



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2205

March 16, 2014

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

Website
Send MailCall news to
MailCall Archives
2013 Roster (updated!)
Thunderbolt (Winter 2014)

www.517prct.org
MailCall@517prct.org
www.517prct.org/archives
www.517prct.org/roster.pdf
www.517prct.org/archives

In Memorium - Sgt. Dallas Long, G Company

It is with great sadness that I am writing to inform the 517 PRCT Association, and Auxiliary of the passing of my Grandfather, **Dallas Lloyd Long Sr.** He was the first sergeant in G Co., 3 Bn. until he was transferred to HQ Co and promoted to a warrant officer immediately following the Belgium campaign. I have provided a link to his obituary below, but I would like to add that he always spoke very fondly of the men he served with and shared several stories from his experiences with the 517.

You'll notice that a portion of the content in the obituary covers his time with the 517 - he was very proud of his service and the unit. This past Christmas I had some time to talk with him and he told me that "the army did right by him." He felt that the Army followed through on all their commitments to him and treated him fairly in his retirement. I was able to be with him on his final day and told him about my finding Mail Call and he again expressed how special the 517th was to him. If anyone has any stories or information from his service my family would love to hear them.



One of his wishes was to have a graveside military honor guard - fortunately we were able to find his discharge papers and the funeral director coordinated with the honor guard from Ft. Benning. I apologize for sending this so late after his passing.

A proud and grateful grandson of a great man in a great generation,
John Mullen

Obituary: <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/atlanta/obituary.aspx?pid=169841539>



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From MailCall 2189 (December 1, 2013):

Special note to **John Mullen** regarding his grandparents. **Dallas Long** was first sergeant of G Co. when I signed into the 517th in November 1943. He was truly a top sergeant. He had what it took to keep our rambunctious eighteen year olds in line with strict military discipline and at the same time display a fatherly effect that gave them some peace of mind. He took the same approach to second lieutenants, of which I was one. At some point in Southern France he transferred to Hq. 3rd Bn. and became its first sergeant. The officers in the 3rd Bn. thought highly enough of him to urge him to go for a combat commission. He turned this down.

After the War he was commissioned in the Georgia National Guard or the army reserves as a warrant officer. He completed more than thirty years of military service and held the highest rank of warrant officer, equivalent to a major at his retirement. He and your grandmother attended all of our 517th reunions for many years and I kept track of him with Christmas cards after that. Seeing him and your grandmother at a reunion was like old home week and we always had things to share. It was only through him that I learned about the post War doings of **Grant Hooper**, who commanded G Co. until sometime in Southern France when Grant traded jobs with **Pysieuski** and became 3rd Bn. S-3. Hooper left us at Bergstein and never kept in touch with anyone from the 517th thereafter, except your grandfather who told me Grant became a school teacher in Washington or Oregon, remained in the reserves and retired as a Col. I can only say in closing that with grandparents like that, you came from good stock.

Howard Hensleigh

G Company at
Camp MacKall:



**Lt. Art Ridler (KIA), Capt. Grant Hooper, Lt. McElroy, Lt. Howard Hensleigh
and First Sgt. Dallas Long**



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For Mardy McMorrow

I met Mardy and Merle through our reunions and thought the world of her. She was fun, feisty, courageous, and very kind. And what a wonderful smile. Mardy was the first person I looked for at reunions and I missed her when she was not there. I'm sure many of us felt the same way. Although I've communicated with Merle, I wanted to share my feelings with our 517th Family as well. She was a very special person.

Brenda Mortensen

I was very sad when I read about the passing of **Mardy McMorrow**, Merle's wife of many years. She was a quiet and sweet person and attended many of our reunion through the years. Always willing to lend a hand when needed. She will be missed.

