



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



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

Volume 7

“A Soldier Once And Always”

October 2017

Commanders Corner: Fellow Members, I'd like to take the time to thank all of you for the great support I received as commander of this chapter over the past 6 years. It has been an honor and pleasure to fulfill the duties you all entrusted me. Luckily, I had a great cast of players in the other officer and at-large positions; they were all immensely helpful while I was in office and, just like the Nam, had my back. As you all may know by now, Stan Disorda, one of our At-large officers, had to relinquish his duties. Since his term was not up for a vote until next year's annual chapter meeting; It was decided at this year's meeting that I will fulfill his duties until the next election (this will allow me to still keep an eye on Ju-Ju). Our new commander is John "Sooperfly" Woyanski (A 2/1) and I'm sure you will all show him the same support I was afforded while in office. I'd like to welcome our 2 new life members; Larry Tallacus (B 2/1 '70) and Ronald White (B 2/1 '66-'67). I have added a new link to the web site under the "Related Links" column; the new link is "Getting/Applying for Military Awards You Have Earned". Also, here's some updated information on the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry; which you were all awarded but may not be aware of. Like the National Defense Medal, the Appreciation of Service Certificate and the Cold War Medal, the VCOG is an 'automatic' award that is fully authorized to ALL veterans who served in Vietnam. If the VCOG is not listed on your DD-214 (because you discharged prior to 1974 or the clerk who typed your DD-214 after 1974 was an airhead) it is not necessary to request a DD-215 as long as your DD-214 displays Vietnam Service. You are 'automatically' fully authorized. The United States is the only nation that does not produce a full-size medal associated with its (ribbon-only) unit awards. This fact confuses some American Vietnam vets who mistakenly believe or advocate that Americans can only wear/possess/display the VCOG unit ribbon; this isn't true. All four variations are authorized to ALL military persons of any Nation who served under Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV). The VCOG with Palm Device award consists of four variations: (1) the full-size medal. (2) a miniature version of the full-size medal. (3) the unit (gold-color framed) ribbon (or "colorbar"). (4) the individual frameless ribbon (colorbar). You may order the medal through various web sites; one of which is "<https://www.medalsofamerica.com/>". The VCOG is the equivalent to the French Croix de Guerre.



Thanks,
Chuck

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

Memorial Bricks: The Kokomo, Indiana Veterans Reunion is hosting its 35th consecutive Reunion. They have relocated to their own property at 8313 E.400 S., Greentown, IN 46936 Ph# (765)-628-0297. And are known today as: Howard County Vietnam Veterans Organization, or H.C.V.V.O. (abbreviation). Their Acreage used to be an old grass airstrip along I-26 just west of Greentown, IN proper. Over the years they have turned it into a First Class Reunion/Campsite. Their website is: www.hcvvo.net/. My favorite spot there is located along the middle of the back fence, where a 50 foot American Flag fly's proudly above their Memorial Garden. This is a place of Reverence, and to my mind, "Sacred Ground". A place to remember Fallen Comrades, both those lost in combat so long ago, and those who have passed since then. Just simple brick pavers, consisting of room for inscription 13 spaces across, 3 vertical rows. Placed with the understanding that, if some of one's ashes are put under their Brick. It can never be relocated. The cost of each brick is \$25.00. Which as far as I know, is the lowest expense outside of actual Military grounds, and locations? Our first 2/1 Infantry placement consisted of 22 bricks. This number has increased each year since then. The HCVVO's website listed above has further information if needed? HCVVO has designated their location as "A Healing Ground". And I intend to have my family place some of my ashes below my personal paver, when my time comes, to be back with my "Band of Brothers"...

