



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



WEBSITE: www.b-2-1-196lib.com

Volume 7

“A Soldier Once And Always”

March 2017

Commanders Corner: Well, back in the good ol’ US of A after my visit to Thailand to visit some friends. In case you were wondering, Asia still smells the same as it did when you guys were lucky enough to visit that area. It’s a lot better with no one shooting at you. My trip was a little bit of a bummer this time over because one of my oldest and most fun friends had a heart attack the week before I arrived and is not in very good shape. I was able to visit him a couple of times after he came out of an induced coma and his recognition was good and he was fairly alert. When he comes off some of the devices they have him hooked up to, they will be flying him back to Norway for his recovery. The doctor I talked to gave him a 60/40 chance which was a great improvement from when he was first admitted. I was able to visit with some other friends and get in some golf. The former was great and the latter, well, the golf courses are pretty hard for a person of my limited ability but still fun. I hope all of you did well during the winter months and are looking forward to the springtime. We had a pretty mild winter over all as far as snow was concerned but, it got bitter cold several times. Yesterday, it was 74 and today the high will be 34. Quite a change in one evening but, warm weather is just around the corner. Just an FYI, the 196th biennial reunion will be in Louisville, KY in 2017 from July 26-30. Information on the reunion is now on our web site’s reunion page and the 196th site at <http://www.196th.org>. I have also updated our main page with information on the 2107 ADVA annual reunion. I also want to welcome 2 new members to our chapter, Edward R. Osborne (A 2/1) and Richard Gregerson (E 2/1). The respective rosters on our web site have been updated with their information.

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

Chuck



Congressional Watchdog Upholds TRICARE Contract Awards: The Government Accountability Office announced the results of its review of the protests filed against the TRICARE 2017 Managed Care Support Contracts awards; upholding the Defense Health Agency contract awards to Humana Government Business Inc., to provide managed care support to the East Region, and Health Net Federal Services LLC in the West Region. “The new contracts demonstrate our continuing commitment to serving the health care needs of our country’s military service members, retirees and their families,” said Dr. Karen S. Guice, Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs. In the newly created East Region, the total potential contract value, including all option periods, is estimated at \$40.5 billion. For the West Region, the total potential contract value, including all option periods, is approximately \$17.7 billion. Both contracts are cost plus-fixed-fee contracts with a nine-month base period (transition-in) and five one-year option periods for health care delivery, plus a transition-out period. “We’ve added new controls to provide a more seamless transition to the new contracts,” she added. “We’ll work very closely with our new partners to test their systems and ensure a smooth handoff of care for all of our beneficiaries,” Dr. Guice explained.

Free Tickets for Veterans: The non-profit Veteran Tickets Foundation (Vet Tix) gives free tickets to service members and veterans to help them relax, strengthen relationships and connect with their communities. To date, more than 475,000 verified veterans and service members have officially registered as Vet Tixers and are able to enter lotteries for tickets through the Tickets for Troops program, or apply for the experience of a lifetime through Hero’s Wish. Vet Tix has provided more than 2.5 million tickets for events across the country ranging from college and professional sports to concerts and theater performances. For more information, read the VA Vantage Point Blog and visit the Vet Tix website. For more entertainment-related military news, visit the Military.com Off-duty section. For more on veteran benefits, visit the Military.com Benefits Center.

No Cost Flu Shots for VA patients at Walgreens: There has been a resurgence of influenza infections late in this flu season, so give yourself a Valentine’s Day gift of health by getting a *no cost* flu vaccination by simply walking into your nearest VA medical facility or one of the 8000 partnering Walgreens Pharmacies and getting a vaccination! The Department of Veterans Affairs has once again teamed up with Walgreens Pharmacies nationwide to allow all veterans who are currently enrolled in the VA healthcare system to be able walk into any of the over 8000 Walgreens nationally (and the Duane Reade pharmacies in the New York metropolitan area) to receive a vaccination *at no cost*. Vaccinations will be available through March 31, 2017.



‘Soldier for Life’ window sticker?

The Army and Air Force Exchange Service sells the SFL window sticker. If your local store doesn’t have it, ask the manager. It is also available from retailers. Retirement Services Officers are also authorized to order and distribute the SFL window sticker.