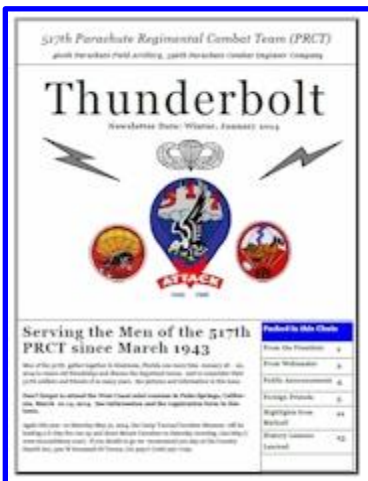
Rest in Peace Mardy,

Darrell Egner

Was very saddened to read the news about Mrs. McMorrow's passing. What a remarkable gal she was and how she touched folks lives in such a special, upbeat way. Am glad for her sake that the Good Lord called her Home, mission accomplished, she was still going gung ho and enjoying the "party of life". What a blessing she was to so many and an inspiration to us all. Please let Merle know that words cannot express Alan's and my sympathy. He is in our thoughts and prayers that the Good Lord will shower him with all the graces that he needs at this time. We know she is looking out for him. May he feel the Good Lord's presence and comfort to counterbalance his sorrow. All our love,

Pat Seitz and Alan Greer

The Thunderbolt is in the Mail



The Winter 2014 edition of the **Thunderbolt** was mailed out on March 7th.

MailCall readers can read it online now. Click [here](#) to download and read it.

Thanks to the editors -- **Lory Curtis** and **Claire Giblin**.



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MailCall News

Forwarded by Nila Gott:

A nice email to start your week.

It wasn't that long ago, that DoD FINALLY allowed these dogs to come home with their handlers. Some of them wearing Purple Hearts.

Link: [I've Got Your Back – Military Working Dogs](#)





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Interesting Guestbook entry on the website.

Submitted by

Name: **salvador padilla**
From: nicaragua
E-mail:
salvadorgpadilla@gmail.com

Comments:

Though i have never served in the us arm forces let me say i just got through watching soldiers n saints and more now than ever is more proud to be part of the greatest country in the whole world and i currently live in nevada but i wanted to say thank you to all the men and woman past n present that fought and are fighting for or on behalf of this great country.thank you so much.it is to bad that this country dont do more for the veterans since thanks to them im aloud to be here and be free and have freedom of speach.thank u and may god bless all of you today and always.

Salvador padilla-adams
Proud american citizen of the greates nation in the world

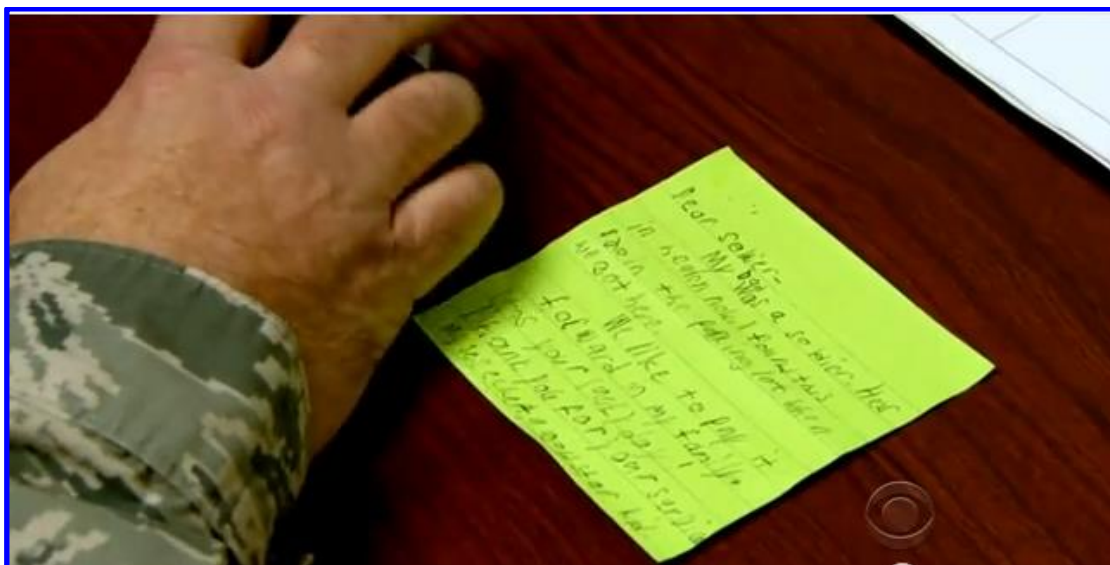
Added: March 12, 2014

MUST SEE: Young Ohio boy pays it forward.