Respectfully,
Gerry "Bo" Borysiak
Memorial Brick Coordinator

The Vietnam War: A new 10-part, 18-hour documentary film series directed by Ken Burns and Lynn Novick, started on September 17, 2017, on PBS stations nationwide. The first five episodes will air nightly from Sunday, September 17, through Thursday, September 21, and the final five episodes will air nightly from Sunday, September 24, through Thursday, September 28. Each episode will premiere at 8:00 p.m. ET with a repeat broadcast immediately following the premiere (check local listings). Beginning Tuesday, October 3, the series will re-air on a weekly basis through November 28, at 9:00 p.m. ET (check local listings). On September 17, concurrent with the broadcast premiere, the first five episodes of THE VIETNAM WAR will be available for streaming on all station-branded PBS platforms, including PBS.org and PBS apps for iOS, Android, Roku, Apple TV, Amazon Fire TV and Chromecast, and the final five episodes will be available beginning September 24. All episodes will remain accessible until October 3, when the series begins its weekly rebroadcast. During the rebroadcast period, each episode will be available to stream for two weeks. PBS station members with Passport, a benefit for donors, offering extended access to a rich library of public television programming can view the entire series (all 10 episodes) beginning September 17



Flu Season is here! Veterans Protect Yourselves and Get a NO COST Flu Shot: The cold and flu season is upon us and 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, 2018. Veterans wishing to receive the no cost vaccination simply need to present a Veterans Identification Card and a photo ID, at any participating Walgreens to receive the vaccination. The Group ID is: **VAFLU**

In addition, after the Walgreens pharmacist administers the vaccine Walgreens will transmit that information securely to VA where it becomes part of the patient's electronic medical record. VA is committed to keeping Veteran patients healthy, and during this flu season, vaccination is the best way to prevent the spread of flu. No matter where you live, visit your local VA clinic or Walgreens to get a no cost flu shot.

Trump to Award Medal of Honor to Alabama Veteran: President Donald Trump will award the Medal of Honor to a retired Army medic from Alabama who risked his life several times to provide medical care to his comrades during the Vietnam War, the White House recently announced. Trump will award retired Army Capt. Gary M. Rose of Huntsville, Alabama, the nation's highest military honor for his actions in combat. Trump will honor Rose for his conspicuous gallantry during a White House ceremony on Oct. 23. The White House said Rose, 69, will be recognized for risking his life while serving as a medic with the 5th Special Force Group during combat operations in Vietnam in September 1970. Rose repeatedly ran into the line of enemy fire to provide medical care, and used his own body on one occasion to shield a wounded American from harm. On the final day of the mission, Rose was wounded but put himself in the line of enemy fire while moving wounded personnel to an extraction point, loading them into helicopters and helping to repel an enemy assault on the American position. As he boarded the final extraction helicopter, the aircraft was hit with intense enemy fire and crashed shortly after takeoff. The White House said Rose ignored his own injuries and pulled the helicopter crew and members of his unit from the burning wreckage and provided medical care until another extraction helicopter arrived. Rose is a 20-year veteran of the Army. He will be the second person to be awarded the Medal of Honor by Trump. The president honored James McCloughan of South Haven, Michigan, in July for his actions to save wounded soldiers in a Vietnam kill zone.



Navy's 'Blueberries' Uniform on the Way Out, Starting Next Month: The era of the Navy's much-reviled blue digital camouflage work uniform is rapidly drawing to a close. Beginning Oct. 1, new recruits, officer candidates, and sailors assigned to Navy Region Southwest will be assigned the Navy Working Uniform Type III. The forest-green digital camouflage uniform was developed by Naval Special Warfare Command as a tactical uniform and has been used by riverines and other expeditionary sailors. The full transition to the new green working uniform will take 24 months, ending Sept. 30, 2019, according to a Navy.

Wait Times As Good or Better Than Private Sector: Report: VA health care is as good or in some cases better than that offered by the private sector on key measures including wait times, according to a study commissioned by the American Legion. The report titled "A System Worth Saving," concludes that the Department of Veterans Affairs health care system "continues to perform as well as, and often better than, the rest of the U.S. health-care system on key quality measures," including patient safety, satisfaction and care coordination. "Wait times at most VA hospitals and clinics are typically the same or shorter than those faced by patients seeking treatment from non-VA doctors," the report says. The report comes at a time when the Trump administration, Congress and the VA are considering a long-term overhaul of the Veterans Choice Program, which allows veterans to seek VA-funded care through private providers. In July, Congress approved a \$3.9 billion bill to extend the Veterans Choice Program on private care for six months. Funding for Choice had been due to run out in mid-August, according to the VA. The Choice program, established after a 2014 scandal over extended wait times for care at VA medical facilities, allows veterans who face a more than 30-day wait for an appointment, or who must travel more than 40 miles to a VA facility, to instead seek VA-funded care through private providers. Legion-commissioned report says, "Although there are opportunities for VA to improve its performance by entering into partnerships with other health-care providers, no evidence supports the claim that privatizing VA or substantially outsourcing its services would bring veterans better care."

