



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



WEBSITE: www.2-1-196th.com

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"A Soldier Once... And Always"

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Commanders Corner: Guys, I need some help from you on putting together a new slide show for the web site. As, hopefully all of you know, I have been putting out new slide shows on the web site featuring pix, movies, etc. from our members. The one I am currently trying to put together concerns our comrades who made it back to the "world" but, have passed on since. To accomplish this I need some pix from any of you for the following guys: Gary Carder (A,B), Howard Hampton (A), Thaddeus Banks (B), Fred Barbosa (B), Bill Chrest (B), Eddie Cooper (B), Mike "Doc" Crowe (B), Ron Dearmon (B), Mike Fox (B), Johnny Garlic (B), Paul Terry "Foxhole" Loyd (B), William "Top" Martin (B), Luther Miles (B), and Raymond "Muleshoe" Wesley (B). The reason most of these listing were "B" company is because it is the most complete roster I have. If you have any information regarding names to be added to any other company roster or a copy of any company manifest, please forward the information to me. Also, remember, names submitted for company rosters *do not have to be members of the 2/1 chapter*. We want to list any veteran associated with any company. Also, if you have a birth date or the deceased date, please include it. This could take quite a while to complete and is totally dependent on help from all of you. As a side note to this, the "Bravo Company Brick Fund" currently has \$125 in it, enough for 5 more bricks to be placed at the Kokomo memorial. If you have any candidates, please contact me. Our 2/1 chapter "Challenge" coins are now available for \$10 each if they are mailed and for \$7 each if picked up in person. I will bring some of the coins to the annual ADVA-2/1 chapter meeting in Norfolk this fall. All excess monies will be given to our chapter fund. To order, send me an email, give me a phone call or a snail mail. Here's what they look like:



Four MIAs Identified: The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced the identification of remains belonging to one Marine and three soldiers who had been missing-in-action from the Korean and Vietnam Wars. Returning for burial with full military honors are:

- Marine Sgt. John McLaughlin, Company D, 32nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, who was lost in action fighting in North Korea on Dec. 2, 1950.
- Army Cpl. Elmer P. Richard, 20, of Exeter, N.H., was assigned to Battery D, 15th Antiaircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Battalion, 31st Regimental Combat Team. He was reported missing while fighting in North Korea on Dec. 2, 1950.
- Army Pfc. Eugene L. Erickson, 21, of Crow Wing, Minn., was assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division. He died in a North Korean POW Camp on Aug. 31, 1951.
- Army Maj. Dale W. Richardson, 28, of Cashton, Wis., was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 34th Armor Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division. He was lost when the UH-1H helicopter he was a passenger in was shot down near the Vietnamese/Cambodian border on May 2, 1970.

Doolittle Raiders Awarded Congressional Gold Medal : 73 years ago 80 brave Airmen were tasked with a daring mission: carry out the first bombing of Japan's mainland in retaliation to the attack on Pearl Harbor. Flash forward to 2015 - where now hundreds of distinguished guests, high-ranking military officials, members of Congress and more packed the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center's Emancipation Hall to witness the Doolittle Tokyo Raiders be awarded the Congressional Gold Medal for their heroic acts on April 18, 1942. The medal, the nation's highest civilian award, was presented to retired Lt. Gen. John L. Hudson, current director of the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, where the medal will join other artifacts and memorabilia from Doolittle's historic raid on Japan. Neither of the two remaining Doolittle Raiders were able to attend the ceremony on Capitol Hill, but on April 18, the 73rd anniversary of the raid, the medal will be presented to the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force by one of the two surviving Doolittle Raiders, retired Lt. Col. Richard "Dick" E. Cole, co-pilot of Crew No. 1, during a ceremony at the museum. The other surviving Raider, Staff Sgt. David J. Thatcher, engineer-gunner of Crew No. 7, is also planning to attend. "This has been a long time coming," said Sen. Sherrod Brown of Ohio, who co-sponsored legislation alongside U.S. Rep. Pete Olson of Texas. The ceremony was followed by a reception sponsored by the Air Force Sergeants Association, Air Force Association and Lockheed Martin. Members of the Raider's family, as well as members of Congress and other guests attended to further show their gratitude for what the 80 brave men accomplished more than 70 years ago.



I would like to send best wishes and good luck to your Secretary/Treasurer, Don Hicks who will possibly be going through back surgery soon. Send Don a note, if you get the chance.