CBS Evening News - Feb 28, 2014

As part of our continuing series "On the Road," Steve Hartman meets an 8-year-old boy who found \$20 in a parking lot and was thinking of spending it on a new video game. That changed when he saw the man in uniform.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9FCxuVSkT7k>





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I think this has appeared in mailcall before, but it is so good and Bob Hope was a great performer. In fact he performed for the 517th at Camp Toccoa in 1943. This is what my Dad remembers about the show see attached.

Lory Curtis

"Why 'Mess' In Such Large Letters?"



Bob Hope reading the inscription on a leather cigarette case given him by Col. Walsh. Hope was designed the first honorary member of 517's Officers' Mess. S/Sgt. Oliver smiling from behind.

Bob Hope Livens Routine Grind With Hot Performance

Colona, Langford, Romano, Vague Help Keep Rookies Rolling In Aisles

The rookie left his barracks and marched down to the theatre. This night was to be his. Something different was coming into his sheltered Paratrooper's life. Why? Bob Hope was coming tonight. The Rookie would get his mind off the obstacle course. That run up Mt. Currahee could be forgotten—at least until tomorrow. What if his rifle wasn't clean. The sarge wouldn't see it—he was at the show.

Lt. Schmitz Leads Songs

So what happens? He walks into the theatre and after nearly an hour's wait during which Lt. Schmitz led the boys in a little song fest, the one and only Bob Hope walks out on the stage. They are going to put the new roof on the movie house any day now, but that is not the important thing. Do you know what that Hope did the very first thing. That's right—he got down and did push-ups. Of course his nice plaid coat got a little dusty and he collapsed after the fourth one, but that's not the point. The memories of the day's work were brought back to mind.

However, it is doubtful that any one thought of anything but the fugitive from a tooth paste ad for the next hour and a half as he

gave the boys all he and his cast had for the rest of the evening. Besides Hope there was Frances Langford who probably would have drawn the boys out without the rest of the cast. Tony Romano slipped in some soothing guitar music to counter Miss Langford's swingy tunes.

Vera Vague Steals Show

Then came the fun. First there was Vera Vague. Her slanderous cracks about herself seemed very strange to the boys who were seeing her in person for the first time. She is far from the Brenda and Cobia type that she makes herself out on the radio.

Then came the pay-off. The rookies of the second world war were taken back to the Spanish American fracas as a pair of handle bars crossed the stage under the nose of one Jerry Colona. Those men whose sides were still intact went the limit with their laughs as he sang in his own inimitable way, bellowing out the first eight or ten words in one big yell then settling down to real nonsense.

It was a contented crowd of soldiers—that is, paratroopers—who filed back to their bunks. Yes, they rose at 5:45, but it didn't matter that they were up 'til 12 the night before.

After the show, Hope was made honorary member of the officers' mess and presented with a leather cigarette case.