The School Closing Leaves Sergeant in Crisis: US Army Sergeant Mingo McCall, 37, of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, served active duty from September of 2000 to April of 2013. "I decided to join the VFW pretty much on a whim, but after joining I felt a real sense of fulfillment," McCall said. McCall was looking forward to graduating from ITT Technical Institute and stepping into the professional world this year, but this dream was put on hold when the for-profit higher education institution closed 130 campuses across the country in September. "That happened three days before my graduation," McCall related. "This was really devastating, and I still worry about how I'll be able to repay my student loans." I had only enough money to make my car payment in October. I had no idea how I was going to pay the rest of my bills and household expenses." McCall desperately began searching for organizations specializing in veterans' issues. He expressed frustration at the lack of support available to veterans in trouble, especially for those like him struggling with PTSD and other mental health issues. "The VFW was the only organization I found that took my situation into account, and went up the chain of command to get me and thousands of other veterans the help we needed in a desperate situation," McCall continued. The VFW Unmet Needs program provided help paying McCall's electricity, rent and car insurance bills, as well as a gift card to buy groceries. "This was so much more to my family and I than just a helping hand. This gave us a newfound sense of happiness and optimism." McCall is determined to get his degree, despite the setback he faced at ITT. He will be starting school at Front Range Community College in Westminster, Colorado, this month, and ultimately plans to earn his bachelor's and master's degrees in architecture. "To those who donate to the VFW, on behalf of my brothers and sisters in arms, I want to express my thanks for your selflessness, spirit and heart," McCall concluded. "Your support does not go unnoticed!"



Senator Dean Heller of Nevada introduced S.116, January 2017: This bill would permit veterans who have service-connected, total and permanent disabilities to travel on military aircraft in the same manner and to the same extent as retired members of the armed forces are entitled to such travel. This bill would afford priority to totally disabled veterans for transportation on scheduled and unscheduled military flights within the continental United States and on scheduled overseas flights operated by the Air Mobility Command, on a space-available basis. This measure is in accordance with DAV Resolution No. 121, which seeks the enactment of legislation to extend space-available air travel aboard military aircraft to all service-connected veterans entitled to receive compensation at the 100-percent rate. Please e-mail or draft your own message to request that your Senator support this important bill and ask that the measure be brought to the floor for a vote and passed as soon as possible.

Grandpa is the smartest man on earth! He teaches me good things, but I don't get to see him enough to get as smart as him!

Symbols of Honor: The Service Flag was designed and patented by World War I Capt. Robert L. Queissner of the 5th Ohio Infantry whose two sons were serving on the front line. The flag was designed to be displayed in the front window of peoples' homes, to indicate the number of family members serving the war effort as members of the Armed Services. In 1918, President Wilson approved a request from the Women's Committee of the Council of National Defense that allowed mothers who had lost a child serving in the war to wear a gold star on their traditional black mourning band. This practice led to the blue star on the Service Flag being covered with a gold star to indicate that the service member had been killed. This practice became much more widespread during WWII, when organizations and families took great pride and displayed banners indicating the number of members of the organization or family serving in the war. Between WWII and today, the practice of wearing or displaying service flags or gold stars had diminished greatly... but the meaning of the symbols is as significant as it was a hundred years ago. Each time you see a blue service star, you should be aware that the person displaying it has a loved one—possibly in harm's way—supporting the freedoms we enjoy every day. A gold service star indicates that someone in that person's family has lost their life while serving our Army and our nation.



U.S. Law Revises Definition of Reserve Component Veterans: Now, Retired National Guard and Reserve Service members in the U.S. Armed Forces are 'legally' recognized as veterans if they have served at least 20 years of honorable service. However, this distinction by law still does not come with prescribed benefits. On Dec. 16, 2016, then President Barack Obama signed this provision into law as a component to a larger effort pertaining to veteran benefits. Historically, guard and reserve personnel were only considered veterans if their service record upon being retired included more than 179 days of service in a federalized status other than training. H.R. 6416, also known as Jeff Miller and Richard Blumenthal Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2016 is the comprehensive document that amends title 38 of the United States Code and addresses veterans' benefits. Section 305 (Honoring as veterans certain persons who performed service in the reserve components of the Armed Forces) of this law revises the definition to include reserve component Soldiers who fall in the following category: U.S. law revises definition of Reserve Component veterans "Any person who is entitled under chapter 1223 of title 10, United States Code, to retired pay for non-regular service or, but for age, would be entitled under such chapter to retired pay for non-regular service shall be honored as a veteran but shall not be entitled to any benefit by reason of this honor."

My young grandson called the other day to wish me Happy Birthday. He asked me how old I was, and I told him, 72. My grandson was quiet for a moment, and then he asked, "Did you start at 1?"

