



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



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

Volume 6

"A Soldier Once And Always"

December 2016

Commanders Corner: I hope all of you enjoyed your Veterans Day and Thanksgiving celebrations. I spent the last 2 weeks of October and first 3 weeks of November getting over pneumonia. What started out as a cold, which the people at my wife's office kindly shared with her and I, took a turn for the worst but, I've weathered the storm. My wife, Sam, was lucky enough to just settle for a cold. I was down and out on Veteran's Day so I didn't get to do much. However, I did sneak out for a quick couple of beers with one of my buddies who is a retired fire fighter and was a door gunner in Nam. Figured what the doctor didn't know wouldn't hurt him but, I did pay for it the next day because I was dumb enough to think I was feeling better. I have a tendency to think I'm getting better and can do things before I should. By now, you should be gearing up for Christmas and I hope you and your loved ones and friends will have a great time. As usual, we'll have 2 or 3 places to go celebrate on different days. Never could understand why all sides of the family can't get together on the same day. We all like to have a few drinks, eat as much as we can and take a nap during the football games. Now that I'm back up to snuff, I think I'll go down to Florida for a while and lose some golf balls. Also, I'm planning on making a trip to Pattaya, Thailand to visit some Norwegian buddies of mine and lose some more golf balls; the courses over there are beautiful and cheap to play. When I get my act together, I'll be getting the web site updated with the 2017 reunion info and try to clean up a few things. Remember while you are out and about to beat the bushes for 2/1 and Americal veterans. We can use all the members we can get. By the way, our former secretary/treasurer, Don Hicks, took a fall of about 8 feet or so and banged himself up pretty good. Don will be going through about 8 weeks of operations and rehab so, give him a shout to wish him a speedy recovery. Don and his wife, Renee, have given a lot to our chapter so let's repay that with our prayers and good wishes. Don't forget we have elections coming up in 2017; get some nominees ready.



Army to Deploy 1,700 Paratroopers to Iraq: The U.S. Army announced recently it will deploy 1,700 soldiers from the 82nd Airborne Division this winter to advise and assist Iraqi Security Forces currently trying to retake Mosul from Islamic State fighters. The 82nd Airborne's 2nd Brigade Combat Team, stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, will deploy to the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility to take part in Operation Inherent Resolve, according to an Army press release. The unit will replace the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, in training, advising and assisting the Iraqi forces. "The 2nd Brigade Combat Team is highly trained, disciplined and fit," said Col. James "Pat" Work, commander of 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne. "Readiness is our top priority; our paratroopers are prepared for this deployment in support of Operation Inherent Resolve. Our team looks forward to this important mission and our opportunity to assist our Iraqi partners." In mid-October, the Army announced it will deploy about 500 soldiers from the Big Red One to Iraq this fall. The 1st Infantry Division Headquarters troops will assume the role of Combined Joint Forces Land Component Command-Iraq in support of Operation Inherent Resolve. Meanwhile, about 100 U.S. advisers, mostly Special Forces, and forward air controllers are moving with Iraqi forces, backed by U.S. airstrikes and rocket artillery fire, in the ground offensive to drive the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria from Mosul. Army engineers have also pushed closer to the city, searching for improvised bombs just west of the Great Zab River, about halfway between the Kurdish city of Irbil and Mosul.

19th Century KIAs Come Home: The presumed remains of as many as 13 U.S. soldiers who fought and died in the mid-19th century during the Mexican-American War were received recently at Dover Air Force Base, DE. Human remains from the battle of Monterrey, Mexico were uncovered in a series of excavations in the area over the past 20 years through negotiations that included scientists and historians at Middle Tennessee State University. Forensic examinations found that some are likely American soldiers killed during the conflict fought during April 25, 1846, and February 1848. The remains are believed to be those of Tennessee militiamen who volunteered to serve-part of the reason Tennessee is known as the "Volunteer State." ARMY MAGAZINE.