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

Chuck



USS Oklahoma Unknowns to be Exhumed: The Department of Defense announced this week that the commingled remains of up to 388 unaccounted for sailors and Marines associated with the USS Oklahoma will be exhumed later this year for analysis that could lead to identifying most of them. On Dec. 7, 1941, 429 sailors and Marines were killed when Japanese torpedoes sank the ship during the attack on Pearl Harbor. Following the attack, 35 crewmembers were positively identified and buried. During salvage operations, the remaining crewmember remains were removed from the ship for eventual re-interment as unknowns in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, the Punchbowl. The new disinterment policy applies to unidentified remains from other American cemeteries as well, provided a basic threshold of criteria is met. The policy does not, however, extend to sailors and Marines lost at sea or to remains entombed in U.S. Navy vessels that serve as national memorials, such as the USS Arizona.

Postage Stamp Honors Vietnam Heroes: The Medal of Honor is our nation's most prestigious military decoration. It is awarded by the President of the United States on behalf of Congress to members of the armed services who distinguish themselves through "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty" while engaged in action against an enemy of the United States. In October 2014, the U.S. Postal Service® invited the surviving Vietnam War Medal of Honor recipients to be part of an issuance intended to honor all individuals who were awarded the Medal of Honor for their valorous actions during the Vietnam War.



David Petraeus, Former CIA Head Pleads Guilty: "Today marks the end of a two and a half year ordeal that resulted from mistakes that I made," Petraeus told reporters. "As I did in the past I apologize to those closest to me and many others, including those that I was privileged to serve in government and in the military over the years." Former CIA Director **David Petraeus** received a sentence of two years probation and a \$100,000 fine today after he admitted he leaked classified information to **Paula Broadwell**, his mistress. A decorated war veteran and former four-star general, Petraeus entered into an agreement with federal prosecutors in March in which he agreed to plead guilty to a misdemeanor charge for mishandling classified information. The charge, unauthorized removal and retention of classified material, stems, in part, from documents the former director allegedly provided to his mistress. In November 2012, Petraeus resigned as director of the CIA after little more than a year on the job. For 37 years before that, he served in the U.S. Army, including as commander of American forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Don't worry about old age; it doesn't last that long.

COMBAT STORIES:

I Was Just There Last Night

A couple of years ago someone asked me if I still thought about Vietnam. I nearly laughed in their face. How do you stop thinking about it? Every day for the past forty years, I wake up with it- I go to bed with it. This was my response: "Yeah, I think about it. I can't stop thinking about it. I never will. But, I've also learned to live with it. I'm comfortable with the memories. I've learned to stop trying to forget and learned to embrace it. It just doesn't scare me anymore." A lot of my "brothers" haven't been so lucky. For them the memories are too painful, their sense of loss too great. Ask a vet about making friends in Nam. It was risky. Why? Because we were in the business of death, and death was with us all the time. It wasn't the death of, "If I die before I wake." This was the real thing. The kind boys scream for their mothers. The kind that lingers in your mind and becomes more real each time you cheat it. You don't want to make a lot of friends when the possibility of dying is that real, that close. When you do, friends become a liability. If he's a friend, then you are going to be hurt if he dies, and war hurts enough without adding to the pain. Get close; get hurt. It's as simple as that. In war you learn to keep people at that distance. You become good at it, that forty years after the war, you still do it without thinking. You won't allow yourself to be vulnerable again. I can still see the faces, though they all seem to have the same eyes. I always see a line of "dirty grunts" sitting on a paddy dike. We're caught in the first gray silver between darkness and light. That first moment when we know we've survived another night, and the business of staying alive for one more day is about to begin. There was so much hope in that brief space of time. It's what we used to pray for. "One more day, God. One more day." I recall the smells, too. Like the way cordite hangs on the air after a fire-fight. Or the pungent odor of rice paddy mud. So different from the black dirt of Iowa. The mud of Nam smells ancient, somehow. Like it's always been there. And I'll never forget the way blood smells, sticky and drying on my hands. I spent a long night that way once. The memory isn't going anywhere. God, I loved those guys. I hurt every time one of them died. We all did. Despite our posturing. Despite our desire to stay disconnected, we couldn't help ourselves. I know why veterans write their stories. I know what gives them the words to create poems so honest I cry at their horrible beauty. It's love. Love for those guys we shared the experience. We did our jobs like good soldiers, and we tried our best not to become as hard as our surroundings. You want to know what is frightening. It's a nineteen-year-old-boy who's had a sip of that power over life and death that war gives you. It's a boy who, despite all the things he's been taught, knows that he likes it. It's a nineteen-year-old who's just lost a friend, and is angry and scared and, determined that, "somebody's gonna pay". To this day, the thought of that boy can wake me from a sound sleep and leave me staring at the ceiling. I'll always love those guys who shared that part of my life and how I feel about the ones I know are out there yet. The ones who still answer the question, "When were you in Vietnam?" "Hey, man. I was there just last night."

