



2nd Battalion 1st Infantry Chapter, Americal Division Veterans Association (ADVA)



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Volume 3

"A Soldier's Footsteps"

April 2013

Commander's Corner: A Great big Thanks' to all who responded to our plea for dues. It has been excellent and I commend all of you that have come through; special kudos to those of you who have gone beyond the call of duty and tendered extra \$ towards our wreath fund and general coffers. I owe all of you an apology for being remiss in getting the March Newsletter issue published on the website. I had the article on the site but, forgot to add the link to the "Newsletter" page. Chalk one up to senility. One thing I have also been remiss in doing is giving a special "Thanks" to Rich Heroux for his diligent work providing our newsletter. Having been working with the website, etc., I realize how much personal time it takes to get these things accomplished and Rich has done an exemplary job in getting the monthly issues put together and published. I hope all of you appreciate the time and effort it takes and will help ease some of the research he does by contributing articles for publication. Also, special thanks, is due to Don Hicks and his wife, Renee, for keeping up with the Secretary/Treasurer job (and it is a job). Don has been battling some problems and, with the help of Renee, has been able to manage everything in spite of his recent illnesses. The dedication of these folks makes me proud to be associated with them. Many of our members belong to the Americal Division Veterans Association (ADVA) which is a worthy organization and is the base association upon which this chapter was founded. I would like to urge any of you not belonging to the ADVA to join if possible. Annual dues are only \$15 and a life membership is \$125. Congratulations to our, Vice-commander, Rich Heroux, who has been appointed as the Assistant Adjutant of the ADVA. I'm sure he will make us all proud. As I promised, the revamped "Members Roster" is out now and is in alphabetical order which will make it easier to maintain. We want to welcome our newest member, Alton Coleman (HHC).

K *Keep safe and may the bond of battle never be broken!*
Chuck

Editors Notes: *Newsletters* are uploaded to the 2nd Battalion Chapter ADVA Website. If you missed an issue or would like to look at one from the past 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 Rich Heroux, 2005 Montgomery Road, Franklinton, NC 27525-7300.

DoD Restoring Tuition Assistance for All Services: Military.com is reporting that tuition assistance programs that aid hundreds of thousands of service-members in gaining college educations will be restored quickly with renewed funding from Congress, Defense Department officials said last week.

Two Korean War MIAs Identified: The Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office recently announced the identification of remains belong to three soldiers who have been unaccounted-for since the Korean War. Identified are:

- Pfc. Bobby L. Byars, 18, of Griffin, Ga. In late November 1950, Byars and elements of the 31st Regimental Combat Team were deployed along the eastern banks of the Chosin Reservoir in North Korea. On Nov. 29, 1950, remnants of the 31st RCT, also known as Task Force Faith, began a fighting withdrawal to a more defensible position south of the reservoir. Byars would be reported missing on Dec. 12, 1950.
- Cpl. James R. Hare, 19, of Cumberland, Md. In February 1951, Hare and elements of the 2nd Infantry Division were supporting South Korea forces when Chinese forces launched a massive counter attack that got them to retreat south. Hare was reported as missing in action on Feb. 13, 1951. It was later learned he had been captured but died of malnutrition in April 1951.

Veterans Fight Changes to Disability Payments: Veterans groups rallied to fight any proposal to change disability payments as the federal government attempts to address its long-term debt problem. They say they've sacrificed already. Government benefits are adjusted according to inflation, and President Barack Obama has endorsed using a slightly different measure of inflation to calculate Social Security benefits. Benefits would still grow but at a slower rate. Advocates for the nation's 22 million veterans fear that the alternative inflation measure would also apply to disability payments to nearly 4 million veterans as well as pension payments for an additional 500,000 low-income veterans and surviving families. Economists generally agree that projected long-term debt increases stemming largely from the growth in federal health care programs pose a threat to the country's economic competitiveness. Addressing the threat means difficult decisions for lawmakers and pain for many constituents in the decades ahead. But the veterans' groups point out that their members bore the burden of a decade of war in Iraq and Afghanistan. In the past month, they've held news conferences on Capitol Hill and raised the issue in meetings with lawmakers and their staffs. They'll be closely watching the unveiling of the president's budget next month to see whether he continues to recommend the change. Supporters argue that chained CPI is a truer indication of inflation because it measures changes in consumer behavior. It also tends to be less than the conventional CPI, which would impact how cost-of-living raises are computed. Under the current inflation update, monthly disability and pension payments increased 1.7 percent this year. Under chained CPI, those payments would have increased 1.4 percent.

