



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

WEBSITE: [www.2-1-196th.com](http://www.2-1-196th.com)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/2-1-196th](https://www.facebook.com/2-1-196th)



Volume 8

“A Soldier Once And Always”

December 2018

**Commanders Corner:** The Holiday seasons are upon us now. I hope all of you have a Merry Christmas. Time has really flown by and another year is almost over. We had a great Veterans Day on 11 Nov. in our community of Colonial Heights with a great program to honor veterans put on by my American Legion Post 284 and Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2239. Over a hundred were in attendance. I hope that you were able to commemorate Veterans Day in your local community. It is important that we veterans continue to be at the forefront of honoring those that served with us, before us, and those good American men and women who continue to pick up the gauntlet of service to the Nation. I often tell other veterans that they should wear something that tells others what unit they were in during any of our nation's conflicts, like wearing an Americal Division or 196<sup>th</sup> LIB hat for instance. Well, during our latest Veterans day program at our Legion post I had a man come up to me and tell me he served in the 20<sup>th</sup> Infantry in Korea. I wear the unit crests of the two units I served in Vietnam, 20<sup>th</sup> Infantry and 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry on my Legion hat. If he hadn't Noticed what I was wearing, I probably would not have met him. He is now a new member of our Legion Post. Additionally, while at a Veterans Day commemoration at our grandsons' school I met a young Captain who was at Fort Lee as an instructor. He told me when he came into the hall that he didn't think he would ever see a “Legionnaire” crest (our 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment) again as he had just left 2-1 Inf. at Joint Base Lewis-McChord where he served as the Forward Support Company Commander for the battalion. What a surprise! He indicated that the battalion is strong and constantly training for upcoming missions; if you don't know it, our battalion is a Stryker Infantry battalion in 2nd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division; Check out what our battalion is doing on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/2.1legion/> I hope that many of you get involved in donating during this year for our 2-1 Inf. Brick Program. This might be a small commemoration of our battalion and regiment, but it will last for a long time and people will see these in memorial gardens and other places where we decide to honor our brothers who stood in ranks before us. We are members of an old regiment of our Nation's Army, and its service, and the sacrifice of those who came before should be marked in history. Five dollars is not a lot and we can all afford this small token. God bless you and your families during the rest of this year and the upcoming Holidays. Remember our collective extended family, those Americans serving in our Armed Forces all over the world, and especially to the memories of those that gave the ultimate sacrifice.

John  
Commander

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



**2/1 Infantry Chapter Stuff: Locate a Brother** We are looking for someone who might know the whereabouts of CPT Robert McBane. CPT McBane commanded B Company in 1971-1972. Last contact was in Germany after retirement from the service. If you know where he is please contact me.

Looking for a soldier Named **Gary Smith**. He was with Company B 2/1 Infantry during the period April – May 1972. He transferred out of Vietnam around that same time, His last known address is Sparks, Nevada. If you know where he is please contact me.

**Treasurer's Report:** I would like to thank all the members at the reunion for all their help and donations. I collected enough money to cover the cost of the hospitality room and refreshments. We had enough left over to boost our Brick Fund to \$210.00. We now have a balance of over \$5,000.00 dollars in our Chapter account. We now have a total of 157 members in our Chapter. This year we have picked up 16 new members so far. Keep up the good work!  
Jesse Mendoza Sec/Treas.

**Banks of the Maumee, Ohio, August 1794.** Anthony Wayne commanded the Army, enlarged in 1792 and formed into the Legion (now 1st and 3d Infantry Regiments). He trained it into a tough combat team to beat the Indians of the Northwest who had twice whipped us. The Legion advanced into Indian country, feeling its way cautiously. On 20 August 1794 it tracked down the foe, routed him from behind a vast windfall, and destroyed his warriors. Thus the way cleared for the new nation to expand into the Ohio Valley. In the December newsletter, Commander Woyansky made reference to the history of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Regiment. Anyone interested in reading up on the history of the regiment can find detailed information on our web site at [http://www.2-1-196th.com/httpdocs/Sub\\_Htms/History-2nd\\_1st.htm](http://www.2-1-196th.com/httpdocs/Sub_Htms/History-2nd_1st.htm) or at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1st\\_Infantry\\_Regiment\\_\(United\\_States\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1st_Infantry_Regiment_(United_States)). Below is a rendering of the initial “Legion” (which was eventually divided into the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiments) in action in 1794. Our web site also contains information regarding some of the units assigned to the Americal Division, the ARVN's and the NVA.

