



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



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

Volume 5

"A Soldier Once... And Always"

June 2015

Commanders Corner: Every once in a while, believe it or not, I have a reflective moment and ponder why I made it home physically unscathed after spending 10 months or so in the bush and others didn't. I can't find any rhyme nor reason except for just dumb luck and, since I'm sort of a fatalist, it just wasn't my time. Actually, none of us knows what lies around the corner and how the trials of life will affect us from day to day. Life is not a bowl of cherries or a box of chocolates but, a daily test of our ability to cope with the various things that are thrown at us. Coping with adversity is a trait not all of us possess but, in order to wend our way down the path of life; we must succeed against this adversity. This is especially true with the loss of a loved one. In early May, Marlin "Eggy" Egeland and his wonderful wife, Jean, lost their youngest son, Mike. I had the privilege of meeting Mike when a group of B 2/1 guys spent a week at Jean and Eggy's place on Devil's Lake in North Dakota. Mike was a nice kid and a tribute to his family. Losing a child is probably the worst adversity one can face in life; parents just expect to go before their kids. Eggy and Jean are two of the nicest and strongest people I know and I'm sure, although things will never be the same, they will survive this crisis in their lives. I know it is tough to deal with and will be for a long time but, I'm sure the family can overcome. I would like to extend my sincere condolences to family and friends. Any of you who have met Jean and Eggy know what I'm talking about and, if you get the chance, let them know we are all with them. Address/email information is located on our web site under the "Bravo Company Roster".

I still need some help from you on putting together a slide show for the web site for our comrades who made it back to the "world" but, have passed on since. I have had some response but still need some pix 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). Also, even though this was in my last column, I would like any information regarding names to be added to company rosters: remember, names submitted for company rosters *do not have to be members of the 2/1 chapter*. Get some ideas of candidates for officers for this year's chapter elections!

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

Chuck



Four MIAs Identified: The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced the identification of remains belonging to three soldiers who had been missing-in-action since the Korean War and one pilot who had been missing since World War II. Identified are:

- **Army Cpl. Abilesio L. Apodaca**, 18, of Albuquerque, N.M. In early 1951, Apodaca and elements of Heavy Mortar Company, 9th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, were occupying a position near Hoengsong, South Korea, when attacked by Chinese forces. It would later be learned that he had been captured, but died in a POW camp. Apodaca will be buried tomorrow with full military honors in Santa Fe, N.M.
- **Army Cpl. Richard L. Wing**, 19, of Toledo, Ohio. In late November 1950, Wing was assigned to Company H, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, deployed near Kunu-ri, North Korea, when attacked by Chinese forces. It would later be learned that he had been captured, but died from dysentery in a POW camp. Wing will be buried with full military honors on June 5 in Arlington National Cemetery.
- **Army Pfc. Paul L. Tingle**, 36, of Montpelier, Ohio. In late 1950, Tingle was assigned to Company I, 3rd Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, deployed near Kujang, North Korea, when attacked by Chinese forces. It would later be learned that he had been captured, but died in a POW camp. Tingle will be buried with full military honors on June 8 in his hometown.
- **Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. Alvin Beethe**, 23, of Elk Creek, Neb. On Nov. 26, 1944, Beethe, of the 393rd Fighter Squadron, 367th Fighter Group, 9th Air Force, was piloting a P-38 Lightning that failed to return from a mission against enemy forces near Duren, Germany. Another pilot reported the aircraft crashed near the town of Morschenich. Beethe will be buried with full military honors on June 8 in Arlington National Cemetery. Brown was reported missing in action after the battle.

Korean War Soldier Identified: The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced the identification of remains belonging to Army Cpl. Ben L. Brown, 17, of Four Mile, Ore., who is being buried today with full military honors in Roseburg, Ore. In early 1951, Brown was assigned to Company I, 3rd Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, when his unit was forced to withdraw south to a more defensible position. Brown was reported missing in action after the battle.