V A 40 Mile Rule Change: A few weeks ago, the Department of Veterans Affairs announced they would be changing the 40-mile rule from a geodesic straight line measurement to actual driving distance. This was exactly what the VFW wanted to hear. We are optimistic that this change will help address some of the issues veterans are facing when seeking treatment and facing wait times. The VA has also recently changed their informal claims procedures to a standardized claim form. The 'Intent to File a Claim' form will now act as a place holder for your claim date. The VA is hoping this change will help eliminate processing delays, frustrations and inaccuracy,

MOAA Storm Capital Hill: Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) council and chapter presidents from all 50 states, accompanied by members of the national board of directors and headquarters staff, plus members of MOAA's Currently Serving Advisory Council, Currently Serving Spouse Advisory Council, and Auxiliary Member Advisory Committee stormed Capitol Hill April 15 and visited nearly all 535 senators and representatives in support of key legislative priorities. MOAA stormers asked their elected officials to:

- Sustain military pay and benefits;
 - Reject disproportional TRICARE fee increases that shift costs onto beneficiaries while reducing access;
 - Eliminate harmful sequestration cuts, which threaten national security; and
- Address remaining inequities for disabled retirees, survivors, and recalled Guard and Reserve personnel.

Hill-stormers' personal efforts were bolstered by a full-page ad in *The Hill* newspaper on Wednesday sponsored by MOAA and our partner PenFed Credit Union. We were gratified at members' response to the alert we sent last Friday asking you to support this effort by emailing your legislators. MOAA members sent nearly 18,000 messages to Capitol Hill, and many legislators and staffers referenced the messages during their meetings with the MOAA stormers.

A USA President: Cuts Take Army in 'The Wrong Direction': Gordon Sullivan has been around the block a time or two. Enough so that he's troubled by the Army's plan for deep force cuts, coupled by the possibility of sequestration-level federal budget reductions in 2016, at a time of increasing global security threats. Sullivan — a retired Army general who as president of the Association of the United States Army goes to bat for soldiers on Capitol Hill — thinks servicemembers ought to be better compensated. He's yet to formulate an opinion on a proposed 401(k)-style pension plan for troops. Of the current manpower reductions, Sullivan said, "This is a fast track. We're going in the wrong direction." While Army leaders say they intend to slow down the pace of the current drawdown, they are still eyeing an eventual end-strength of 450,000 active-duty soldiers. That would be the Army's smallest size since about 1940, before the U.S. entered World War II. At the end of fiscal 2014, the Army's active ranks numbered 508,000 soldiers. Sullivan said he thinks the active Army should go no lower than 500,000, and the same for the Army guard and reserve. "I cannot believe that the United States of America cannot afford a million men and women" in the Army uniform, he said. "I think they're cutting it too much." With 10,000 troops in Afghanistan and a simmering conflict with the Islamic State group in Iraq, among other continuing and emerging problems, "we are hardly at peace," Sullivan said. Sullivan's 77 years belie his feisty spirit and seemingly tireless work ethic. He's led AUSA, a private, nonprofit organization that supports the interests of U.S. soldiers, since 1998, several years after capping a 36-year military career with a turn as the Army chief of staff under former President Bill Clinton. "I can't think of another way to have served my country than to be a soldier," he said in the interview. "This is what I love." Sullivan was critical of lawmakers who would allow another round of arbitrary, across-the-board federal budget cuts known as sequestration to happen in 2016. "Sequestration is too much," he said. "I think it's irresponsible.

The best argument against democracy is a five-minute conversation with the average voter."