**2019 ADVA National Reunion:** The 2019 ADVA and 2/1 Infantry Chapter Reunion will take place from 2-6 October 2019 in the city of Warwick, RI. You might think this is too early to put together information concerning the Reunion, but many of you remember last year rooms at the host hotel were cut off early in the year. If you are thinking of attending the reunion it isn't too early to reserve your room. The hotel is the Crown Plaza Providence/Warwick (Airport) at 801 Greenwich Avenue, Warwick, RI 02886. The reunion reservation code is “ADV” is available now., Telephone (401) 732-6000. The reunion guestroom rate is \$109.00, plus tax, per night, with free daily breakfast. Events are being planned and will be available soon.

**Funerals Set for 2 Recently Identified Korean War Soldiers:** Funeral services were held in Oklahoma for two Korean War soldiers whose remains were recently identified after they died two days apart in what is described as a running battle with North Korean forces during the early stages of the war. Services will be in Idabel for Army Pvt. Charles Kaniato be of Idabel and in Bokchito for Army Pfc. Mathis Ball Jr. of McKinney, Texas. Charles Kaniatobe, a member of Company A, 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division, was 21 when he was declared missing July 10, 1950, a day after a battle near the town of Chonui, as the North Korean forces attempted to drive to what was then known as Taejon in an attempt to occupy it, according to Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency spokesman Chuck Pritchard. Ball, known by his family as J.R. and a member of Company M, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division, was 20 when he was declared missing July 12, 1950, following combat with the same North Korean regiment near Choch'iwon, South Korea, about 5 miles from where Kaniatobe disappeared, according to Pritchard. "The battle went on until September when the North Koreans finally retreated," Pritchard said.

**Remains of US soldier reported MIA after Chosin Reservoir battle identified:** There's now a national veterans cemetery not far from where John Martin grew up along the upper Hudson River, but when it came time to pick a burial place for the soldier 68 years after he was killed in the Korean War, his niece picked the family plot at a nearby cemetery. "Nope, he's going in the plot with his mom," Tamaris Martin Dolton said Monday, when the Pentagon announced Martin's remains were identified nearly seven decades after he died. "She's been without him too long." Martin was raised in the town of Saratoga, 25 miles (40 kilometers) north of Albany. The second-oldest of four sons who would all serve in the military, he joined the Marines near the end of World War II and enlisted in the Army after the war ended. When the Korean War started in June 1950, Martin was a 23-year-old private first-class serving in a medical detachment in Army's 7th Division. Later that November, the Chinese army launched a major attack on U.S. forces near the Chosin Reservoir in North Korea. During the fighting, most of the 2,500 Army troops were able to withdraw, but hundreds of others were either captured, killed or missing. Martin was reported missing in action on Dec. 2, 1950, after last being seen near the reservoir. He was declared dead on Dec. 31, 1951. According to the Pentagon's Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, a burial site near the reservoir was excavated in September 2001 during a joint U.S.-North Korean recovery operation. Remains were sent to the DPAA laboratory in Hawaii for identification. DPAA officials said Martin's remains were identified last September through DNA analysis and other evidence.

**George W. Bush, Laura Bush Honored for Work with Veterans:** Former President George W. Bush and former first lady Laura Bush were awarded the National Constitution Center's Liberty Medal for their work with U.S. military veterans since leaving the White House. Former Vice President Joe Biden presented the award to the couple at the Philadelphia history museum on Sunday, Veterans Day. Laura Bush spoke of support for military spouses and caregivers, advocating to recognizing them for their efforts and asked government and non-governmental programs working with veterans to consider their needs. The former president said he was honored to receive the award that he was proud to follow in his father's footsteps "once again." Biden gifted the Texas-native Bushes with a pair of Philadelphia Eagles jerseys, ahead of the team's home game against the Dallas Cowboys.