CAUTIOUS RIDER TO HER RECKLESS DEAR
LET'S HAVE LESS BULL AND A LITTLE MORE
STEER

Burma Shave

Army Two WWI Soldiers to Receive Medal of Honor: Two World War I veterans will posthumously receive the Medal of Honor for conspicuous gallantry. President Obama will present the nation's highest medal on June 2 to:

- **Army Pvt. Henry Johnson**, a member of Company C, 369th Infantry Regiment, 93rd Division, who distinguished himself on May 15, 1918, in the vicinity of the Tourbe and Aisne Rivers, northwest of Saint Menehoul, France. While on night sentry duty, Johnson and a fellow soldier were attacked by a German raiding party. Despite being wounded, Johnson mounted a brave retaliation resulting in several enemy casualties, and prevented his badly wounded comrade from being taken prisoner by engaging an enemy soldier in hand-to-hand combat. He died in 1929 and is buried at Arlington National Cemetery. Accepting the medal on his behalf will be New York National Guard Command Sgt. Maj. Louis Wilson.

- **Army Sgt. William Shemin**, a member of Company G, 2nd Battalion, 47th Infantry Regiment, 4th Division, distinguished himself on August 7-9, 1918, in the vicinity of the Vesle River, Bazoches, France. Shemin left the cover of his platoon's trench and crossed open space to rescue wounded comrades, repeatedly exposing himself to heavy machine gun and rifle fire. Due to casualties suffered by his superiors, Shemin took command of the platoon and displayed great initiative under fire until he was wounded on August 9. He died in 1973. Accepting the medal on his behalf will be his daughter, Ms. Elsie Shemin-Roth, of Webster Grove, Mo.

VFW Files Suit Against VA: Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and Disabled American Veterans filed a joint lawsuit to force the Department of Veterans Affairs to change a new claims submission procedure that was created solely to benefit the VA, not veterans. The main issue is the elimination of an informal claims process and the institution of a rigid, veteran-unfriendly system for filing claims for benefits, among several other disagreements, explained William L. Bradshaw, VFW director of National Veterans Service, who oversees a nationwide cadre of more than 1,500 VA-accredited service officers who assist veterans with filing their VA claims. Previously, any form of written communication would have served notice on the VA that within one year, that veteran would be filing a formal claim for disability compensation. If approved, the claim's effective date could be backdated to the day of the initial notification. As of March 24, the VA now no longer accepts informal claims, and instead requires all veterans to use a standardized form, which essentially postpones the effective date and denies compensation to veterans. "The VFW doesn't oppose the use of standardized forms," said Bradshaw. "Our opposition is to this all or nothing approach that VA is forcing on veterans – changes, that if left in place, will guarantee in this year alone that tens of thousands of service-connected wounded, ill and injured veterans will be denied benefits they were entitled to before the change became effective." The VFW, DAV, and other veterans' service organizations fought against the change after VA first proposed it in October 2013. "The VA is once again changing the rules to make the claims process easier for them, not for the veterans the VA was created to serve," said Bradshaw, who added that the new change makes it even more difficult on veterans who don't understand the process, and especially on those who do not avail themselves of the expert and free claims assistance provided by the VFW and other nationally-recognized and VA-accredited service officers. "The VA's move to a standardized form should not come at the cost of an informal claims notification procedure that works," he said. "The VA can and should accept both."

Of course I talk to myself, sometimes I need expert advice.

COMBAT STORIES:

2/1 Ambush NVA: PHU BAI May 12, 1972 – Sharp eyes and ears netted a 2/1 ambush two NVA killed in action here recently, and two AK-47 rifles and an 82mm mortar base plate captured. The action began where Company A, 2nd Battalion 1st Infantry was moved into the dinner roll-shaped green hills west of Phu Bai. The battalion had been moved into the area to provide added security for the Americans at Phu Bai during the NVA invasion in Quang Tri Province. The second night in the bush the 2nd squad 1st platoon, led by Sgt. Charles A. Rivers, 24, Brunswick, Ga., moved into ambush position at 1845. They set up claymores and trip flares in a small hollow with a placid pool crossed by a wandering stream and a footpath. The first contact came at 2000 when three communist soldiers activated a trip flare in front of the position. A sharp firefight ensued, and the enemy soldiers evaded the area. The night's action wasn't over though.