There are two theories to arguing with a woman.Neither works.

DoD Restoring Tuition Assistance for All Services: Military.com is reporting that tuition assistance programs that aid hundreds of thousands of servicemembers in gaining college educations will be restored quickly with renewed funding from Congress, Defense Department officials said last week. George Little, the Pentagon's chief spokesman, said DoD intends to implement the programs in the way they were before the suspension of new enrollments was ordered earlier this month to meet the cost-cutting demands of the legislative process known as sequester. An amendment attached to the continuing resolution passed by Congress last week and signed by President Obama Tuesday specifically directed DOD to restore the tuition programs and "We will comply with the law," Little said.

VA Panel Debates Post 9/11 GI Bill Claims: House VA Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity held a hearing recently to review the implementation of VA's computer system used to process Post-9/11 GI Bill claims. Prior to the passage of the Post 9/11 GI Bill, Congress authorized \$100 million to develop a new system, called the Long Term Solution or LTS, to fully automate education claims. Witnesses discussed the IT system and the problems that student-veterans face as they try to get real-time information on the status of their benefits. Since the Post-9/11 GI Bill became law, the subcommittee has held about seven hearings on the program. Subcommittee Chairman Bill Flores (R-TX) said "Congress expects the system and the information provided to veterans and schools to be more accessible so that everyone involved can make better-informed decisions on education and training benefits in the future." Student Veterans of America testified on potential improvements to the system and echoed the concerns of the VFW, which works closely with SVA on education issues.



2013ADVA National Reunion Check-in on Wednesday, September 11, 2013, Thursday September 12 trip to Fort Campbell and 101st Airmobile Division, Friday September 13 trip to Tennessee Vietnam Veterans Memorial (one of the nicest in the country), then Country Music Hall of Fame, Dinner and then Grand Ole Opry; Saturday September 14 meetings as usual and Saturday night Banquet. Out on Sunday, September 15. The reunion will be housed at the Millennium-Maxwell House Hotel at 2025 Rosa Parks Blvd., Nashville, Tennessee 37228-1505. Thursday will feature a bus trip to Fort Campbell, KY. Friday will highlight a visit to the Tennessee war memorial for the annual memorial service and culminate with dinner and a trip to the "Grand Ole Opry. Saturday we will hold our annual meeting and elect new officers and our banquet. See the ADVA Journal or visit our 2/1 website for more details.

Military Senate VA Committee Still Talking About VA Disability Claims Backlog: The Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee opened up their first full hearing of the session discussing the VA disability claims backlog. Current numbers recorded by VBA show total claims pending (including compensation, pension, education, appeals, etc.) at about 1,957,000. Most of the members expressed frustration that they are still talking about the claims backlog and the fact that the numbers are ever increasing. Telling witnesses from VA that this is the number one item they get calls about from constituents and that the VSO community has acknowledged it as a top priority. VA Undersecretary for Benefits Allison Hickey spoke strongly about VBA's transformation and the number of claims adjudicated, which surpassed 1 million last year. She also talked about the inventory of claims and the factors impacting the backlog. The committee members asked her about the goal to have the backlog under control by 2015 and the VA-DOD joint-integrated medical record as well as the ongoing plan for a seamless handoff from VA to DOD that seems to have dissipated. Joe Violante, Legislative Director for the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) reminded the committee that to build a paperless system with new technology and updated business processes as well as changing the cultural shift within VA will take time and collaboration with all interested parties.