This is Witten by a Chaplain in Iraq: I recently attended a showing of 'Superman 3' here at LSA Anaconda. We have a large auditorium that we use for movies as well as memorial services and other large gatherings. As is the custom at all military bases, we stood to attention when The National Anthem began before the main feature. All was going well until three-quarters of the way through The National Anthem, the music stopped. Now, what would happen if this occurred with 1,000 18-to-22-year-olds back in the States? I imagine that there would be hoots, catcalls, laughter, a few rude comments, and everyone would sit down and yell for the movie to begin. Of course, that is, only if they had stood for The National Anthem in the first place. Here in Iraq 1,000 soldiers continued to stand at attention, eyes fixed forward. The music started again, and the soldiers continued to quietly stand at attention. Again, though, at the same point, the music stopped. What would you expect 1,000 soldiers standing at attention to do? Frankly, I expected some laughter, and everyone would eventually sit down and wait for the movie to start. No! ! . . . You could have heard a pin drop while every soldier continued to stand at attention. Suddenly, there was a lone voice from the front of the auditorium, then a dozen voices, and soon the room was filled with the voices of a thousand soldiers, finishing where the recording left off: "And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air, gave proof through the night that our flag was still there. Oh, say, does that Star Spangled Banner yet wave, o'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave." It was the most inspiring moment I have had in Iraq, and I wanted you to know what kind of U.S. Soldiers are serving you! Remember them as they fight for us! Chaplain Jim Higgins, LSA Anaconda is at the Ballad Airport in Iraq, north of Baghdad.

US Army Ranked 'Weak' in New Think Tank Report: The U.S. Army is ranked "weak" and the other branches of services "marginal" when it comes to military power, according to a new think tank report. Overall, American military power is just "marginal" and trending toward "weak," according to the 2017 Index of U.S. Military Power, released Wednesday by the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank based in Washington, D.C. The scores are based on the military's "capability or modernity, capacity for operations, and readiness to handle assigned missions successfully," the document states. The group's Army assessment is the same from last year (the index began in 2015) and stems from the service's decision to decrease the size of the force and delay equipment upgrades to improve readiness -- yet only a third of its units are prepared for war, according to the document. "Even for units deployed abroad, the Army has had to increase its reliance on contracted support to meet maintenance requirements," the report states. "In summary, the Army is smaller, older, and weaker, a condition that is unlikely to change in the near future."



Shulkin Pledges to Get VA Off 'High Risk' List for Waste, Abuse: Dr. David Shulkin used his first public statement as the new Veterans Affairs Department secretary on Thursday to pledge management reforms that would remove the VA from a government agency's "high risk list" for waste, fraud and abuse. "We will implement a plan that directly addresses these risks by building on the progress we have already made," Shulkin said in response to a Government Accountability Office report naming the VA as a "high risk" agency in its treatment of veterans, handling of claims and efforts to lower wait times. "VA has been working hard to function as an integrated enterprise," Shulkin said, "and I will continue to build upon the progress we've made since 2015 and accelerate the changes required to meet all of GAO's criteria for removal from the high risk list." The department was among a number of agencies, including the Defense Department, listed by government auditors as high risk because of a wide range of management issues. The GAO's biennial high risk report first listed the VA in 2015; the latest report cited a "lack of progress" by the department in implementing necessary reforms. The GAO report said improvements cited by the VA didn't go far enough to rate removal from the high risk list this year and noted ongoing issues with accountability, information technology, staff training, ambiguous policies and cost efficiency. The report raised concerns in the House and Senate on how the VA is allocating funding to initiate reforms. "While this information is not new, it certainly underscores that the Veterans Health Administration has not made enough progress towards providing quality care for our veterans," said Rep. Phil Roe, a Tennessee Republican and chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee. "As I've said time and time again, VA should have the resources necessary to serve veterans, but we must also take a close look at how the department is allocating the resources they've been entrusted," Roe said in a statement.

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Quote from a WWII veteran overhearing someone say that "You can't bomb an ideology.": "The hell you can't, because we did it. These Muslims are no different than the [Imperial] Japanese. The Japs had their suicide bombers too. And we stopped them. What it takes is the resolve and will to use a level of brutality and violence that your generations can't stomach. And until you can, this shit won't stop. It took us on the beaches with bullets, clearing out caves with flame throwers, and men like LeMay burning down their cities, killing people by the tens of thousands. And then it took 2 atom bombs on top of it. Plus we had to bomb the shit out of German cities to get them to quit fighting. But, if that was what it took to win, we were willing to do it. Until you are willing to do the same...well I hope you enjoy this shit, because it ain't going to stop!" Back then, we had leadership, resolve, resources and determination. Today we're afraid to hurt people's feelings....and worry about which bathroom to piss in!!!