At mid-night and again at 0300 small units of NVA clashed with the squad. "They came down the trail making lots of noise, talking and jiving" Rivers said. "They put their base plates down to get water, and then we tripped a claymore. A half hour firefight ensued. Rivers said, "they spoke English pretty good. When we popped the claymore one of them said "What was that? and another one hollered 'Let's get the hell out of here'". There were no U.S. casualties, but SP4 John C. Barahak, 21, Joliet, Il., got half a dozen AK rounds through his ruck, and one through his helmet, "Man I'm sure glad I wasn't wearing that at the time" he said fingering the jagged hole. Early morning recon revealed one NVA body laying in pool in front of the ambush position. The weapons and other base plate were found nearby. First light saw a "charlie-charlie" bird fro m2/1 on the scene to check out the results. As the bird was leaving, Capt. Mike Murphy, Bn S-2, spotted another NVA hiding in the stream not 50 feet from the squad. He marked the position and more troops from the platoon moved in, seriously wounding the NVA, who was dusted off to Phu Bai in the charlie-charlie and later died. The action is believed to have decimated a mortar squad which was attempting to shell the U.S. installations at Phu Bai. It was summed up pretty well by one soldier who-observed "Yep, we pretty well ruined their whole day."

Official Change-over of Responsibility: It is official I have taken total control of the Kokomo Indiana Brick Activities. Chuck is aware, now you all are aware. Having stated this, if any of you have located another Bravo 2/1 Deceased/KIA. Please direct them to Me rather than Chuck or Rich, they have plenty to do as it is now... Juju just paid for another Bravo Brother James C. Nau who died along with his buddy Samuel Morgan. They both came into Nam and Bravo together and Died within minutes from one another.... Thanks Juju the order has been placed and there is one open space next to Samuel Morgan, and that is where he will go.... Chuck has another request, he received via "Snail Mail" and hopes to get it to me ASAP so we can have it made and placed well before the next September reunion here in Greentown ?Kokomo. Juju I will get a photo as soon as the brick is placed next to Samuel Morgan's I promise so you can send it to his family. This all takes time and I am writing from Greentown HCVVO. so I am trying to make things happen without mistakes.... That is the best I can do... If it falls short please feel free to impeach & replace me OKAY?

Your Brother:
BO

At my age "Getting lucky" means walking into a room and remembering what I came in there for.

Pentagon Taps Milley as Next Army Chief of Staff:

The Pentagon chief named Gen. Mark Milley – a leader with a strong background in light infantry and Special Forces – to replace Gen. Raymond Odierno as the Army's next chief of staff. Defense Secretary Ash Carter announced the nomination of Milley to be the 39th chief of staff of the Army. President Obama has accepted the nomination, referring to Milley as a "warrior and a statesman." "He not only has plenty of operational and joint experience in Afghanistan, in Iraq and on the Joint staff, but he also has the intellect and vision to feed change throughout the Army," Carter said. Milley graduated and received his commission from Princeton University in 1980. He has served in the 82d Airborne Division and the 5th Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg, N.C., the 7th Infantry Division at Fort Ord, Calif., the 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum, N.Y., the 2d Infantry Division in Korea, the Joint Readiness Center at Fort Polk, La., the 25th Infantry Division at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, and the 101st Airborne (Air Assault) at Fort Campbell, Ky. Milley has commanded the 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry in Korea, the 2d Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, the 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum, and the III Corps at Fort Hood, Texas. Additionally, he has served on the Operations Staff of the Joint Staff and as a Military Assistant to the Secretary of Defense in the Pentagon. He was also commanding general of III Corps and Fort Hood where he deployed as the C.G. of ISAF Joint Command and Deputy Commanding General, United States Forces-Afghanistan. Recently, Milley was put in charge of reviewing the investigation into Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, who was charged with multiple counts to include desertion.

Submariner Adm. Richardson Picked As Next Chief of Naval Operations:

Adm. John M. Richardson was chosen to succeed Adm. Jonathan Greenert as the next chief of Naval Operations (CNO) in a sign of the Pentagon's commitment to the expensive replacement program for the Ohio class ballistic missile submarines. Defense Secretary Ashton Carter said he had recommended the 55-year-old Richardson to the White House and President Obama had agreed to nominate him to become the Navy's top officer and a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). Carter said that Richardson, currently director of the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program, was the "clear choice" to become CNO, calling him a "go-to officer for many of the Navy's tough issues." Carter cited Richardson's work on the Ohio replacement program and "his handling of problems of integrity and ethics." The reference to "integrity and ethics" included the admiral's leadership and connection to three high profile investigations that have rocked the Navy – the Navy Yard shooting, the Fat Leonard scandal, and the nuclear reaction cheating scandal. Richardson led a Consolidated Disposition Authority (CDA) in the Navy's dealings with Glenn Defense Marine Asia (GDMA) and its chief executive, Leonard Glenn "Fat Leonard" Francis, which issued a wide range of bribes for Navy contracts. Richardson eventually cleared Adm. Samuel Locklear, head of the Pacific Command, whose retirement was put on hold while the CDA deliberated. However, the CDA issued a censure of three, two-star rear admirals for their involvement with GDMA.