US Veterans Awarded France's Highest Honor for WWII Service: Ten California men who fought overseas with U.S. forces have been awarded the French government's highest honor for their World War II service. The veterans were each presented the National Order of the Legion of Honor during a ceremony Tuesday at Los Angeles National Cemetery. Among them was 94-year-old Sterling D. Ditchey, an Army Air Corps 1st lieutenant who flew 70 combat missions in Europe as a B-25 bombardier. Ninety-five-year-old Ignacio Sanchez was part of 35 combat missions as a B-17 turret gunner. The presentations were made by Christophe Lemoine, the consul general of France in Los Angeles. Instituted by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1802, the Legion of Honor recognizes exceptional service to France.



Why do I have to press one for English when you're just gonna transfer me to someone I can't understand anyway?

The world is changed by your example not your opinion!

V **A Fires DC Medical Director for the Second Time:** The Department of Veterans Affairs fired its D.C. medical director again, this time using new laws championed by President Donald Trump that ease restrictions on employee discipline. "We at VA will use the authorities available to ensure our veterans get the highest quality service and care possible," VA Secretary David Shulkin said in a written statement announcing the second firing, which followed a federal board forcing the agency to take the director back last month. "This is the right decision for veterans in D.C. and employees at the medical center." Brian Hawkins led the Washington DC VA Medical Center when the inspector general's office issued a scathing report in April detailing unsterile conditions and instances of the hospital running out of necessary medical equipment. The hospital was putting veterans at "unnecessary risk," the report stated. Shulkin removed Hawkins from the position immediately following the report and fired him July 28 for "failing to provide effective leadership," the VA said. The Merit Systems Protection Board, which hears appeals from terminated federal employees, ordered the VA on Aug. 2 to reinstate Hawkins as medical director. The board's sole member, Mark Robbins, issued a 45-day stay on Hawkins' firing while the U.S. Office of Special Counsel reviewed whether the dismissal violated civil-service protections. Shulkin vowed at the time to fire Hawkins again. Trump signed the bipartisan VA Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act in June. The legislation created more repercussions and a faster firing process for VA employees, and it lowered the standard for evidence that the VA needs before it takes disciplinary action. Lawmakers created the legislation with the intention of restoring veterans' trust in the VA by rooting out a perceived culture of corruption in the department. Evidence for Hawkins' first dismissal was collected with the old law still in place. The new law -- and a new inspector general's report -- gave Shulkin the authority to fire him again, the VA said. The VA inspector general released more findings in August that Hawkins sent sensitive information to private email accounts belonging to him and his wife.

2.1% Pay Raise, BAH Cuts, Tricare Fee Hikes Approved by Senate: Troops would get a 2.1 percent pay raise in 2018 under a bill approved by the Senate, but married military couples with dependents would potentially lose hundreds of dollars a month due to a new cap on housing allowances. The upper chamber of Congress approved its version of the \$700 billion defense authorization act by a vote of 89-8. The 1,215-page bill now heads to closed-door negotiations. Pres. Trump has supported a 2.1 percent pay raise for troops -- 0.3 percentage point lower than the 2.4 percent passed by the House. The Senate's version would cap the amount of housing allowance dual-military couples with dependents can receive. Currently in those cases, the higher-ranking spouse receives that allowance at the with-dependents rate, while the lower-ranking spouse receives it at the without-dependents rate. The Senate proposal would instead require that both receive the without-dependents rate. As a result, affected troops could see several hundred dollars less in their paychecks per month. Officials estimate that the change to the housing allowance benefit could save the Pentagon about \$52 million in fiscal 2018. Senate lawmakers also approved an increase to the cost of prescription drugs for all Tricare users except active-duty troops. Currently, a 30-day supply of generic drugs is \$10 at an in-network retail pharmacy, while the cost of a 30-day supply of brand-name drugs is \$24. A 90-day supply of generic drugs ordered through the by-mail home delivery program is free, while a 90-day brand-name supply is \$20. Under the plan approved by the Senate, those costs would go up by 2026.