**South Korea Unearths Nine Sets of War Dead Remains Inside DMZ:** South Korea has unearthed nine sets of remains of war dead, including a rare, relatively intact skeleton, during a mine-clearance operation inside the heavily fortified border that divides the peninsula, the military said. The return of remains from the 1950-53 Korean War, including 55 cases containing the remains of American troops who were lost in North Korea, has been a bright spot in otherwise slow diplomatic efforts to persuade the North to give up its nuclear weapons. The defense ministry announced it had recovered five sets of remains, including one that "appears to be complete," last week during work in the Cheorwon area northeast of Seoul. "All the five sets have been determined during the on-site investigation to be the remains of war dead," the ministry said. They will be sent to the ministry's agency for the recovery and identification of troops killed in action, known as MAKRI, for DNA analysis and further identification. The total number of remains found since the operation began Oct. 1 at Arrowhead Hill is now nine. The joint effort to remove land mines and excavate remains from the DMZ, a 2.5-mile wide, 155-mile long no man's land, is part of an inter-Korean military pact that was reached during a summit between the two countries in September. Some 7,675 Americans remain unaccounted for since the war, with an estimated 5,300 believed to be on the North Korean side. More than 133,000 South Koreans are still missing from the conflict, according to the defense ministry.

**New HBO Documentary Puts a Much-needed Face to Complex Veteran Struggles with PTSD:** "When I first got back home from Afghanistan, my dad was like, 'Hey, if you ever want to talk, we're here for you,'" retired Marine Joe Merritt says in "We Are Not Done Yet," a new HBO documentary produced by actor Jeffrey Wright "Westworld," "Casino Royale," "Boardwalk Empire") and directed by Sareen Hairabedian. "But it never made sense to be like, 'Hey dad, I watched people burn to death. Also, can you pass the mashed potatoes?' Like, how do I start this conversation?" Almost 3 million service members have deployed in support of American war operations since 2001. Of those who deployed to operations in Iraq or Afghanistan, approximately 14 percent to 20 percent suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. Furthermore, female veterans experience military related sexual trauma at a rate of over 32 percent. "We Are Not Done Yet" goes well beyond the aforementioned black and white statistics, however, to tell the stories of 10 veterans from diverse backgrounds and experiences, all pursuing a process of healing and empowerment together through the arts. "Grappling with PTSD, the 'warrior poets' share fears, vulnerabilities, and victories that eventually culminate into a live performance of a collaborative poem under the direction of actor Jeffrey Wright," the film's synopsis says. Wright, along with retired Army officer April Harris, who spent 26 years in the service, discussed the groundbreaking film, misconceptions about PTSD and the much-needed personalization of these struggles during a recent interview with Military Times.

**Coast Guard Seizes about \$500M Worth of Cocaine:** The United States Coast Guard seized cocaine with an estimated street value of around \$500 million during a series of interdictions in international waters. The 18.5 tons (16.7 metric tons) of cocaine was unloaded at Port Everglades in Fort Lauderdale recently. In a news release, Coast Guard officials said they worked with other U.S. agencies and law enforcement from other countries to seize the drugs from 15 smuggling boats off the coasts of Mexico, Central and South America. The operation also led to the arrests of 49 people who will be prosecuted in South Florida.

**I don't have gray hair; I have "wisdom highlights." I'm just very wise.**



**Man Who Lied About Combat Service for Second Time Sentenced to Federal Prison:** United States Attorney Sherri A. Lydon announced today that Keith R. Hudson, 71, of Charleston, South Carolina, was sentenced to six months in federal prison and six months of home confinement for receiving \$197,237 in benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) after falsely claiming to be a veteran. Evidence presented to the court showed that Hudson falsely claimed that he was entitled to VA benefits because he was a veteran who had been in combat in Vietnam. He even went so far as to claim that he had received two Purple Hearts and a Bronze Star. Hudson has committed the same crime in the past. In 2005, he was prosecuted in Connecticut for the falsely claiming to be a veteran in order to claim VA benefits. He was placed in pretrial diversion. He moved to Charleston, South Carolina, and in 2012 he applied to the VA in Charleston for benefits. He used the same falsified form from the Department of Defense, (a DD-214, “Report of Separation from Active Duty”) and claimed that he was in the Navy and saw combat as a medic, suffering wounds and other trauma. He claimed that he served from August 1, 1967, through October 31, 1971. This was all a fraud. Hudson was never in the military. He never served in the United States Navy, nor did he ever see combat in Vietnam.