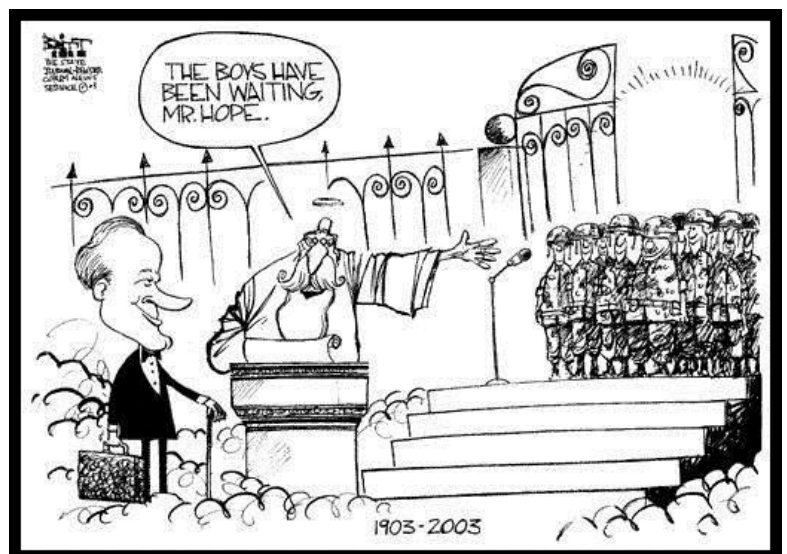
BOB HOPE IN HEAVEN

For those of you too young to remember Bob Hope, ask your Grandparents. And thanks for the memories.

Tribute to a man who DID make a difference.

ON TURNING 70

'I still chase women, but only downhill.'





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ON TURNING 80

'That's the time of your life when even your birthday suit needs pressing.'

ON TURNING 90

'You know you're getting old when the candles cost more than the cake.'

ON TURNING 100

'I don't feel old. In fact, I don't feel anything until noon. Then it's time for my nap.'

ON GIVING UP HIS EARLY CAREER, BOXING

'I ruined my hands in the ring. The referee kept stepping on them.'

ON NEVER WINNING AN OSCAR

'Welcome to the Academy Awards, or, as it's called at my home, 'Passover.'

ON GOLF

'Golf is my profession. Show business is just to pay the green fees.'

ON PRESIDENTS

'I have performed for 12 presidents but entertained only six.'

ON WHY HE CHOSE SHOWBIZ FOR HIS CAREER

'When I was born, the doctor said to my mother, Congratulations, you have an eight pound ham.'

ON RECEIVING THE CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL

'I feel very humble, but I think I have the strength of character to fight it.'

ON HIS FAMILY'S EARLY POVERTY

'Four of us slept in the one bed. When it got cold, mother threw on another brother.'

ON HIS SIX BROTHERS

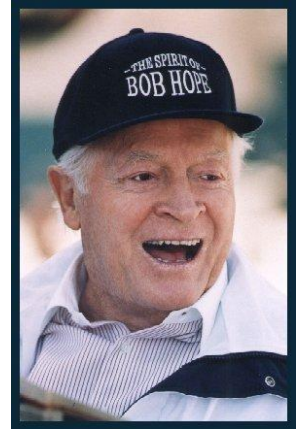
'That's how I learned to dance... waiting for the bathroom.'

ON HIS EARLY FAILURES

'I would not have had anything to eat if it wasn't for the Stuff the audience threw at me.'

ON GOING TO HEAVEN

'I've done benefits for ALL religions. I'd hate to blow the hereafter on a technicality.'





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This Week in 517th History

From *Paratroopers' Odyssey*:

In early 1943 the United States had been at war for a little over a year. The future was cloudy. How long the war would last and its final outcome were uncertain. Although Japanese expansion had been halted in the Pacific, it was still a long way to Tokyo. The Germans held all of Europe and were deep within Soviet Russia.

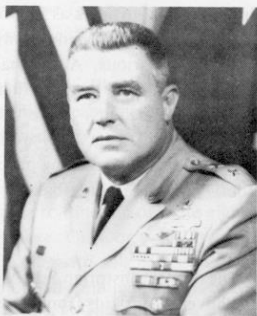
This war was far different from its predecessor of 1914-18. The tank and the airplane had restored mobility to the battlefield. American airborne forces underwent a vast expansion, growing from a parachute test platoon to five airborne Divisions and several smaller units.

The paratroopers were a new kind of soldier, trained to jump behind enemy lines and fight without outside help until relieved. They were brash, cocky, self-reliant, aggressive individualists, and a great deal was expected of them. How well some of them met those expectations is the subject of this book.