Chuck

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



I don't make jokes. I just watch the government and report the facts.
-- Will Rogers

POW/MIA Update: : The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced the identification of remains belonging to three servicemen who had been missing in action since World War II and Korea. All will be buried with full military honors. Returned home are:

-- **Marine Pfc. Ben H. Gore**, 20, will be buried Nov. 14 in his hometown of Hopkinsville, Ky. Gore was assigned to Special Weapons Group, 2nd Defense Battalion, Fleet Marine Force, which landed against stiff Japanese resistance on the small island of Betio in the Tarawa Atoll of the Gilbert Islands. Over several days of intense fighting, approximately 1,000 Marines and sailors were killed and more than 2,000 were wounded in securing the island; the enemy force of 4,700 was virtually annihilated. Gore died of his wounds on Nov. 25, 1943.

-- **Army Pfc. Daniel Hunt** is scheduled to be interred on Dec. 2 in Phoenix. Hunt was a member of Company A, 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, in the vicinity of Hill 1030, conducting operations in an area referred to as Heartbreak Ridge. He would be reported killed in action, body not recovered on Sept. 28, 1951.

-- **Army Pfc. William W. Cowan**, 19, of White House, Tenn., was buried Nov. 19 in Fredonia, Ohio. On Feb. 12, 1951, Cowan was a member of Company M, 3rd Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, when he was reported missing in action after his unit attacked a road block set up by enemy forces near Hoengsong, South Korea. It would be later learned he had been captured but died in captivity in a POW camp in North Korea.

-- **Marine Corps Pfc. Wilbur C. Mattern**, 23, of Oelwein, Iowa, was buried Nov. 21, in Arlington National Cemetery. In November 1943, Mattern was assigned to Company M, 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, which landed against stiff Japanese resistance on the small island of Betio in the Tarawa Atoll of the Gilbert Islands. After several days of intense fighting at Tarawa, approximately 1,000 Marines and sailors were killed and more than 2,000 were wounded, but the Japanese were virtually annihilated. Mattern died on the second day of the battle, Nov. 21, 1943.

-- **Army Sgt. 1st Class Robert R. Cummings**, of Schoolcraft, Mich., was assigned to Company K, 3rd Battalion, 187th Airborne Infantry Regimental Combat Team, when his unit was attacked by an estimated 200,000 Chinese soldiers near the Yalu River in North Korea. He would be declared missing in action on Nov. 29, 1950. Interment services are pending.

-- **Army Air Forces 1st Lt. Frederick W. Langhorst**, 24, of Yonkers, New York, was buried Nov. 26 in Battle Creek, Michigan. On July 17, 1945, Langhorst was assigned to the 1330 Army Air Force Base Unit, Air Transport Command, and was the co-pilot of a C-109 aircraft with three other crew members on a routine cargo transport mission from Jorhat, India, to Hsinching, China, when it crashed in a remote area. An extensive search of the area failed to identify the crash site and the crew was declared deceased on July 18, 1946, and their remains designated non-recoverable.



YOU'RE NOT REALLY A
BAD-ASS UNTIL YOU CARRY A
HOLSTERED ATTACK DOG!

Carter: Opening Combat Jobs to Women 'Makes Sense': As questions swirl over whether President-elect Donald Trump will seek to roll back recent social changes in the military, the outgoing defense secretary said the push to open more combat jobs to women "makes sense." The secretary said, "Females are half of our population. We're an all-volunteer force. So we recruit from the population it makes sense for us to recruit people, from as wide a population as possible." Carter added, "Now they have to be qualified, but it's a benefit to our military to be able to draw from what is a competitive [market] ... to have the ability to have access to the best people we can." Trump is facing calls from some conservatives to undo the women-in-combat provisions, which affects a large portion of the military -- hundreds of thousands of troops -- serving in combat-related military occupational specialties. "Those policies have to be rolled back," said Elaine Donnelly, president of the Center for Military Readiness, which opposed lifting the "don't ask, don't tell" policy to allow gay troops to openly serve in the ranks, according to an article by Andrew Tilghman of Military Times. "Right now the policy is that women can and will be assigned to ground combat units," she said, according to the report. "That pronouncement can indeed be changed by a future secretary of defense." It's as yet unclear whether Trump will heed such recommendations and pursue such a policy change.