Congress Rejects Plans to Reform TRICARE:

Both the Senate and House armed services committees have rejected two TRICARE reform plans, one from the administration to raise fees and consolidate the three option health benefit, and a second from the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission to replace TRICARE entirely with a menu of civilian health insurance options. Both ideas went too far to win support in Congress this year.

Old age is coming at a really bad time!

Deals Between National Guard and NFL Cause Stir:

At halftime of each home game last season, the New England Patriots invited a soldier on the field to honor the troops. Dressed in camouflage, they smiled and waved to the crowd during the feel-good moment. However, the "True Patriot" program wasn't simply patriotism. It was part of a \$225,000 advertising deal between the team and the Massachusetts and New Hampshire National Guard. The military has long advertised at sporting events and during sports broadcasts as a way to reach potential recruits. But new revelations about deals between professional football teams and the National Guard have caused a stir over whether the military and the league should be more transparent about what's a display of goodwill toward the troops and what's a paid advertisement. A report on government waste issued last week by Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) detailed the expenditure and questioned why the Guard spent \$49.1 million on professional sports sponsorships in 2014. Some of that money funded programs by NFL teams similar to the "True Patriot" program that appeared to honor the military but were actually part of advertising agreements with the Guard. "The Guard has claimed that states receive significant return-on-investment from these deals, but has provided no evidence to prove it," McCain's report said. "Using taxpayer funds to pay for the less tangible benefits of cobranding with billion-dollar sports leagues raises serious questions, particularly as the Guard reduces its end strength." The first item in a 12-point advertising agreement between the New York Jets and New Jersey National Guard for the 2012 season included a "Hometown Hero" feature. During each regular-season home game at MetLife Stadium, one or two soldiers would have their picture displayed on stadium video screens and their names announced over the public address system. NJ.com first reported the arrangement, which netted the Jets \$377,000 from 2011 to 2014. Promoting the military is good publicity for any business these days. In the case of the NFL agreements, it was not clear that the military was paying for that publicity.

House Passes 6 Bills Aimed at Helping Veterans:

The House approved a series of bills Monday aimed at helping veterans win government-paid jobs, get small business loans or obtain other assistance. The House passed six bills aimed at veterans. One bill would give preference to government contractors who employ veterans on a full-time basis. Another bill would allow all veterans to receive official identification cards through the VA. A third would require that written reprimands and admonishments received by VA employees be kept on file for as long as the person works for the VA. Under current policy, an admonishment only remains in an employee's file for two years and a reprimand for three years. Lawmakers said this hurts the VA's ability to get a true picture of an employee's performance history. Rep. Vern Buchanan, R-Fla., said the bill on ID cards responds to veterans who have expressed frustration over their inability to document their service without carrying around official military records. Under current law, veterans who do not qualify for a VA-issued ID card must carry other documents to prove their veteran status. Some of the documents contain sensitive personal information, including Social Security numbers and service details that put veterans at risk for identity theft, Buchanan said. The bills now go to the Senate.

Unique World War II Stories:

The youngest US serviceman to die in WW II was 12 year old: Calvin Graham, USN. He was wounded and given a Dishonorable Discharge for lying about his age. His benefits were later restored by act of Congress.

Osprey Squadron to be Stationed at Yokota Air Base in 2017: A special operations squadron of CV-22 Ospreys will be stationed at Yokota Air Base in Tokyo beginning in 2017, the Pentagon said Monday in a long-expected announcement. Three of the Ospreys will arrive in the second half of 2017, with seven more slated to arrive by 2021, a Defense Department news release said. The Osprey uses tilt-rotor engines to fly like a fixed-wing aircraft or take off and land like a helicopter. Designed to carry special operations troops, Ospreys have been used in Afghanistan and last year were sent to Central Africa to help track rebels with the Lord's Resistance Army. The Yokota Ospreys will likewise be used to enhance capability of U.S. Special Operations forces to respond to crises and disasters in Japan and the greater region, the news release said. The additional aircraft are also intended to promote stronger defense relations with the Japan Self-Defense Forces, which is poised to build its own fleet of Ospreys. The arrival of Ospreys has been anticipated since 2013, when Pacific Air Forces commander Gen. Herbert Carlisle told reporters in Washington, D.C., that the aircraft could be stationed at Yokota or Kadena Air Base on Okinawa beginning in 2015.