**VA Under Pressure to Deliver Trump Reforms:** A law overhauling how the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) allows patients to seek outside care is falling behind in implementation despite President Trump’s boasts about the reforms. Trump has long touted the law, which makes it easier for veterans to access private or community health-care programs, as essential to improving the beleaguered agency. The law, signed in June, allows for a yearlong implementation period, and veterans say they would rather it be done right than hastily. Veterans groups are also watching the process intently, and the VA is under pressure to implement the new law in time. The Choice program gives veterans facing long wait times at the VA or who would have to travel far to reach a VA facility the ability to seek private health care paid for by the government. About 30,000 appointments per day are funded through the Choice program. The \$55 billion Mission Act seeks to address the issues with Choice by overhauling and consolidating the network of private health-care providers where veterans can use their benefits. “Congress has done what no Congress has ever done. They have given us the roadmap for success,” Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert Wilkie said at a “State of the VA” address, referring to the Mission Act and other bills. “Today, we are working to give veterans more choice in their health-care decisions because of the Mission Act.” For the Mission Act, veterans groups say they are watching closely to make sure both that the implementation isn’t delayed and that the mistakes of the Choice program aren’t repeated.

**Powerball Lottery Winner Gives \$500K to Veterans Group:** An Iowa woman who shared a nearly \$700 million Powerball lottery jackpot has donated \$500,000 to a veterans group. Lerynne West announced on the Ellen DeGeneres Show broadcast that she gave the money to the Travis Mills Foundation. The Maine-based organization offers programs for disabled veterans and their families that include retreats in Maine, sporting events and other activities. Before announcing her gift, West recounted buying the winning ticket at a convenience store in the small Iowa community of Redfield, then leaving it on the floor of her sister’s pickup. After submitting her ticket to officials, she promised to use her winnings to help others. West says it’s important “that we never forget the sacrifices our soldiers and families make for our country.”

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

**New Research Could Lead to Disability Benefits for Vietnam Veterans with High Blood Pressure:** New research linking veterans’ high blood pressure with wartime exposure to chemical defoliants could dramatically expand federal disability benefits for tens of thousands of Vietnam-era troops. The findings, from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, conclude that “sufficient evidence” exists linking hypertension and related illnesses in veterans to Agent Orange and other defoliants used in Vietnam, Thailand and South Korea in the 1960s and 1970s. They recommend adding the condition to the list of 14 presumptive diseases associated with Agent Orange exposure, a group that includes Hodgkin’s Disease, prostate cancer and Parkinson’s Disease. That’s an upgrade from past research that showed a possible but not conclusive link between the toxic exposures and high blood pressure problems later in life. If Veterans Affairs officials follow through with the recommendation, it could open up new or additional disability benefits to thousands of aging veterans who served in those areas and who are now struggling with heart problems. Veterans who struggle with high blood pressure issues are eligible for health care at VA facilities. But the illness is eligible for disability benefits in only select cases. Adding an illness to VA’s presumptive list means that veterans applying for disability benefits need not prove that their sickness is directly connected to their time in service. Instead, they only need show that they served in areas where the defoliant was used and that they now suffer from the diseases. That’s a significant difference, since proving direct exposure and clear health links can be nearly impossible for ailing veterans searching for decades-old paper records.

**Girl Donates Hair for American Bomb Sight:** Mary Bannock Brown was an American woman who donated her long blond hair to be used as crosshairs in Noreen bombsights in WW II. Brown was a Coloradan; the children of Slovenian immigrants. She left elementary school at the age of 12, to help support her family as a servant for \$5/week. When she was 13, she lied about her age so that she could work at National Broom Factory for 75 cents a day, a job she held for 42 years. Her younger siblings pitched in by picking up chunks of coal that had fallen onto the railroad tracks. Brown’s lone prized possession was her knee-length fine blonde hair. In 1943, Brown saw an advertisement in a newspaper, searching for women with blonde hair of at least 22" length, that had never been treated with chemicals or hot irons. The military was offering to purchase such hair, to be used for meteorological instruments in the war effort. Brown sent off a sample of her 34" blonde hair to the government for analysis. After analyzing her hair, they agreed to purchase it, offering to pay her in war savings stamps. But Brown wouldn’t accept payment for her hair. She saw it as her patriotic duty to help the war effort. She later recalled that she cried for months after cutting her hair. It was decades before Brown learned the true use of her hair, and the effect of her sacrifice. In 1987, on her 80th birthday, she received a personal thank-you letter from President Ronald Reagan.

**Let’s Get Ready for Tax Season:** Getting ready for the 2019 tax season should start now. The 2019 tax season will bring big changes for everyone. For now, the most important task is to make sure that you have an active **myPay** account and that your mailing address is correct. If you have updated your information with another government agency such as the Department of Veterans’ Affairs (VA) or the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting Service (DEERS) you also need to update your information with DFAS and vice-versa.

