



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



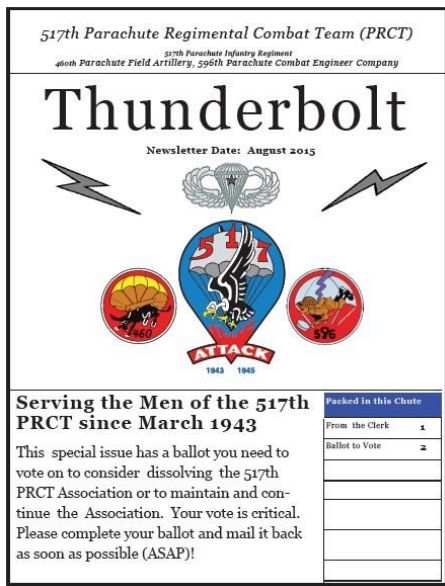
PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

## MailCall No. 2283

August 3, 2015

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

## "Why would you want to dissolve the 517<sup>th</sup> Association?"



We recently sent out a "special" MailCall and also a printed Thunderbolt newsletter asking the Association members -- 517<sup>th</sup> troopers and family -- to vote on dissolution of the 517<sup>th</sup> Association. I understand how most of you are sad and confused about this. Does this mean the end of everything about the 517<sup>th</sup> PRCT?

The answer is no. We will continue to talk and meet and promote and honor the 517/460/596 units. We will continue MailCall and the website for the indefinite future, and hopefully we will continue to have occasional reasons to get together at mini-reunions in Florida and Palm Springs and other places. If that is so, then why are we doing this? Why is my vote important?

I cannot speak for the Association, I am just a proud, second-generation member of the 517<sup>th</sup> family. But I have heard the sadness and concern about dissolving the Association every time the subject is brought up, including with both the Board and

membership, and especially the troopers, at the recent reunion in New Orleans. Let me give my personal assurances that this is not the end of the 517<sup>th</sup>, just a transition that is necessary for legal and tax purposes only.

Let me try, in my own words to respond to some of the questions I have heard. If you have more questions, send them to me, and I will post them in MailCall. I also ask that others help me in answering your questions. Mine is only one opinion, and I have little understanding of the legal and tax work required other than knowing how much work maintaining the organization has been for a few dedicated people, especially over the past few years in dealing with IRS regulations.

So below, I have written my own FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions), to try to clarify and simplify the questions and answers. I hope this helps. Again, I am not a lawyer, and not an official representative of the 517<sup>th</sup>, just a concerned and slightly informed family member.

Bob B.



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

### **FAQ: "Why would you want to dissolve the 517<sup>th</sup> Association?"**

**Q: Why would you want to dissolve the 517<sup>th</sup> Association?**

No one wants to dissolve the Association. But the time has come to change our legal structure because the current legal record-keeping, accounting and tax obligations are too complex and require too much work to maintain. The Board is simply recommending closing down the formal business structure – the corporation -- since we don't have the manpower to handle the workload.

At this point, the question is not whether we dissolve the Association, but when to do it. We want to be able to do it while we can still complete the job and select a good partner organization to carry on our legacy, and do it while there are still some 517<sup>th</sup> troopers to advise us.

**Q: But I want to stay informed and keep in touch with the 517<sup>th</sup>. What happens to the website and MailCall and reunions and trips to ceremonies and events in Washington D.C., and Europe?**

Nothing changes. Troopers, family, and friends will probably not even notice a difference. The website and MailCall will continue for the indefinite future (as long as I am alive and hopefully forever). The Thunderbolt will probably slow down or be discontinued due to the expense, but all that information is still available on MailCall and the website. Our friendships will remain with troopers, family and friends around the country and around the world. We expect the mini-reunions in Palm Springs and Florida to continue. They won't be subsidized and you'll have to pay your own way, which is pretty much the way they have operated for many years now.

**Q: Can't the next generation just take over the work of filing and organizing reunions?**

That has already been done. For the past ten years or so, the second-generation of the 517<sup>th</sup> team has done most of the work for reunions, MailCalls, Thunderbolt, collecting donations (we do not have "dues"), maintaining bank accounts, filing tax and regulatory reports, organizing Board meetings, etc. Most of this is behind the scenes. The major problem, and the reason for our need to change, is that the current format of the organization, requiring members and officers to be 75% veterans, is non-sustainable due to the decreasing number of 517<sup>th</sup> veterans. To change to any other non-profit status at this point is a huge, multi-year investment of time and legal resources to deal with the IRS and other organizations.

**Q: What does "dissolving the Association" mean, exactly?**

Mostly, we just need to dissolve the legal 501(c)(19) status that we have with Massachusetts and the IRS, so that we can stop filing tax and regulatory reports, and stop managing bank accounts and detailed record-keeping.

**Q: If we dissolve, do we lose all our history?**

The recommended plans for dissolution include transfer of the small remaining funds and artifacts to another public charity (museum) that is better equipped to handle the administrative and legal details. At the National Reunion, in New Orleans, the Board selected a committee, chaired by Rick



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

Seitz, to research which public charity will best honor the 517th and preserve its history. It would be nice to choose the museum while there are still 517th veterans around.

**Q: What about all the records, documents, photos, flags and other memorabilia?**

Actually, there are very few “assets” and memorabilia to be distributed. The Association does not own any of the photos or memorabilia that you see at reunions – those belong to the individual troopers. The official army records are still maintained by the US army, including the entire files of Rupert Graves, Mel Zais, William “Wild Bill” Boyle and others leaders. Dick Seitz’s personal files are preserved at Kansas State University. Many troopers have written their own books and biographies which were done independently of the Association. The Paratrooper’s Odyssey, our official record, and other short histories are already fully available on the public website. Most photos and collectables always belonged to the troopers and their families who can hand them down or donate them to museums as they see fit.

**Q: Can I vote? I’m not one of the original troopers, but I’m a close relative.**

[Corrected 8/4/15]: Yes, Under the current association formation, any member of the 517<sup>th</sup> family can vote. However, part of this exercise is to also get a count of how many people are 517<sup>th</sup> WW2 veterans, how many are other veterans of the US Armed Forces, and how many are non-veterans.

"Active membership is limited to those men who served honorably with the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team ("the Combat Team") and their wives, widows, descendants, brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews and in-laws."

**Q: I’m still confused. I still want to vote against the dissolution just as a matter of principle. I don’t want to see the 517<sup>th</sup> disappear.**

That won’t help. In fact, a vote against the dissolution will just create a huge amount of work to change the Association’s structure, which no one has the time for. We would quickly become non-compliant to the membership rules and reporting requirements, creating more issues with the regulatory agencies. The board of the 517 PRCT Association has looked at alternatives, and recommends that the only viable alternative is to dissolve the formal Association, as most other WW2 units have already done. If you want the 517<sup>th</sup> legacy to continue, help us make this transition and then add your own voice to the history. Talk to your closest trooper and see if you can get them to tell us their story to be included on the website history: [Meet the Troopers](#)

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**So please help the dedicated people who have kept the 517<sup>th</sup> alive for 72 years and vote “Yes” on both ballot questions to allow the dissolution so that we can move on.**

See you at the next reunion!

And please send some news about yourself to [MailCall@517prct.org](mailto:MailCall@517prct.org) .