



2nd Battalion 1st Infantry Chapter,  
Americal Division Veterans Association (ADVA)  
WEBSITE: [www.b-2-1-196lib.com](http://www.b-2-1-196lib.com)



Volume 2

*"A Soldier's Footsteps"*

May 2012

**Commander's Corner:** : May already! Hope all of you and yours are doing well. I'm glad to see we are getting more members from the other 2/1 companies joining us. I've been sending out emails whenever I hear of these guys and I think the word is spreading slowly but surely. I just contacted 5 more guys I came across. Have had some contact with a few of the "Originals" that took the ship over to Nam and were our forerunners of the 196<sup>th</sup> across "The Pond". I received 2 CDs from Stan Disorda (A 2/1) with some pictures of the early days which I will try to get into the web site as soon as I can. I've been a little remiss about adding new stuff with the site as I've been really busy the last couple of months. Stan also included a roster of A company from his tour which may help us locate them.

You may or may not have noticed but, the Americal reunion and the huge annual veteran's reunion in Kokomo are on the same weekend this year. It was some pretty poor planning in my opinion but, too late to do anything about it. There are a lot of Americal and 196<sup>th</sup> veterans that attend Kokomo every year and I think that will cut down on the Americal attendance in Atlanta a little bit. I've only missed Kokomo once in 25 or so years but, will have to attend Atlanta this year instead. I have made the suggestion to the powers that be in Americal to attempt to avoid conflict with other major veteran's gatherings in the future. I hope some of you will express the same thought to them.

Bruce Nielsen, B 2/1, has suggested we include more "personal" experiences in the newsletters in the future; so, if any of you have some stories, serious, humorous, or otherwise, please send them in. This may keep Bruce from sending in 100 poems at a time.

Newest members of the chapter as of this writing are Bob Liddell (HHC) and Ed Moree (A).

Remember, 2012 dues go to Don Hicks, 909 Maple Leaf St., Franklin, KY 42134.

**War Memorial Cross Will Return to Mojave Desert:** The battle over a 7-foot-high war memorial cross that wound its way from California to the Supreme Court has ended with its restoration, officials said. A settlement has been reached to return the cross to its perch atop Sunrise Rock in the Mojave Desert, The (Riverside Calif.) Press Enterprise reported. Under terms of the settlement, the National Park Service will relinquish 1 acre of land encompassing Sunrise Rock to the local post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. In return, Henry and Wanda Sandoz will give 5 acres of land they own to the federal government. The couple promised one of the veterans who erected the memorial 78 years ago that they would take care of it after his death.

**Money isn't everything, but it sure keeps the kids in touch.**

**V**A to Increase Mental Health Staff by 1,900: Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki recently announced that the department would add approximately 1,600 mental health clinicians – to include nurses, psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers as well as nearly 300 support staff to its existing workforce of 20,590 mental health staff as part of an ongoing review of mental health operations.

VA's ongoing comprehensive review of mental health operations has indicated that some VA facilities require more mental health staff to serve the growing needs of Veterans. VA is moving quickly to address this top priority. Based on this model for team delivery of outpatient mental health services, plus growth needs for the Veterans Crisis Line and anticipated increase in Compensation and Pension/Integrated Disability Evaluation System exams, VA projected the additional need for 1,900 clinical and clerical mental health staff at this time. As these increases are implemented, VA will continue to assess staffing levels.

"Mental health services must be closely aligned with Veterans' needs and fully integrated with health care facility operations," said VA Under Secretary for Health Dr. Robert Petzel. "Improving access to mental health services will help support the current and future Veterans who depend on VA for these vital services."

VA will allocate funds from the current budget to all 21 Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs) across the country this month to begin recruitment immediately. Under the leadership of President Obama and Secretary Shinseki, VA has devoted more people, programs, and resources toward mental health services to serve the growing number of Veterans seeking mental health care from VA. Last year, VA provided specialty mental health services to 1.3 million Veterans. Since 2009, VA has increased the mental health care budget by 39 percent. Since 2007, VA has seen a 35 percent increase in the number of Veterans receiving mental health services, and a 41 percent increase in mental health staff.

VA has enhanced services by integrating mental health care into the primary care setting, developed an extensive suicide prevention program, and increased the number of Veterans Readjustment Counseling Centers (Vet Centers). VA's Veteran Crisis Line has received more than 600,000 calls resulting in over 21,000 rescues of Veterans in immediate crisis.

"The mental health of America's Veterans not only touches those of us at VA and the Department of Defense, but also families, friends, co-workers, and people in our communities," said Petzel. "We ask that you urge Veterans in your communities to reach out and connect with VA services."