**Trump Expected to Give Troops Authority to Protect Border Personnel:** President Donald Trump is expected to grant new authority to US troops on the Southwest border with Mexico to protect Customs and Border Protection personnel from migrants if they engage in violence, according to two defense officials and another US official directly familiar with the plans. An additional administration official tells CNN that the authority will also authorize protection of federal property. Currently troops do not have any authorities that would allow them to intervene if CBP personnel came under attack unless they need to act in their own self-defense. There are 5,800 troops assigned to the border mission. The move could be announced very soon, officials said. The mission will be characterized solely as "protection of CBP" personnel, according to the administration official. This comes as Department of Homeland Security officials said Monday that they had started to get information from "multiple sources include individuals in the Mexican government" of potential waves or groups of individuals who were discussing an incursion into legal ports of entry in California by attempting to pass through vehicle lanes.

### **Army Commanders can Start the Separation Process for some Non-Deployable Soldiers Immediately:**

The Army's new non-deployable policy takes the Defense Department's 12-month limit and chops it in half for soldiers sidelined due to administrative issues. And if your leadership is pretty sure you can't get on track? They can move to administratively separate you right away. A directive signed Nov. 8 by Army Secretary Mark Esper deals specifically with administrative non-deployables, deferring regulations for those on medical or legal hold to the Defense Department standard. "It's the first time, actually, we've ever put down on a piece of paper, no kidding, this is what constitutes deployability," Maj. Gen. Joseph Calloway, the G-1's director of personnel management, told reporters on Nov. 13. While 80 percent of the Army's current non-deployables are medically sidelined, this new policy is meant to chip away at about 10,000 of them who can't deploy because they're behind on medical exams or they're a single parent without a family care plan in place, for example. Those soldiers are now subject to separation if they are non-deployable for six consecutive months, or six months out of a year-long period.

### **Army Approves 'Pinks and Greens' Uniform on Veterans Day:**

The Army was able to straighten out its congressionally mandated notification requirements in time to announce on Veterans Day, that the much anticipated "Army Greens" will indeed be your next service uniform. Formerly known as the "pinks and greens," the World War II-era officer uniform could go Army-wide as soon as 2020, according to a release that was posted to the Army's website. "The current Army Blues Uniform will return to being a formal dress uniform, while the Army Greens will become the everyday business-wear uniform for all soldiers," the release said. The new uniform will be "cost-neutral," according to the Army, though details of the budgeting plan were not immediately available. The standard uniform set-up will require pants and brown leather oxfords for both men and women. Women will have the option to wear a pencil skirt and pumps. Everyone will also be able to buy a leather bomber jacket as an outerwear option. Soldiers won't be calling their latest retro-style dress uniforms "pinks and greens," according to Sergeant Major of the Army Daniel Dailey. "We're calling them Army Greens," the top enlisted soldier told Stars and Stripes during a visit to the home of U.S. Army Japan. "Pinks and greens is a World War II nickname." The Army officially adopted the outfit, which includes pinkish-brown trousers and dark olive jackets modeled on a design worn in WWII.

**From Civil War Drummer to Chief of Quartermaster:** In May of 1861, 9 year old John Lincoln "Johnny" Clem ran away from his home in Newark, Ohio, to join the Union Army, but found the Army was not interested in signing on a 9 year old boy when the commander of the 3rd Ohio Regiment told him he "wasn't enlisting infants," and turned him down. Determined, Clem tagged after the regiment, acted out the role of a drummer boy, and was allowed to remain. Though still not regularly enrolled, he performed camp duties and received a soldier's pay of \$13 a month, a sum collected and donated by the regiment's officers. At Shiloh, Clem's drum was smashed by an artillery round and he became a minor news item as "Johnny Shiloh, The Smallest Drummer". A year later, at the Battle Of Chickamauga, he rode an artillery caisson to the front and wielded a musket trimmed to his size. In one of the Union retreats a Confederate officer ran after the cannon Clem rode with, and yelled, "Surrender you damned little Yankee!" Johnny shot him dead. This pluck won for Clem national attention and the name "Drummer Boy of Chickamauga." Clem stayed with the Army through the war, served as a courier, and was wounded twice. Between Shiloh and Chickamauga he was regularly enrolled in the service, began receiving his own pay, and was soon-after promoted to the rank of Sergeant. He was only 12 years old. After the Civil War he tried to enter West Point but was turned down because of his slim education. A personal appeal to President Ulysses S. Grant, his commanding general at Shiloh, won him a 2nd Lieutenant's appointment in the Regular Army, December 1871, and in 1903 he attained the rank of Colonel and served as Assistant Quartermaster General. He retired from the Army as a Major General in 1916, having served an astounding 55 years. General Clem died in San Antonio, Texas on 13 May 1937, exactly 3 months shy of his 86th birthday, and is buried at Arlington National Cemetery.