The 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team, organized relatively late in the war, was destined to play a major role in the campaigns that led to the total defeat of the German Army and the liberation of Western Europe. **The story of the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team begins with the activation of the 17th Airborne Division on March 15, 1943.** The Division's parachute units were the 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment, the 460th Parachute Field Artillery Battalion, and Company C, 139th Airborne Engineer Battalion. The 517th was at Camp Toccoa, Georgia; the 460th and C/139 were at Camp Mackall, North Carolina.

For the next several months all men volunteering for parachute duty at induction stations throughout the United States were sent to Camp Toccoa. The 517th was charged with screening the volunteers and assigning those qualified to either the infantry, artillery, 517 PIR Commander 1943 or engineers. Officers of the 460th and C/139 were placed on temporary duty at Toccoa to help with the screening, and men assigned to those units were sent to Camp Mackall.

517 PIR Commander 1943



Col. Louis A. Walsh, Jr.
(Maj. Gen. USA Ret.)

As units filled up they were to be given basic training at their home stations and then sent for parachute qualification to Fort Benning, Georgia. After jump training all units, including the 517th, would join the 17th Airborne at Camp Mackall.

Receiving and screening one to two hundred men a day was a pretty big order for the 517th. On activation the Regiment had a total strength of nine officers, headed by newly-appointed commanding officer **Lt Col Louis A. Walsh, Jr.** They were joined three days later by the "cadre" under command of Major William J. Boyle, bringing the Regiment's strength to about 250.

Two days before the cadre's arrival the first trainload of parachute volunteers had pulled into the railroad station at Toccoa, early and unexpected. The nine officers met the train, drove the recruits to camp in borrowed trucks, issued some clothing and bedding and--with some help from the





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Post garrison--cooked and served them their first meal.



Lt. John "Boom Boom" Alicki

They were the first of many. Through the Spring of 1943 trains arrived at Toccoa daily with contingents of from 50 to 150 men. Each group was met at the station and trucked to the parade ground where a 34 foot tall parachute "mock tower" had been erected. **Lieutenant John Alicki**, favored by fortune with a rugged appearance, greeted them with a blood-and-guts speech intended to scare off the timorous.

"Awright, ya volunteered for parachute duty, now's your chance to prove ya meant it!" Still in civilian clothing, each man climbed the tower, was strapped into a parachute harness, and tapped on the rump. Most made it. Those who did not were immediately headed elsewhere.

"In" and "out" platoons were formed. Those who survived the mock tower went to the "In" platoon for further screening, This consisted of a medical examination by **Regimental Surgeon Paul Vella** and his staff, followed by an interrogation by their potential officers as to why they had applied for parachute duty. Many answers were interesting and some hilarious. A few had been advised by doctors to take up parachuting to help overcome their fear of heights, Some with criminal records had been told their slates would be wiped clean. Those failing the screening process were sent to the "out" platoon and the balance assigned to units.



Maj. Paul D. Vella

The military historian S.L.A. Marshall described the American WW II paratroopers as "adventurous kids from the wrong side of the tracks." This was close, but they were more than that. In prewar, depression America there had hardly been any "right" side of the tracks. The paratroopers came from all social and economic levels. Most were teen-age kids, but some were married men in their twenties. There were roughnecks and brawlers, but also some saints and scholars. The common denominators uniting them were willingness to take a chance and refusal to admit there was anything in the world they couldn't handle.

As men assigned to the artillery and engineers moved to Camp Mackall the infantry began basic training. Camp Toccoa had been a National Guard summer training post called Camp Toombs. With the coming of World War II it had been taken over by the Federal Government and retitled.* High in the mountains of northeastern Georgia, Camp Toccoa had a good climate and a natural training aid in Mount Currahee, 3 1/2 miles away, The nearest town was the sleepy village of Toccoa.

*"Toombs", although the name of a distinguished Southern soldier, is a little on the gloomy side.

The isolation of Camp Toccoa had certain advantages from a purely military view-point. With few outside distractions and no higher headquarters close by, the Regiment was free to develop on its own. **Major Paxton**, the S-3, drew up a basic training program and the cadre went to work on the recruits, Companies taught the fundamentals, battalion committees trained crew-served weapons teams, and regiment supervised training in intelligence, communications, medical treatment, and other specialized subjects.