I **Israel and US Open First American Military Base in Israel:** Israel and the U.S. inaugurated the first American military base on Israeli soil that will serve dozens of soldiers operating a missile defense system. The move comes at a time of growing Israeli concerns about archenemy Iran's development of long-range missiles. Together with the U.S., Israel has developed a multilayered system of defenses against everything from long-range guided missile attacks from Iran to crude rockets fired from Lebanon and the Gaza Strip. The base's opening is largely symbolic and isn't expected to bring operational changes. But the Israeli military says that along with other measures, it sends a message of readiness to Israel's enemies. "It's a message that says Israel is better prepared. It's a message that says Israel is improving the response to threats," said Brig. Gen. Zvika Haimovich, the commander of Israel's aerial defense. The base is located within an existing Israeli air force base and will operate under Israeli military directives. Israeli and U.S. military officials cut a ribbon at the base, where the American and Israeli flags flew side by side and soldiers from both countries commingled. Israel's multi-tier missile defense system includes the Arrow, designed to intercept long-range ballistic missiles in the stratosphere with an eye on Iran, and Iron Dome, which defends against short-range rockets from the Gaza Strip. David's Sling is meant to counter the type of medium-range missiles possessed by Iranian-backed Hezbollah militants. Israel considers Iran to be its greatest threat, citing the country's nuclear ambitions, its development of long-term missiles, hostile anti-Israel rhetoric and support for anti-Israel militant groups. Israel has grown increasingly concerned about Iran's involvement in the civil war in neighboring Syria, where its troops are supporting President Bashar Assad. Israel is worried that Iran and its proxy Hezbollah will establish a long-term presence in Syria near the Israeli border.

S **uicide Among Veterans Highest in Western US, Rural Areas:** Suicide among military veterans is especially high in the western U.S. and rural areas, according to new government data that show wide state-by-state disparities and suggest that social isolation, gun ownership and access to health care may be factors. The figures released Friday are the first-ever Department of Veterans Affairs data on suicide by state. It shows Montana, Utah, Nevada and New Mexico had the highest rates of veteran suicide as of 2014, the most current VA data available. Veterans in big chunks of those states must drive 70 miles or more to reach the nearest VA medical center. The suicide rates in those four states stood at 60 per 100,000 individuals or higher, far above the national veteran suicide rate of 38.4. The overall rate in the West was 45.5. All other regions of the country had rates below the national rate. Other states with high veteran suicide rates, including West Virginia, Oklahoma and Kentucky, had greater levels of prescription drug use, including opioids. A VA study last year found veterans who received the highest doses of opioid painkillers were more than twice as likely to die by suicide compared to those receiving the lowest doses. The latest VA data also reaffirmed sharp demographic differences: Women veterans are at much greater risk, with their suicide rate 2.5 times higher than for female civilians. Among men, the risk was 19 percent higher among veterans compared to civilians. As a whole, older veterans make up most military suicides -- roughly 65 percent were age 50 or older.

A second grader came home from school and said to her grandmother, "Grandma, guess what? We learned how to make babies today." The grandmother, more than a little surprised, tried to keep her cool. "That's interesting," she said. "How do you make babies?" "It's simple," replied the girl. "You just change 'y' to 'i' and add 'es'."