To locate the nearest VA facility or Vet Center for enrollment and to get scheduled for care, Veterans can visit VA's website at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov). Immediate help is available at [www.VeteransCrisisLine.net](http://www.VeteransCrisisLine.net) or by calling the Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 (push 1) or texting 838255.

**A New Army Rifle/A Game Changer:** *No hiding place from new U.S. Army rifles that use radio-controlled smart bullets.* The XM25 Counter Defilade Target Engagement System has a range of roughly 2,300 feet - and is to be deployed in Afghanistan this month. The rifle's gun sight uses a laser rangefinder to determine the exact distance to the obstruction, after which the soldier can add or subtract up to 3 meters from that distance to enable the bullets to clear the barrier and explode above or beside the target. Soldiers will be able to use them to target snipers hidden in trenches rather than calling in air strikes. The 25-millimetre round contains a chip that receives a radio signal from the gun sight as to the precise distance to the target. Lt. Col. Christopher Lehner, project manager for the system, described the weapon as a 'game-changer' that other nations will try and copy. He expects the Army to buy 12,500 of the XM25 rifles this year. 'With this weapon system, we take away cover from [enemy targets] forever. 'Tactics are going to have to be rewritten. The only thing we can see [enemies] being able to do is run away.' Experts say the rifle means that enemy troops will no longer be safe if they take cover. The XM25 appears perfect weapon for street-to-street fighting that troops in Afghanistan have to engage in, with enemy fighters hiding behind walls and only breaking cover to fire occasionally. The weapon's laser finder would work out how far away the enemy was and then the U.S. soldier would add one meter using a button near the trigger. When fired, the explosive round would carry exactly one meter past the wall and explode with the force of a hand grenade above the Taliban fighter. A patent granted to the bullet's maker, Alliant Techsystems, reveals that the chip can calculate how far it has travelled. These rounds will end up costing \$15.50 apiece. They're relatively cheap. The enemy has learned to get cover, for hundreds if not thousands of years. Well, they can't do that anymore. We're taking that cover from them and there's only two outcomes: We're going to get you behind that cover or force you to flee. The rifle will initially use high-explosive rounds, but its makers say that it might make later use versions with smaller explosive charges that aim to stun rather than kill.. One of the revolutionary bullets which can be pre-programmed to explode to hit troops that are hiding.

**GO ARMY GO**

**VA Claims Update:** The Department of Veterans Affairs is moving a step closer to fixing a disability claims system that for years has taken in more claims than are processed. The department is about to rollout nationally a new automated Veterans Benefit Management System to make claims determinations faster and more accurate. In 2009, VA produced 900,000 claims decisions, but took in 1 million new claims. VA increased its claims decisions to 1 million in both 2010 and 2011, but then took in 1.2 million and 1.3 million new claims, respectively. The new automated system will be launched in 16 of the VA's 56 regional offices this fall to complement ongoing manual efforts, with the rest of the ROs brought onboard by 2014. VA's intent is to have no claim older than 125 days, and for every rating decision to be 98 percent accurate.

**"I think Congressmen should wear uniforms, you know, like NASCAR drivers, so we could identify their corporate sponsors."**

**Memorial Day 2012:** Memorial Day, which is observed on the last Monday of May, commemorates the men and women who died while in the military service. In observance of the holiday, many people visit cemeteries and memorials, and volunteers often place American flags on each grave site at national and local cemeteries. Although most of us know what is being accomplished here at home, ever wonder what is done to commemorate Memorial Day at cemeteries overseas where many of our fallen heroes are located. In all 21 cemeteries worldwide have been in operation since the end of World War II. 11 are in France, three in Belgium, two in England, two in Italy, one in Luxembourg, one in Holland and one in Tunisia. These cemeteries contain the remains of veterans killed in battle from the start of World War I. Every year flags are placed at various locations where fallen heroes are properly decorated. Over 183 flags are to be placed at 183 sites.



War I. American sent to the countries cemeteries to ensure one of our heroes grave decorated. 63,000 dispatched sites. The day before the Memorial Day ceremonies begin school children and their parents go out and place an American flag at our guys' graves. The American Overseas Memorial Day Association (AOMDA) including some nine participation organizations is responsible for the overseas grave decoration effort. The Administration revealed a new defense strategy that would shrink the Army and Marines, focus more attention on China and reduce the nation's nuclear arsenal. The plan would cut military spending by \$487 billion or about 8%- over the next ten years. The plan would cut the Army by 14%, or about 80,000 troops, and the Marines by some 10% or about 20,000 troops. Currently, approximately 80,000 U.S. troops are stationed in Europe, built it is unclear how many will remain. The Pentagon will launch a full review of the military's retirement system to get the costs for retirement program under control, however retirees already receiving benefits would be "grandfathered" into ant new system, unless the bottom falls out of the U.S. economy.