Mighty Fine at 109': America's Oldest Vet Marks Birthday with Cigar: Richard Overton feels a "little stiff" from time to time and he's cut out the whiskey but other than that, he feels pretty good. Not bad for America's oldest living military veteran, who turned 109 on Monday. "I get around pretty good, just get a little stiff. I'm doing all right, I guess," Overton told FoxNews.com, as he waited at his Austin, Texas, home for a car to pick him up to take him to meet Gov. Greg Abbott. "Gonna go see the governor," he added. "He wants to talk to me." The World War II veteran's friends and family tossed a birthday party for him last week, with as many as 100 people in attendance. Neighbor Helen Elliot organized and hosted the party, which was sponsored by Mighty Fine Burgers, Fries and Shakes. The theme for the day was "Mighty Fine at 109." "He's just the coolest neighbor on the planet," Elliot told Fox affiliate KTBC. "He's so much fun and always has the best stories." Overton served from 1942-45, with stops in Hawaii, Guam, Palau and Iwo Jima while attaining the rank of sergeant. He saw many of his Army buddies die serving their country, and the rest have passed away since the war ended. He said he misses the soldiers who served with him in the all-black 1887th Engineer Aviation Battalion, and would love to reminisce with them. "I'm the only one that can tell the tale now," he said. "All the other boys are gone." Born on May, 11, 1906, in Texas' Bastrop County, Overton worked in the furniture business and then with the Texas Treasury Department in Austin after he got out of the Army. He married twice but never fathered any children and still attends church every Sunday. "I got good health and I don't take any medicine," he told FoxNews.com in 2013. "I also stay busy around the yards, I trim trees, help with the horses. The driveways get dirty, so I clean them. I do something to keep myself moving. I don't watch television."



Burial of Unclaimed Remains: On Wednesday, VA announced its program to reimburse an individual or entity for the purchase of a casket or urn used to inter a deceased, unclaimed veteran in a VA national cemetery, if the veteran died with no identifiable next of kin and insufficient resources to pay for a casket or urn. Starting this week, VA will reimburse the actual cost of a casket or urn, not to exceed an annually established average cost, used to inter an eligible unclaimed veteran.

National WWI Memorial Design Competition: The World War I Centennial Commission is opening a design competition for the new national memorial that will be built a block away from the White House in Pershing Park, which is along Pennsylvania Avenue between 14th and 15th Streets. Officials have set up a two-stage competition and it is open to all. In the first stage, participants will submit narrative and graphic descriptions of a design concept responding to the competition's design goals. Judges will select three to five submissions, and those entries will be further refined and developed in the second stage. The commission will have final decision on the selected design, based on the recommendation of a jury. The submission deadline is July 21, 2015, with the finalists to be announced on Aug. 4, 2015. The commission expects to announce its selected design in January 2016. The design competition formally begins May 21 and competition rules will be posted on the commission's website: <http://www.worldwar1centennial.org/>.

South Korea, US Experts Excavate for Korean War Remains: South Korea and the United States have begun exhuming the remains of soldiers killed during the 1950-53 Korean War. The project is not the first of its kind – since 2000 the South Korean military has conducted excavations of war remains, Yonhap reported. Most of the 9,500 bodies recovered to date have been identified as South Korean soldiers. The U.S. Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, sent a team to jointly excavate the remains in the South Korean region of Masan in the southeast, reported South Korean newspaper Donga Ilbo. In August 1950, the area was the scene of brutal fighting between North Korean forces and the Allied Command, which consisted mostly of South Korean and U.S. soldiers. Due to the high number of casualties, soldiers called the area "Death Valley." The three-day excavation began and will involve 15 South Korean experts and eight U.S. analysts from the DPAA. According to the U.S. team chief, the bodies of 8,000 dead U.S. soldiers remain unaccounted for. In Masan, the U.S. 25th Infantry Division under the command of Maj. Gen. William Keen repelled North Korean incursions toward the port city of Busan. In the course of bloody battles, however, many lives were lost. According to Hwang, locals said U.S. soldiers were buried in a nearby mountain, and superstition suggested digging in the area would bring bad luck.