Fort Bragg Soldiers Return Home After Africa Mission:

More than 80 soldiers from the 82nd Airborne Division quietly deployed in late September. Unlike most missions undertaken by conventional Army forces, this one came with nearly no fanfare. There was no announcement the troops would be leaving. Officials on Fort Bragg, as well as families of the soldiers, were instructed to keep the mission quiet. Over the weekend the soldiers returned to Fort Bragg, welcomed by family and friends and broke their silence. For the past five months, the detachment of 85 soldiers provided aviation, personnel recovery and casualty evacuation capabilities to the Combined Joint Task Force -- Horn of Africa mission, which spans an area roughly the size of the eastern United States. Comprised of soldiers from F Company, 2nd Assault Helicopter Battalion and B Company, 3rd General Aviation Support Battalion, the detachment included the Army's last pathfinder unit and crews that fly and serve with the 82nd Airborne Division's CH-47 Chinook helicopter company. The mission ends an era for the pathfinders of F Company -- representing the last time the unit was called to action before its inactivation later this month. The first of four Air Force C-5 Galaxy aircraft carrying the detachment and the soldiers' equipment -- including four CH-47 Chinooks -- landed at Fort Bragg's Pope Field late Saturday. Inside the hulking plane were 25 soldiers and two of the bus-sized helicopters. They were greeted by dozens of family and friends, many carrying balloons and homemade signs. Col. Erik Gilbert, commander of the 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade, and Col. Michael Fenzel, deputy commander for support of the 82nd Airborne Division, welcomed the soldiers. The soldiers, in some cases, weren't able to say where they were going or what they would be doing, the mission was kept a secret.

Fifty-one years ago, Herman James, a North Carolina mountain man, was drafted by the Army. On his first day in basic training, the Army issued him a comb. That afternoon the Army barber sheared off all his hair. On his second day, the Army issued Herman a tooth-brush. That afternoon the Army dentist yanked seven of his teeth. On the third day, the Army issued him a jock strap. The Army has been looking for Herman for 51 years.

Army Allows Sikhs Permanent Exemptions to Wear Beards and Turbans: The Army has made it easier for Sikhs and observers of other religions to serve in uniform while upholding the tenets of their faiths by simplifying the process to receive a religious appearance accommodation. Brigade-level commanders now must grant religious accommodations to any soldier seeking to wear a religiously mandated beard, turban or Muslim hijab while in uniform with only a few exceptions, Army Secretary Eric Fanning wrote Tuesday in a memorandum. Previously such uniform exemptions had to be approved by the secretary. "The soldier's brigade-level commander will approve a request for a religious accommodation ... unless the commander determines the request is not based on a sincerely held religious belief, or identifies a specific, concrete hazard that is not specifically addressed in this directive and that cannot be mitigated by reasonable measures," Fanning wrote, noting the new policy would be added to Army Regulation 670-1, which defines the Army uniform appearance standards. The Army has granted several Sikh soldiers temporary appearance waivers in recent years to wear neatly groomed unshorn beards and hair under a turban while serving in uniform. Those waivers were applied on a case-by-case basis, and most of them were granted only after the soldiers filed lawsuits seeking their uniform exemptions. The new accommodations will be made permanent for soldiers throughout their careers once granted by their brigade-level commander, Fanning wrote in the memo issued in the final weeks of his tenure. The Sikh Coalition, which helped represent Sikh soldiers seeking exemptions in recent years, was pleased with Fanning's ruling. "While we still seek a permanent policy change that enables all religious minorities to freely serve without exception, we are pleased with the progress that this new policy represents for religious tolerance and diversity by our nation's largest employer," said Harsimran Kaur, the coalition's legal director. Sikhs fought in the Army during both World Wars, the Korean War and in Vietnam, but few Sikhs have served in recent decades because of a 1981 policy mandating they cut their hair and beards. Sikhism is a monotheistic religion that emerged in what is now India and Pakistan in the 15th century. Sikhs believe resistance to oppression is a religious duty, and military service was considered the highest honor for young Sikh men.