-- Sir Winston Churchill

V A Sued for Delays in Providing Veterans With Health Records: A veterans' organization and a public advocacy group filed suit in federal court on Monday against the Veterans Affairs Department, claiming the agency has kept some veterans waiting longer than two years for records needed to apply for benefits. "Veterans who have been injured and disabled in combat should not be forced to wait months or years to receive their records from the VA so they can apply for disability benefits," Bart Stichman, co-founder and co-executive director of National Veterans Legal Services Program, said in a statement. Some of the seven veterans named in the suit have been waiting 25 months for records that should have been turned over to them within 20 days, according to the lawsuit. The complaint asks the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia to find that the VA has unreasonably delayed providing the records and to order the VA to produce them within 20 days. The veterans requested their VA health records in order to apply for special combat disability compensation benefits or for a rating increase, according to NVLSP and advocacy group Public Citizen. Rachel Clattenburg, an attorney for Public Citizen, said the lawsuit "is about ensuring that our country keeps its promise to its service men and women, and their families." If the VA is unable to meet its 20-day delivery time for the records, the agency is supposed to contact the veteran to say when the records will be provided. If the VA denies releasing copies of the files, it is supposed to give the veteran an explanation for denial, the groups said. The requested records would detail veterans' periods of service, circumstances of their separation, letters from the VA regarding decisions to deny or grant benefits, explanations for any rating already granted, service medical records and personnel files. This program is for combat-disabled military retirees who, by law, have their monthly retirement docked by the amount of the disability compensation they were awarded. Congress established the tax-free special compensation as a workaround to the law so that eligible retirees would get the benefit of their full retirement pay and disability compensation. The veterans listed in the law suit have so far waited between 308 and 803 days for their records, according to NVLSP and Public Citizen.

V A Extends TBI Assisted Living Program: The Department of Veterans Affairs announced the award of 20 contracts for the Assisted Living Pilot Program for Veterans with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). Originally slated to end in 2014, the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 extended this program through October 2017. Under the TBI assisted living program, Veterans meeting the eligibility criteria are placed in private sector TBI residential care facilities specializing in neurobehavioral rehabilitation. The program offers team-based care and assistance in areas such as speech, memory and mobility. Approximately 202 Veterans participated in the TBI Assisted Living Pilot Program in 47 facilities located in 22 states to date. Currently, 101 Veterans participate in the pilot as VA continues to accept new eligible patients into the program. VA has awarded 20 contracts to facilities located in 27 states. The contracts went into effect on April 1, 2015.

Warning for TRICARE Beneficiaries: Numerous reports have been received from TRICARE beneficiaries regarding bogus "call center" representatives who are encouraging beneficiaries to provide personal identifying information and health information so that TRICARE can allegedly provide prescribed cream medications to the beneficiary. Be wary of unsolicited attempts by any entity asking for personal or health information, either by phone or in person. TRICARE beneficiaries receiving calls asking for personal information should immediately submit a fraud report to the pharmacy benefit contractor, ESI, via email to TRICAREfraudtip@express-scripts.com or call toll free 866-759-6139.

Manager Removed at Philly VA After IG Audit Slams Facility: A top manager at the Department of Veterans Affairs office in Philadelphia has been temporarily removed from his position to get "different eyes" on the deeply troubled facility, the department said Friday. Gary Hodge was head of the Pension Management Center -- one of only three such centers in the country -- until last week when an inspector general audit found tens of thousands of unanswered inquiries and pieces of returned mail. Hodge was reassigned as an assistant director of the Pension and Fiduciary Service in the VA's headquarters in Washington, D.C., according to a department spokeswoman. The Philadelphia audit detailed a variety of issues, including chronic inefficiency, mismanagement and unsafe working conditions. It has also rekindled a national scandal that began a year ago with revelations that the VA systematically manipulated patient records to disguise long wait times at hospitals and clinics. The department is "shifting leadership in the regional office by bringing in another leader from another Pension Management Center to see if having different eyes on the problem will bring new solutions," VA spokeswoman Walinda West wrote in an email to Stars and Stripes. West said the move is "not a promotion, demotion or lateral move." Hodge is on temporary assignment that will include ongoing VA projects, and he is slated to resume his duties as manager of the Philadelphia Pension Management Center on Aug. 17, West said. The IG found that the center was responsible for more than 31,000 veteran inquiries that had languished for an average of 312 days -- the standard response time is supposed to be five days -- and another 22,000 pieces of returned mail that were never processed. Also, the devices used to time-stamp received mail were not secured, meaning staff could change the date without supervision. Last year, it was revealed that VA used off-the-books wait lists to hide long delays in veterans receiving requested health care. The VA has said the audit describes conditions a year ago and that it has since made improvements.