Mattis: Transgender Troops Can Continue to Serve: New guidance released Friday by the Pentagon makes it clear that any transgender troops currently in the military can re-enlist in the next several months, even as the department debates how broadly to enforce a ban on their service ordered by President Donald Trump. In a memo to top military leaders, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said a high-level panel will determine how to implement Trump's ban on transgender individuals in the military. Trump directed the military to indefinitely extend the ban on transgender individuals enlisting in the service, but he left it up to Mattis to decide if those currently serving should be allowed to stay. Members of Congress have already sent a letter to Trump calling on him to reconsider the ban. Sen. John McCain, the Republican chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said Friday he backed legislation that would bar the Trump administration from forcing transgender troops out of the armed forces. McCain of Arizona said in a statement that any service member, including those who are transgender, who meets the standards for military readiness and medical fitness should be permitted to serve. "When less than 1 percent of Americans are volunteering to join the military, we should welcome all those who are willing and able to serve our country," McCain said. The bill is an attempt to establish protections for transgender troops in law, cutting off Trump's efforts to kick service members out based on their gender identity. Trump tweeted in July that he would ban transgender troops from serving anywhere in the U.S. military. The directive caught the Pentagon flat-footed as defense officials struggled to explain what they called Trump's guidance.

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Special Ops Soldier Killed, 7 Injured in Fort Bragg Accident: A training exercise involving demolitions killed one special operations soldier, Staff Sgt. Alexander P. Dalida, 32, of Dunstable, Massachusetts, and injured seven others at the Army's largest base Thursday. The injured soldiers were taken to the base's Womack Army Medical Center for treatment, said Lt. Col. Rob Bockholt, a spokesman for the U.S. Army's Special Operations Command, which is based at Fort Bragg. Bockholt said he could not describe the extent of the injuries or what caused them. "There was an incident that occurred on one of the ranges," he said, adding that the command is investigating. "We're looking into exactly what happened." The incident at Bragg is the latest training accident to result in injured military personnel.



Production Begins on Commemorative Bricks: Over 6,000 commemorative bricks have been purchased to date as a lasting way to honor the service and sacrifice of currently serving Soldiers, Army veterans, and Department of the Army civilians as part of the National Museum of the United States Army (NMUSA) Brick Program. These bricks are now in production to be used to "Pave the Way to Army History" on the Path of Remembrance leading to the Museum's main entrance. Jenna Truax, Manager, Donor and Membership Programs at the Army Historical Foundation (AHF), remarked, "Although the Museum won't be open until 2019, we've had to begin production on the bricks to ensure they'll be installed when the Museum opens." Due to high demand, the width of the inlaid brick portion of the promenade has been expanded by 40 percent. "We expect to sell out the promenade this winter," Truax continued. "Additional areas are planned for expansion of the Commemorative Brick Program, but those areas may not be completed in time for Museum dedication." These high quality American-made granite bricks were mined by Coldspring in northern Minnesota and inscribed by Fund Raiser's Sports, located in Boise, Idaho. The journey of these bricks to their final location at the U.S. Army Museum is an American story of its own. "Working with the Army Historical Foundation to offer the nation a chance to pay tribute to those who have served and continue to serve in the United States Army is a true honor," said Karen Lockner, President and CEO of Fund Raisers Sports. "The rich legacy of those selfless men and women who serve or have served in the Army will live on through the sentiments of their families, friends, and fellow Soldiers in what is sure to be a magnificent place of honor and reflection." "We are excited to see the bricks go into production using the materials and expertise of Minnesota's Coldspring and Idaho's Fund Raiser Sports," noted Truax. "With their help, we look forward to seeing the Path of Remembrance become a reality at the Army Museum."



BARRELS OF OIL: When the first oil wells were drilled they had made no provision for storing the liquid so they used water barrels. That is why, to this day, we speak of barrels of oil rather than gallons.

The North Carolina Commander of the American Legion Post 187 expressed with sincerity and love of country these words. I thought you would share his views.

Service to Our Country – A Veteran’s Perspective -- As a nation, we recognize Veterans Day. Originally known as Armistice Day, Veterans Day is officially observed Saturday November 11, 2017. We honor the more than one million American men and women who have given their lives for their country since our nation’s founding. Our debt to these heroes can never be re-paid but our gratitude and respect must last forever. For many veterans, our nation was important enough to endure long separations from their families, miss the births of their children, freeze in sub-zero temperatures, bake in wild jungles, lose limbs, and, far too often, lose their lives. Military spouses have had to endure career interruptions, frequent changes of address, and a disproportionate share of parental responsibilities. The children often had to endure changes in schools, separation from friends and, hardest of all, the uncertainty of whether or not Mom or Dad will live through their next combat tour.