### **The Pentagon Failed its Audit, but Officials Aren't Surprised:**

The U.S. Department of Defense "failed" its first-ever audit and Deputy Secretary of Defense Patrick Shanahan isn't surprised at the result, saying it was widely expected the audit would find issues. The audit, concluded through the DoD's Office of Inspector General, has long been sought by lawmakers and good-government groups. "We never thought we were going to pass an audit, right?" Shanahan told reporters. "Some of the compliance issues are irritating because the point of the audit is to drive better discipline in our compliance with our management systems and our procedures," he added. "Some of those things frustrated me because we have a job to do and just have to follow our procedures." The audit officially launched, much to the relief of long-annoyed members of Congress. A 1990 law passed by Congress required audits for all government agencies. But the Pentagon has been the sole holdout, with leadership across several administrations arguing the building is too large and has too many systems that don't link up, to give any kind of helpful result that would be worth the cost. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, said the audit identified "multiple material weaknesses" across the department but also provided "invaluable information that will help us target and prioritize corrective actions. Our single largest number of findings is IT security and reflects the challenges that the department faces in IT security." One area of concern was in security clearances for personnel and terminating user access when they depart. The audit should be used to make the military more efficient and agile it should not be used as an excuse for arbitrary cuts that reverse the progress we have begun on rebuilding our strength and readiness..

## Who's Packing Your Parachute?

Charles Plumb was a US Navy jet pilot in Vietnam. After 75 combat missions, his plane was destroyed by a surface-to-air missile. Plumb ejected and parachuted into enemy hands. He was captured and spent 6 years in a communist Vietnamese prison. He survived the ordeal and now lectures on lessons learned from that experience!

One day, when Plumb and his wife were sitting in a restaurant, a man at another table came up and said, 'You're Plumb! You flew jet fighters in Vietnam from the aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk. You were shot down!

'How in the world did you know that?' asked Plumb.

'I packed your parachute,' the man replied.

Plumb gasped in surprise and gratitude.

The man pumped his hand and said, 'I guess it worked!'

Plumb assured him, 'It sure did. If your chute hadn't worked, I wouldn't be here today.'

Plumb couldn't sleep that night, thinking about that man. Plumb says, 'I kept wondering what he had looked like in a Navy uniform: a white hat; a bib in the back; and bell-bottom trousers. I wonder how many times I might have seen him and not even said 'Good morning, how are you?' or anything because, you see, I was a fighter pilot and he was just a sailor.' Plumb thought of the many hours the sailor had spent at a long wooden table in the bowels of the ship, carefully weaving the shrouds and folding the silks of each chute, holding in his hands each time the fate of someone he didn't know

Now, Plumb asks his audience, 'Who's packing your parachute?' Everyone has someone who provides what they need to make it through the day. He also points out that he needed many kinds of parachutes when his plane was shot down over enemy territory - he needed his physical parachute, his mental parachute, his emotional parachute, and his spiritual parachute. He called on all these supports before reaching safety.

Sometimes in the daily challenges that life gives us, we miss what is really important. We may fail to say hello, please, or thank you, congratulate someone on something wonderful that has happened to them, give a compliment, or just do something nice for no reason. As you go through this week, this month, this year, recognize people who pack your parachutes. I am sending you this as my way of thanking you for your part in packing my parachute. And I hope you will send it on to those who have helped pack yours! Sometimes, we wonder why friends keep forwarding jokes to us without writing a word. Maybe this could explain it! When you are very busy, but still want to keep in touch, guess what you do - you forward jokes. And to let you know that you are still remembered, you are still important, you are still loved, you are still cared for, guess what you get? A forwarded joke. So, my friend, next time when you get a joke, don't think that you've been sent just another forwarded joke, but that you've been thought of today and your friend on the other end of your computer wanted to send you a smile, just helping you pack your parachute.