicago. They will request a copy of your discharge which will show action in France during a period that coincides with the period that constitutes World War II. Then some correspondence will follow. You will be informed that it could take up to a year to process. This depends on the Consulate. After approval they will give you 3 options as how you may want the presentation of the medal made.

You can go to Washington, DC and have the award made with a group that are also being presented with the same honor or you can arrange to have the presentation made locally or you can have the medal sent directly to you by UPS. I selected the third option but Senator Hoven's office got wind of it and made some political hay.

This award was founded by Louis XIV in 1693. During the Revolution all orders were abolished, but it was soon realized that some form of official compensation was needed to recognize and honor outstanding service. By an order enacted under Napoleon Bonaparte on 4 Nivose, Year VIII the Arms of Honor were instituted for military. In time it became an honorary order that would reflect the principal of equality not only between military and civilian but also in services rendered to the country. Today such individuals as Bob Hope and others have been awarded the Honor.

**Merle McMorrow**

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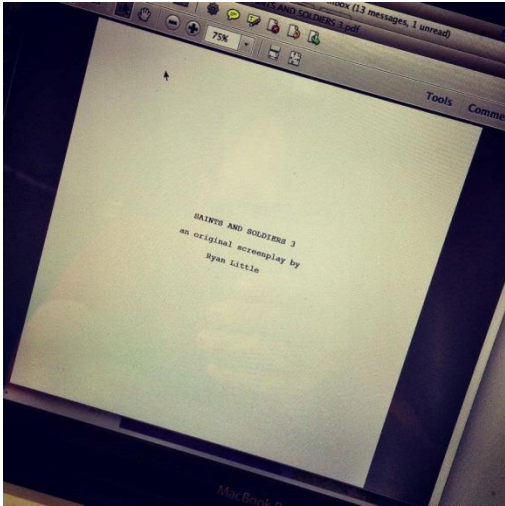
Thanks Bob for the info. Merle McMorrow sent me the info I require. I'm going to try for it.

Mel



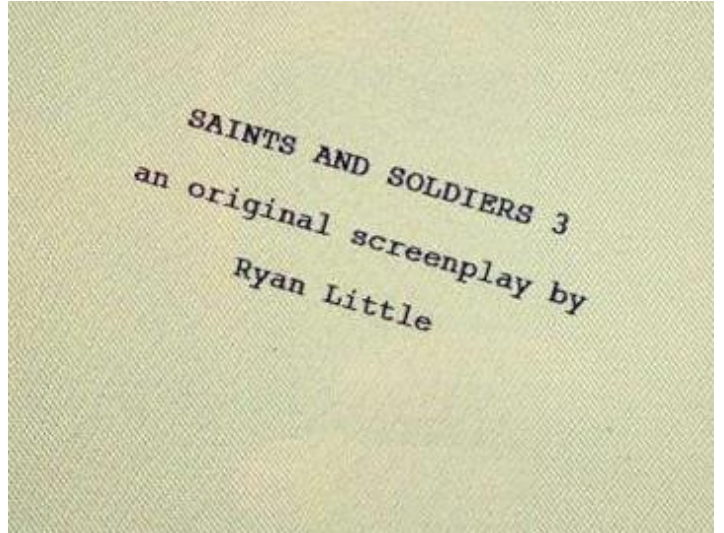
## 517<sup>th</sup> Parachute Regimental Combat Team

From the *Saints and Soldiers: Airborne Creed* Facebook page:



So it begins.  
Stay tuned for  
more details.  
Who is  
excited?

**Ryan Little**



Greetings, Bob and family -

I am writing with trooper updates, since I've talked to several of the guys recently.

**Lee Johnson**, aka Leroy Johnson, aka The Bad Johnson, is again in rehab and will be there for another 8 days or so. He is sounding good and the procedure to help his lungs and heart seems to have helped - he just needs to get his strength up. We hope he can go home soon!

**Darrell Egner** continues to improve and I have to call him back because he was on his way out the door when I called. Glad he was feeling up to it!

**Leo Dean** had a car accident this past week and broke his sternum. He is staying with his good friend Renee and we should know more next week. I hope he heals quickly because he is scheduled to come with us to France on 9 August!

**Merle and Mardy McMorrow** moved again in the last couple of months or so. They are much happier in their new place, I am happy to report. Mardy has broken out the wine glasses and I am sure neighbors will beat a path to their door.

My dad, **Allan Johnson**, is en route to Kansas as I type for General Seitz's funeral. **Nancy Fraser Armand** will be meeting him and ferrying him around - thank you, Nancy!

All the best to my favorite vets and their families. Our hearts are with the Seitz clan this weekend as they gather to pay homage to our own **Lt. General Richard Seitz**. So many of us must settle for being there in spirit and in prayer from afar.

**Claire Giblin**





# 517<sup>th</sup> 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.
- 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 Donations, In Memory of... 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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