Independent Budget Partners Lays Out VA Budget Needs: The VFW, along with its three Independent Budget (IB) partners—PVA, DAV, and AMVETS—has released what is believed to be the necessary funding for VA to continue to offer consistent high-quality healthcare and services to all eligible veterans, their families, and survivors. The comprehensive budget highlights the needs of older veterans and those young men and women returning from active duty to join civilian life. Funding information is provided after careful review of medical and administrative costs within VA, which form the foundation of the recommendations. The Administration and Congress are expected to release their FY 2014 budget proposals sometime in March. We will continue to update you here as the budget and appropriations cycle moves along in the 113th Congress. We will continue to ask Congress and the Administration to provide sufficient funding to meet the healthcare and benefit needs of veterans in a timely and predictable manner. IB Recommendations for FY 2014 include:

- \$58.8 billion total for healthcare—\$1.3 billion more than what the Administration recommended (\$57.5 billion) in their advance appropriation last year.
- \$2.4 billion for the Veterans Benefits Administration—approximately \$226 million more than the expected FY 2013 appropriated level.
- \$2.25 billion for all construction programs—approximately \$900 million more than the expected FY 2013 appropriated level, and well below the true funding needs of construction projects.
- \$611 million for medical and prosthetic research, approximately \$28 million more than the expected FY 2013 appropriated level.

News for animal planet glory hounds: If you get *Animal Planet* check out "Glory Hounds", a documentary on Military Working Dogs to see how one of our units work. Combat dogs have their day in *Animal Planet's Glory Hounds*, which details relationships between four military working dogs & their handlers in GLORY HOUNDS 8-10 p.m. EST Thursday Animal Planet

Defense Budget Harms Retirees: The Pentagon released its FY 2014 budget with proposals designed to cut military pay and increase health care fees for retirees and their families immediately came under fire. VFW Commander-in-Chief John E. Hamilton, a Vietnam veteran, said "We recognize the Pentagon has tough decisions but proposals in this year's budget breaks faith with our volunteer force by further burdening our military retirees and our military families." The proposed budget asks for a military pay raise of only one percent and increases TRICARE fees for military retirees and their families -- something the VFW adamantly opposed last session and included in resolutions passed by members at the 113th National Convention. VFW will continue to pressure Congress and the Pentagon to find savings in programs that do not affect military personnel, retirees and their families.

House VA Committee Discusses National Cemeteries: Earlier this week, The House VA Subcommittee on Disability and Memorial Affairs held an oversight hearing on the VA National Cemetery Administration or NCA. A recent audit that NCA performed on its gravesites found errors in burial placement and markers. According to Undersecretary for Memorial Affairs (NCA) Steve L. Muro, proper changes were made and continued oversight will be performed to determine best practices. Subcommittee members also asked if VA is determining ways to improve access to national cemeteries for all veterans, especially those that live in states that do not have one. Currently, 11 states with a combined veteran population of 1.8 million are without an active national cemetery.

Pentagon Struggles with High Cost of Health Care: The loud, insistent calls in Washington to rein in the rising costs of Social Security and Medicare ignore a major and expensive entitlement program - the military's health care system. Despite dire warnings from three defense secretaries about the uncontrollable cost, Congress has repeatedly rebuffed Pentagon efforts to establish higher out-of-pocket fees and enrollment costs for military family and retiree health care as an initial step in addressing a harsh fiscal reality. The cost of military health care has almost tripled since 2001, from \$19 billion to \$53 billion in 2012, and stands at 10 percent of the entire defense budget. Even more daunting, the Congressional Budget Office estimates that military health care costs could reach \$65 billion by 2017 and \$95 billion by 2030. On April 10, when President Barack Obama submits his fiscal 2014 budget, the Pentagon blueprint is expected to include several congressionally unpopular proposals - requests for two rounds of domestic base closings in 2015 and 2017, a pay raise of only 1 percent for military personnel and a revival of last year's plan to increase health care fees and implement new ones, according to several defense analysts. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel insisted this past week that the military has no choice as it faces a \$487 billion reduction in projected spending over the next decade and possibly tens of billions more as tea partys and other fiscal conservatives embrace automatic spending cuts as the best means to reduce the government's trillion-dollar deficit.