Military organizations are strongly influenced by the character of their commanders. Because of its isolation and greenness this was particularly true of the 517th. At age 32, **Louis Walsh** was young, cocky and aggressive. A '34 USMA graduate, he was the first in his class to make full colonel. He had been with the airborne since its earliest days and had spent three months as an observer with U.S. forces in the Southwest Pacific, Having seen combat in its most primitive form under atrocious conditions, he was determined to prepare the 517th to survive, fight, and win under any circumstances.



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Fw: You may have seen and heard this before....it's WELL WORTH A REPEAT

Merle McMorrow

The Silence...

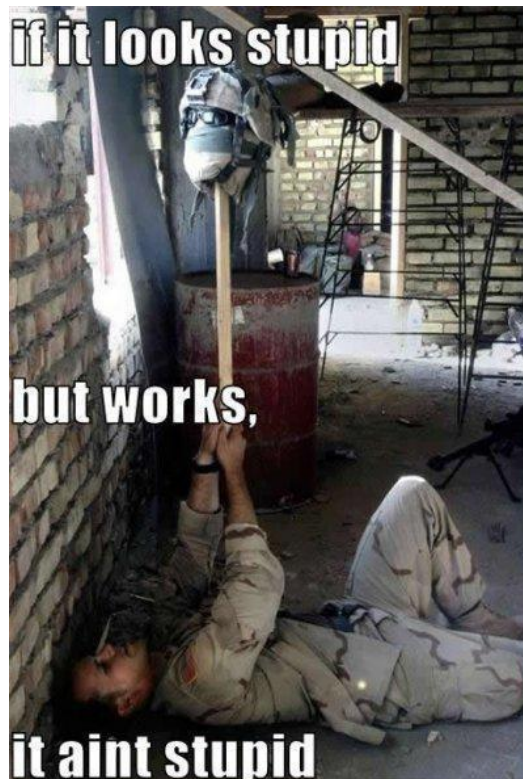
About six miles from Maastricht, in the Netherlands, lie buried 8,301 American soldiers who died in "Operation Market Garden" in the battles to liberate Holland in the fall and winter of 1944-5. Every one of the men buried in the cemetery, as well as those in the Canadian and British military cemeteries, has been adopted by a Dutch family who mind the grave, decorate it, and keep alive the memory of the soldier they have adopted. It is even the custom to keep a portrait of "their" American soldier in a place of honor in their home. Annually, on "Liberation Day," memorial services are held for "the men who died to liberate Holland." The day concludes with a concert. The final piece is always "Il Silenzio," a memorial piece commissioned by the Dutch and first played in 1965 on the 20th anniversary of Holland's liberation. It has been the concluding piece of the memorial concert ever since.

This year the soloist was a 13-year-old Dutch girl, Melissa Venema, backed by André Rieu and his orchestra (the Royal Orchestra of the Netherlands). This beautiful concert piece is based upon the original version of taps and was composed by Italian composer Nino Rossi.

Watch at this site and go full screen. It's very beautiful and moving.

<http://www.flixy.com/trumpet-solo-melissa-venema.htm>

Military Humor





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Current Association Members: Remember to Vote

All 517th Association active members (all troopers who served with the 517th/460th/596th in WWII):

Please remember to vote regarding the future of the Association, using either the form attached to the end of this MailCall (Page 11) or print out and use this one-page version:

[http://www.517prct.org/association_business/Solicitation for Votes of Active Members of the 517th PRCT.pdf](http://www.517prct.org/association_business/Solicitation_for_Votes_of_Active_Members_of_the_517th_PRCT.pdf)

Or you may also vote by sending an email to MailCall by clicking one of the links below. Please read the voting documentation carefully. Please include your name and unit in the email.

[I vote YES: Merge the 517th Association and Auxiliary](#)

[I vote NO: Do Not Merge the 517th Association and Auxiliary](#)

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.
- 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