2015 ADVA NATIONAL REUNION
Norfolk Virginia
October 28 thru November 1 2015



The Norfolk Waterside Marriott, 235 East Main Street, Norfolk, VA 23510 will be the main hotel for the reunion. The hotel is noted as the best place to stay. It has just recently been remodeled. The ADVA attendees are offered 3 days before and after the reunion dates based on availability. The reunion guest room rate is \$109 = tax (currently 14 % + \$2 occupancy fee) World War II members will their individual room rate reduced to no-charge when they check-in. There is also a special rate of \$129 + tax for a Concierge Level room. The cutoff date to make reservations is September 25, 2015. Book early to ensure lodging at the reunion hotel. The hotel is offering complimentary overnight parking. There is no parking for RVs in the main street garage or city streets. The hotel is offering free self-overnight parking.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29 - 9:00am – 5:00pm Tour Ft Eustis and Williamsburg

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30 - 11:30am – 2:00pm Spirit of Norfolk Lunch Cruise

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31 – 9:00am – 12:00pm Norfolk Botanical Garden Tour

6:00pm – 10:00pm **BANQUET DINNER**. As requested by ADVA membership, members and guests can select seating assignments with friends/family before the banquet. We have an exceptional menu and some unique entertainment before, during, and following the banquet that will make for a memorable event that should not be missed.

Final Civil War Land Battle Was 150 Years Ago -- In Texas

It's common knowledge that the four bloody, thunderous years of the American Civil War came to a solemn end when Southern Gen. Robert E. Lee surrendered to Union Gen. Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox -- but it's not true. The final land battle of the war wasn't fought until more than a month later, 150 years ago May 12-'13 1865, on a barren, wind-swept coastal plain at the southern tip of Texas. And the Confederates won. How the battle of Palmetto Ranch came about involves a tale of one officer's ego and another's stubborn refusal to yield. It was fought on land where little has changed in more than a century, marked by patches of prickly pear cactus, void of the namesake palm trees and buffeted periodically over the decades by storm surges and hurricanes from the nearby Gulf of Mexico. "You don't just come here," says Craig Stone, with the Cameron County Historical Commission. "You have to want to be here." Stationed on Brazos Island, Minnesotan Theodore Barrett, a newly promoted Union brigadier general, wanted to be here. The Confederate forces further up the Rio Grande at Brownsville had thumbed their noses for years at the Union's river blockade. They used neutral-flagged vessels at the then-Mexican port of Bagdad as a conduit for supplies. "(Barrett) decided he needed some glory, needed something to make him look good," said Don Barnhart, an historian and volunteer at the Texas Civil War Museum in Fort Worth. Ignoring an informal truce imposed a couple of months earlier by local commanders, Barrett launched what he planned as a surprise attack. His men were spotted, then sparred with Rebel soldiers. The next day, Confederate troops led by Confederate Col. John Salmon "Rip" Ford repulsed the Union forces in the main engagement and chased them back some seven miles nearly to Brazos Island before Ford broke off the pursuit. Ford, a former Texas Ranger and newspaper editor, had been present when his boss, Gen. James Slaughter, and Union Gen. Lew Wallace agreed to an informal truce a couple of months earlier. Wallace had told his adversaries a fight on the Rio Grande was useless and "would have no effect on the final result of the contest," Ford recalled. "We, on the Confederate side, admitted the fact," he added. Nevertheless, Ford didn't back down when Barrett's troops attacked. "Boys, we have done well," Ford told his men, according to his memoirs, housed at the Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas. "If memory is correct, the federals had about 50 killed and wounded, and 113 prisoners," he wrote. "Our loss a small number wounded." Ford described Barrett as "confused" and said he "seemed to have lost his presence of mind" during the deciding battle. Barrett later tried to deflect criticism by bringing charges against a subordinate officer at a court martial. In the battle, involving perhaps 1,000 soldiers, Hispanic men fought for the South and black soldiers for the Union. Among the casualties, Union Pvt. John J. Williams, from the 34th Indiana, is considered by many historians to be the last soldier killed in a war that claimed more than 600,000 soldiers' lives.