The quickest way to double your money is to fold it and put it back into your pocket.

Sending Picture of 5 Veterans of 2/1: Five comrades from "B" Co. 2/1, (1970-71) linked up on March 16, 2013. Three are from around the Kansas City area drove up together to Mound City, MO and linked up with two from Omaha & Kearney NE. An LZ was established at a local truck stop and proceeded to have a mini-reunion. Robert "Bob" Pigg did the leg work in getting this event to happen. 4 hours was not enough time to catch up on the last 42 years, but we sure had a great time. The restaurant manager did not even get upset with us taking over a corner of his establishment for that length of time and invited us back anytime we wanted to get together again. Pictured below from left to right are: Don Campbell, Wellington, MO; Tim Bruner, Kearney, NE; Rod Beck, Shawnee, KS; Bob Pigg, Richmond, MO; and Larry Donahue, Omaha, NE.



House Armed Services Discusses Mental Health Research: On Wednesday the House Armed Services Personnel Subcommittee heard testimony on how research by DOD has improved the treatment our troops receive for mental health issues, particularly TBI and PTSD. Chairman Joe Wilson, (R-SC) noted that, since 2007, Congress has appropriated close to \$1.5 billion for PTSD and TBI research, funding nearly 1,000 clinical and scientific studies. The panel, which included the Assistant Defense Secretary for Health Affairs, the Service Chief of the Behavioral Health Clinic at Walter Reed, and the Surgeons' General of each of the armed services, reported on how those funds have been used to create better practices for the diagnosis, access to care, and treatment of invisible wounds. Some items discussed included the use of embedded mental health teams in military units and the development of the PTSD checklist which allows clinicians to track symptoms of active duty service members over time. Of note, it was reported that the benzodiazepine class of medications typically used for anxiety may actually worsen many PTSD symptoms, while certain medications normally used to treat high blood pressure may reduce nightmares and hyper-vigilance.

HISTORICAL TRIVIA

Ladies wore corsets, which would lace up in the front. A proper and dignified woman, as in 'straight laced' wore a tightly tied lace..

MREs Are Back (Though They Never Really Went Away)



The deadline for ISAF personnel to depart Afghanistan is allegedly 31 DEC 14. As the drawdown gathers steam, a lot of amenities currently available to deployed troops will disappear (including a few that probably never needed to be there in the first place). Ethnic food, food specialty nights, some hot chow meals entirely – it’s all slowly going away. You have no doubt seen the outraged posts and comments on social media from people whose idea of supporting the troops is sharing a picture or someone else’s outraged post, comment or picture about our troops having to miss meals – an inaccuracy, in large part, because the meals in question aren’t being denied, they are being replaced with [MREs](#) or [UGRs](#). Apparently not everyone understands the concept of “tooth to tail”. “Ye Gods. They gave a war and garrison came.” [Nate M.](#) “You’re not going to believe this s&!t Dave. Less than forty minutes from where we were eating MREs and showering once a week they had surf and turf night every Friday. Steak and lobster. Once a week. We were glad to get boxes of frozen corndogs. It’s like two different worlds.” In any case, MREs will be coming back in a larger numbers than deployed troops have seen in recent years. Part of this is due to an infrastructure that allows hot chow to be served with far greater frequency than any previous war in history. Part of it is because MREs are actually more expensive than a number of other options, including among other things boxed nasties. This is euphemistically referred to as returning to “expeditionary standards” and unfortunately it’s a necessary part of the draw-down. It will begin in the more outlying locations (those that had any amenities in the first place) and will slowly affect larger and larger installations. Presumably they’ll eventually pull out the ice cream stands and burger huts too. The original article refers to as *MREs* as “dreaded”. I wasn’t sure that was a completely accurate term..then I remembered the old egg and cheese omelet packages (not the more recent #4s, the older ones) and thought...maybe dreaded isn’t such a bad word after all.