**Marine Completes Walk to Arlington:** Marine Corps veteran Justin Kuhel arrived at Arlington National Cemetery, completing a 17-day, 400-mile walk from his hometown of Columbus, Ohio, to help raise the nation's awareness of wounded veterans. Veteran groups were on hand at Arlington to greet Kuhel and accompany him on a visit to fallen comrades laid to rest in Section 60.

**Editors Notes:** Newsletters are uploaded to the 2nd Battalion Chapter ADVA Website. If you missed an issue, look on the Website. The Web address is identified in the heading of the N/L. If you have anything relating to this N/L, email or write them to the following addresses; Email: rheroux1@nc.rr.com or gcarder@columbus.rr.com. Snail mail: Rich Heroux, 2005 Montgomery Road, Franklinton, NC 27525-7300 or Gary Carder, 1725 Demorest Road, Columbus, OH 43228.



**25 Years of Rolling Thunder:** May 27, 2012 marks the twenty-fifth year that Rolling Thunder has contributed in a big way to the tribute paid our dead veterans in the nation's capital. Approximately 900,000 participants and spectators are involved with this annual demonstration. Bikers and spectators from as far as California, Canada and Australia come to Washington D.C. to ride to the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Wall, referred to as the "Ride to the Wall." Rolling Thunder members are Veterans, non-veterans and/or motorcyclists, but anyone can participate in the demonstration or become a member of this incredible organization as long as you believe in the issue. The purpose of this demonstration is to bring awareness to the government so full accountability can be achieved for all Prisoners of War (POW) and those Missing in Action (MIA) from all wars. Rolling Thunder is aptly named for the roar of their motorcycles, a sound not unlike At twelve o'clock sharp some thousands of moto000r cyclists will parade through downtown Washington, DC to demonstrate solidarity and patriotism for our comrades

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throughout the United States. While many members are veterans and many ride motorcycles, neither qualification is a prerequisite. All are united in the cause to bring full accountability for Prisoners of War (POW) and Missing I Action (MIA) of all wars. Their watchwords are "We Will Not Forget." In 1987 Vietnam veterans met to discuss their personal concerns about the POW/MIOAs from the Vietnam War. They were deeply troubled by the abhorrent neglect of attention given to those who did not make it out with their lives and freedom. At the time these veterans discussed the more than 10,000 reported sightings of live Americans living in dismal captivity. Intelligence reports of these sightings were generally ignored by the government and mainstream press. The Founders of Rolling Thunder were ordinary men who understood that they had a right to have their voices heard and proceeded to lay down the plans for a gathering in Washington, D.C. during the 1988 Memorial Day weekend. They reached out to their families, fellow veterans and veteran's advocates to unify and form a march and demonstration in the nation's Capitol. Their arrival would be announced by the roar of their motorcycles, a sound not unlike the 1965 bombing campaign against North Vietnam dubbed *Operation Rolling Thunder*. Hence, they would call themselves "Rolling Thunder" a title that would endure time and be trademarked in 1990. Word spread quickly and by Memorial Day weekend in 1988, approximately 2,500 motorcycles from all over the country converged on Washington, D.C. to demand from our leaders a full accounting of all POW/MIAs. As the Founders of Rolling Thunder made their stand that day in front of the Capitol, they reflected thankfully for the people who came in support of the POW/ MIAs and for the unity that was felt. This was Rolling Thunder's first demonstration. Only until ALL POW/MIAs ARE ACCOUNTED FOR, it will not be their last. On that day, the foundation was laid for the annual "Ride for Freedom" to the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Wall (also referred to as the "Ride to the Wall").

**Remington will Make Army's New Carbines:** The Army awarded Remington Arms Company a contract to make tens of thousands of M4A1 carbines. Remington may end up being the only winner in what many gun makers have labeled as the Army's well-intentioned but doomed effort to arm soldiers with a better carbine. On the upside, the award means that more soldiers will go into combat with the M4A1, a SOF version of the carbine that features a more durable barrel and a full-auto capability. The Army's decision to dump the



three-round burst setting will give soldiers a more consistent trigger and better accuracy. It's part of the service's dual-path strategy to improve the individual carbine. In the end, the winner of the competition will likely lose when the Army conducts a business-case analysis comparing it to the new-and-improved carbine that emerges from the parallel effort known as the M4 Product Improvement Program. Questions have already started to surface over just how successful the PIP will be since the Army recently canceled a search for an improved bolt and bolt-carrier assembly. It will be interesting to see if similar efforts to improve components such as the selector-switch assembly and the forward-rail assembly suffer the same fate. For now though, congratulations to Remington for winning a contract to make 24,000 M4A1s. More orders are likely to follow since last summer's pre-solicitation detailed a requirement for 70,000-100,000 M4A1s. This has been a long, tedious road since the Army launched its improved carbine effort in late 2008.