Authorities Make 6 Arrests in 2 States in Terrorism Probe: Six people have been arrested in connection with a terrorism investigation in Minnesota, where authorities have been tracking youths who have traveled or tried to travel to fight with militants, including the Islamic State group, authorities said. A spokesman for the Minnesota U.S. Attorney's Office said the arrests were made in Minneapolis and San Diego but there is no threat to public safety. Spokesman Ben Petok did not give details about the charges. He said more information would be released soon. The U.S. Attorney's Office and the FBI planned a news conference to announce details. AK le Loven, spokesman for the Minneapolis office of the FBI, said six people were arrested but gave no further details. An FBI spokesman in San Diego referred questions to Loven. Authorities say a handful of Minnesota residents have traveled to Syria to fight with militants within the last year. At least one Minnesotan has died while fighting for the Islamic State. Since 2007, more than 22 young Somali men have also traveled from Minnesota to Somalia to join the militant al-Shabab group. Four Minnesotans have already been charged in connection with supporting terror groups in Syria, including the Islamic State group. One man, 19-year-old Hamza Ahmed, had been stopped at a New York City airport in November as he and three others were attempting to travel to Syria. Ahmed has been indicted on charges of lying to the FBI during a terrorism investigation, conspiring to provide material support to the Islamic State, and attempting to provide material support. He has pleaded not guilty. But there have been no public charges filed against his three companions, and little information had been released about them. All are between 13 and 20 years of age and live in the Twin City area.

US Army Will Close 10 Warrior Transition Units: The Army announced a plan to close 10 of its 25 Warrior Transition Units (WTUs) that treat wounded, injured and ill soldiers with the goal of returning them to duty or easing their return to civilian life. The WTUs scheduled for inactivation by August 2016 are at Fort Gordon, Ga.; Fort Knox, Ky.; Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va.; Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.; Fort Sill, Okla.; Fort Polk, La.; Fort Wainwright, Alaska; Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska; Fort Meade, Md.; and Naval Medical Center, San Diego. The service said the consolidation was made possible by the declining population of wounded, ill and injured troops after the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Col. Chris Toner, commander of the Army Warrior Transition Command, said the automatic defense cuts under the sequestration process were not a factor in closing the WTUs. Projected spending for the WTUs in 2015 was \$791.5 million. Toner said the Army's estimated the projected savings from the closures at about \$350 million. Despite the closures, the Army viewed wounded warrior treatment as an "enduring mission," Toner said. "We are not walking away from warrior care." The 10 closures will affect a total of about 800 soldiers and 300 civilian workers. The Army will attempt to reassign the workers while moving the 800 soldiers to other nearby units or possibly into community care. The WTUs were set up following the 2007 scandals at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center on the treatment of wounded warriors. The Army spent more than \$1.2 billion on 45 WTUs but the numbers have dwindled as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan wound down. Last year, the service closed 14 WTUs to bring the total down to 25. At the height of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the WTUs were serving more than 12,700 troops. Toner said the current total was 3,654, and he expected a continuing population of about 3,000. The remaining number of WTUs could quickly be expanded to accommodate up to 8,000 troops in the event of another war, Toner said. More than 69,500 troops have passed through the WTUs since 2007 and, until recently, about 45 percent of them returned to duty. Since last August, about 24 percent have returned to duty. Currently, active duty soldiers must require six months of treatment before they are accepted into a WTU. National Guard and Reserve troops called up for active duty must require at least 30 days treatment. Of the 3,654 troops now in WTUs, 1,753 were active duty (48 percent) and 1,901 were Guard or Reserve, Toner said. He added that about 1,700 of the 3,654 were being treated for various types of post-traumatic stress and behavioral problems. Since the Walter Reed scandals that led to the firing of Army Secretary Francis Harvey that on active, the WTUs have frequently been the target of agency, inspector general and media reports of allegations of mistreatment and disrespectful behavior by staff. On Friday, Toner pushed back against a report by NBC 5 in Texas that soldiers in WTUs nationwide filed more than 1,100 complaints about mistreatment from 2010-2014. Toner said that all of the 1,137 complaints were to the Army's own ombudsmen. He said 171 of the complaints involved allegations of unfair treatment and lack of respect. He said that 92 percent of the 171 cases were resolved by the leadership. "I treat all these allegations seriously," Toner said, adding that he had "zero tolerance" for soldiers being treated with a lack of respect and was "absolutely dedicated to eliminating that."

At the time of Pearl Harbor, the top US Navy command was called CINCUS (pronounced 'sink us'); The shoulder patch of the US Army's 45th Infantry division was the swastika. Hitler's private train was named 'Amerika.' All three were soon changed for PR purposes.