2017 ADVA National Reunion Bloomington, MN -- August 23-27

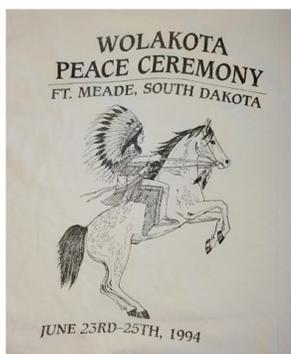
Attendees will stay at the Hilton Minneapolis/St. Paul Airport Mall of America hotel at 3800 American Blvd E, Bloomington, Minnesota 55425. Hotel reservations can be made by calling the Hilton at 952-854-2100 or on the web at <http://group.hilton.com/americaldivisionveteransassociation>. Use the reunion Group Code: ADVA. The reunion room rate is \$114 per day plus 15.25% tax. The group rate will be offered three days before and three days after reunion dates. Call in your room reservation if you plan to use the extended dates or have any problems with the Hilton web site. There is free Hilton shuttle service from the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP) to the nearby reunion hotel. We have teamed up again with Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. (AFR). AFR will provide web based reunion registration, pre-selected banquet seating with your friends, and on-site reunion support. You may register for the reunion, tours, and banquet by completing the online form and pay by credit card at afr-reg.com/americal2017. For more details visit the Americal Division Website; Americal.org/reunion, or 2/1 Inf Chapter website; b-2-1-196lib.com/reunion_events.

WOLAKOTA
A tribute to LT General Hal Moore
By LT Jerry Hughes

Back in June 1994 Francis Whitebird (B 2/1 68-69) then *Director of Indian Affairs* for the State of South Dakota organized a WOLAKOTA, meaning a peace ceremony where the 7th Cav (Custer's unit) would sit down with the Sioux Nation and smoke a ceremonial peace pipe.

Easily thirty plus B 2/1 fellow vets showed up to support Francis, and to this day it remains for those who attended one of our favorite reunions.

The war had been over 24 – 25 years for most of us, but was still fresh on our minds to say the least. I brought my oldest son Jerry Jr with me and it was a good opportunity for him to listen to our expanded war stories and share a “few” bravos.



I had brought with me from New Jersey 30 t-shirts I had professionally made up to celebrate the long weekend and Francis' efforts. On the front side was our 1st Platoon “widowmaker's” patch and on the back an Indian brave on rearing horseback with the event name and date. It was a keeper!



Some of my personal best recollections were having Mike Fox there prior to his death, and Terry “Foxhole” Loyd. There was time for Sgt Craig Weaver, Jerry Younger and I to visit Devil's Tower in Wyoming, for Chuck Holdaway to play a dead man's poker hand in Deadwood, and for our entire 1st Platoon contin-

gent to visit Marlin Eggy Egeland's Devil's Lake and Edmore, North Dakota digs.

The formal Wolakota Ceremony was held outside of Sturgis, SD at FT Meade, which was established in 1878 and home to the 7th US Cavalry and Buffalo Soldiers of the 25th Infantry. The Lakota drums were pounding, and we all remarked, “can you imagine hearing those the night before you are to go into battle?” Very unnerving...

LT General Hal Moore of Ia Drang Battle fame was there on horseback representing the 7th Cavalry. I presented him with one of our t-shirts and I recall how tall he was, and sharp looking in buckskin jacket. This was eight years before Mel Gibson would make him even more famous, and he was congenial as ever. Ed. Note: We were in the food line, just before the enormous Army GP tent was blown down by the Dakota prairie high winds.

Hal Moore was buried with high honors at FT Benning just recently, and it was a given he was loved and respected by all his men, something all good officers strive for.

I treasure those days around the camp fire with my old troops as one of the highlights of my life's bucket list. Till we all meet again!

To live as soldiers was our pride
Now we live on slowly until we die
Don't you ne'er forget all that we have done
For we were soldiers once and young

Hal Moore, Army general memorialized in book and film ‘We Were Soldiers,’ dies at 94: Hal Moore, an Army lieutenant general whose leadership in one of the earliest and bloodiest battles of the Vietnam War saved scores of lives and was memorialized in the book “[We Were Soldiers Once ... and Young](#)” and in a film adaptation starring Mel Gibson, died Feb. 10 at his home in Auburn, Ala. He was 94. In a [Facebook post](#), his family said that Gen. Moore suffered a stroke last week but did not provide additional details. Gen. Moore's military career spanned three wars and multiple continents, beginning with a posting in Japan during the American occupation after World War II and a stint at Fort Benning, Ga., where he tested parachutes and parachuting equipment on more than 130 test jumps. At least one jump resulted in his being dragged along the ground by an airplane. Sporting a bulldog face and a Southern accent acquired from a childhood in small-town Kentucky, he developed a



reputation as an exceptional combat leader during the Korean War and in the early stages of the Vietnam War — no more so than in the Battle of Ia Drang, the first major engagement between American and North Vietnamese forces.