**National Military Appreciation Month:** Congress designated May as National Military Appreciation Month in 1999 to ensure the nation was given the opportunity to publicly demonstrate their appreciation for the sacrifices and successes made by our servicemembers - past and present. Each year the president makes a proclamation, reminding Americans of the role the Forces in the develop- country. selected most days celebrat-

our military's achievements. These days include Loyalty Day, which was established in 1921, Victory in Europe (VE) Day commemorating the end of WWII in Europe on May 8, 1945, Armed Forces Day created in 1949, Military Spouse Appreciation Day established in 1984, and of course the best known of the May holidays, Memorial Day.



important U.S. Armed have played history and ment of our May was because it has set aside for ing and commemorating

# Atlanta



**Time to Make Arrangements for the 2012 ADVA Reunion:** It's not too early to decide to make plans for the 2012 ADVA reunion in Atlanta, GA. This note is intended to alert you to join us for an anticipated "Hot" time. Atlanta is chock-full of fun things to do and see. It is the capital city of the South making it a well traveled tourist adventure land. The ADVA staff is working to make this year's event everyone will long remember. We are scheduled to participate in the dedication of the Americal Division monument in the "Walk of Honor" near the newly opened National Infantry Museum at Fort Benning. As part of this memorable event the attendees are invited to eat lunch at the 2/46<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment Mess Hall. What a treat this will be for the ladies who have seldom had the opportunity to dine in this fashion. The lunch may even be an experience for all of us "Grunts". An application is part of your latest Americal Journal. You can also find an application via our Chapter and ADVA WEBSITES. Make your reservations early. Let's make this another banner reunion. Our annual membership meeting will also be conducted at this time. We adding a "Hospitality Room" for Chapter use during the reunion. We have tried to ask the ADVA leadership to refrain from scheduling the ADVA Reunion during the same period as another major reunion such as Kokamo. In prior years this was the case however with the dedication of the Americal Division monument this could not be avoided.



**Instructions are Intended to Prevent Injury:** So here I am in Vietnam reading the instructions on a hand flare. Think I was on LZ Baldy at the time. The aluminum kind where ya took off the top put it on the bottom and fired it off with the palm of your hand. Next thing ya know there are several of us having a discussion about why you were only supposed to shoot it off with the palm of your hand. It said right on it DO NOT FIRE FROM LEG. We came to the conclusion that if you fired it off from your leg ya just might hit yourself in the face. So I, being either a fire team leader or squad leader at the time, decide to fire it off from my leg and see just why you're not suppose to do it that way. By the time I got around to it I had an audience of four or five guys. I placed my right leg, firmly planted on the ground, with my right foot at a right angle making sure I had a stable platform to shoot off the hand flare making sure I had all other body parts well outta the way. Kneeling on my left knee I slammed the hand flare down just above my right knee. The resulting impact, just above my right knee, was about like somebody taking a claw hammer with a full swing and hitting me on the right leg just above my right knee. My GI brain immediately started yelling at me "BACK BLAST BACK BLAST BACK BLAST DUMB ASS". For the next month or so I walked around with a perfect imprint of the bottom of a hand flare, including the writing, in black and blue and purple just above my right knee. Thanks to my NCO school training I only did this once.

*Bruce "Nelson" Nielsen*

**Government Medallion for Placement in a Private Cemetery:** VA to furnish service bronze medallion to be affixed to veteran's headstone when the headstone is privately purchased or marker placed at the gravesite of an eligible deceased Veteran who is buried in a private cemetery. The medallion is made of bronze and available in three approximate sizes: 5 inches, 3 inches, and 1-1/2 inches. Each medallion is inscribed with the word VETERAN across the top and the Branch of Service at the bottom Eligible Veterans may receive a Government furnished marker, or a headstone or use VA Form 40-1330. The medallion is available to members of the Armed Forces of the United States who dies on active duty and is buried in a private cemetery in a grave marked with a privately purchased headstone or marker. Any deceased Veteran discharged under honorable conditions, who died on or after November 1, 1990, and is buried in a private cemetery in a grave marked with a privately purchased headstone or marker. A deceased Veteran discharged under conditions other than honorable, who died on or after November 1, 1990, and is buried in a private cemetery in a grave marked with a privately purchased headstone or marker, may also be eligible. A copy of the deceased Veteran's discharge certificate (DD Form 214 or equivalent) or a copy of other official document(s) establishing qualifying military service must be attached. The Government is not responsible for costs associated with affixing the medallion to the privately purchased headstone or marker. Appropriate affixing adhesives, hardware and instructions are provided with the medallion.