You cannot fight a war without veterans and while the utopian idea of a society without war is appealing, let us not forget that wars have liberated slaves, stopped genocide and toppled terrorist. Stephen Ambrose once wrote, “America’s wars have been like rungs on a ladder by which it rose to greatness. No other country has triumphed so long, so consistently or on such a vast scale through force of arms.” It has been often said that without our veterans, Americans would be speaking some foreign language. Regardless of which view of alternative history you take, *we do know* that without our veterans America would not be America.

You can show your support by hiring a veteran in your workplace, visiting a VA hospital or donating to a veterans program. Companies should understand that it’s smart business to hire veterans, and when members of the Guard and Reserves deploy, it is America’s business to ensure that their civilian careers do not suffer. Homelessness is another issue that affects veterans disproportionately. Too often today’s tattered citizen of the street was yesterday’s toast-of-the-town in a crisp uniform with rows of shining medals. This is hardly the “thanks of a grateful nation.” We can do better. We must do better.

Fortunately, veterans don’t ask for much. Benefits are a mere drop in the bucket compared to the financial and human cost of war. But, nonetheless, we still owe them. In 1979 author Tom Wolfe wrote a book about the Mercury 7 astronauts called “The Right Stuff.” As heroic veterans they certainly earned the distinction, but, my friends, I would not limit the title to that group only. Anyone who has honorably worn a United States military uniform has ***The Right Stuff***. Remember **that** - the next time you see a homeless person on the street, a man in a wheelchair or a difficult co-worker who is experiencing PTSD. Historians have said that Dwight Eisenhower was prouder of being a soldier than he was of being the president. And while relatively few veterans ever reach the rank of general, pride in ones’ military service is a bond shared by nearly all who have served. This pride is on display on every obituary page in the country, where military service – regardless of how many decades have passed and subsequent achievements reached – is mentioned with the death notice of nearly every deceased veteran. Can any CEO or distinguished Ivy League graduate truly claim to have more responsibility than the 21-year-old squad leader walking point on patrol in Afghanistan? Yes, my friends, nothing they ever do will eclipse their military service and they ***do have the right stuff!*** Fewer than 10 percent of Americans can claim the title “veteran.” And while the great military phrase “uncommon valor was a common virtue,” has been so often repeated that it risks becoming a cliché, it is no less true.

In 1789 George Washington said, "The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional as to how they perceive the veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by their country." We must ask ourselves as a nation, are we serving veterans even half as well as they have served us?

The Walter E. Cole Post 187 American Legion is responsible for conducting the Veterans Day ceremony. It will take place at the Wake Forest Veterans’ Memorial, located on the grounds of the Heritage Golf Course just off Rogers Road. Ample signage throughout greater Wake Forest point directions to the ceremony location. The ceremony will commence at 11 o’clock sharp. As we honor the over 23 million living veterans from the Greatest Generation to the Latest Generation, let us never forget this debt that is owed. No government commission or single dollar amount can adequately re-pay what has been given to all of us throughout our nation’s history. When we Americans were born, we inherited two very precious gifts. One was the gift of life, and the other was the gift of freedom, both of which were paid for by someone else. I would like to encourage the young people to think about what others have done to make it possible for us to wake up every morning free.” Through their blood, service and sacrifice.

We have set aside a moment to honor those veterans who are commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War. Vietnam era veterans will be provided with a commemorative pin designed by the Department of Defense to distinguish their faithful service to the nation. Vietnam veterans were never really shown the nation’s admiration or pride for having answered the call to duty as veterans had before. They have suffered through the sarcasm, arrogance and repugnance after serving admirable doing whatever was asked of them. It is finally time to heal the wounds of this conflict once and for all. Please join me and the other members of the American Legion as we pay tribute to these gallant and brave warriors. You can show your support simply by saying “Thank you for your service to our country” to the next veteran you meet.

Steve Spellman
Commander
Post 187