Officer Testifies That Soldier Was Shot During Search for Bergdahl: A military officer testified Monday that he saw another soldier shot in the head during the 2009 search for U.S. Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, who's accused of endangering comrades by walking off his post in Afghanistan. At the same hearing, an Army judge also agreed to delay Bergdahl's trial by several months until May 15, 2017. Prosecutors are arguing that two wounded soldiers' injuries should be allowed as evidence to show Bergdahl's disappearance effectively put other military members in harm's way. Bergdahl is charged with desertion and misbehavior before the enemy, the latter of which carries a maximum penalty of life in prison. U.S. Air Force Maj. John Marx testified about a firefight that erupted as he and several others joined about 50 members of the Afghan National Army on a search for Bergdahl. They were attacked by enemy fighters near a town in Afghanistan on July 8, 2009. Marx testified about fighting alongside U.S. Army National Guard Sgt. First Class Mark Allen, who was shot in the head during the firefight. Prosecutors said Allen suffered a traumatic brain injury that left him in a wheel chair and unable to communicate. Another soldier had hand injuries and required surgery because of a rocket-propelled grenade. Marx described the mission's sole purpose as to search for Bergdahl. He testified he was beside Allen as bullets flew. "I looked at him, then I see a trickle of blood coming down his head," Marx testified. Asked where Allen was wounded, Marx pointed at his temples and said: "Right through his head." Marx testified that he later carried Allen to the medevac helicopter, describing it as "probably one of the toughest things I've ever done in my life." Marx and two others involved in the firefight said they came from another part of Afghanistan to take part in a hastily planned search mission. Their group, patrolling on foot, had run out of water but couldn't get more supplies before they came under attack.

Bigger Pay Raise for Troops Still Possible: The House and Senate are hashing out the details of the National Defense Authorization Act and could wrap up by Dec. 1. House lawmakers have proposed a version of the annual bill that includes a 2.1-percent pay hike instead of the 1.6 percent increase ordered by President Barack Obama. If the House proposal prevails in the final NDAA -- the Senate went with the lower raise -- it could become law in December and the biggest military pay raise in five years.

New Hand Grenade in Works: About 13 centuries after hand-tossed incendiary devices were first used against enemy forces. The U.S. Army is working on a new version. Currently, the M67 fragmentation hand grenade is the only such weapon available to Army combat forces. The MK3A2 concussion grenade was ushered out of service in 1975 because of an asbestos hazard. The new Enhanced Tactical Multi-Purpose (ET-MP) hand grenade being developed will allow soldiers to arm it for either fragmentation or concussive effects by flipping a switch before tossing. The ET-MP is designed for throwing with either the right or left hand. Fielding is expected by fiscal year 2020. *Army Magazine*

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National Guard Unit Joins Historic Mountain Division: A regiment of the Colorado Army National Guard became part of the historic 10th Mountain Division during a ceremony at Camp Hale. The Vail Daily reports that hundreds of troops from the 1st Battalion, 157th Infantry Regiment, became one of only three mountain infantry battalions in the U.S. Army. It marks the return of Colorado to the 10th Mountain Division, originally organized during 1942 to train soldiers for mountain combat by holding rigorous training exercises in the harsh alpine conditions around Leadville. During the event, division troops scaled cliffs surrounding the camp, some wearing replicas of the original ski trooper uniforms, recognizable for their bright white gear and heavy rucksack. The World War II soldiers counted numerous victories, including their vertical assault against German fortifications in Italy's Northern Apennines in 1945. "After their legendary service during the war, many of the soldiers of the 10th Mountain chose to stay in Colorado and helped found our mountain culture and ski communities," said U.S. Army Lt. Col. John Hancher, battalion commander. The soldiers set a standard for mountaineering, he said. The battalion has units in Alamosa, Colorado Springs, Grand Junction, Fort Lupton and Windsor.

Veterans Group Seeks to Delay Passage of Reform Bill: A massive veterans reform bill backed by the Department of Veterans Affairs will face resistance in Congress' lame-duck session from a group intent on letting the new Republican-controlled Senate and President-Elect Donald Trump have a say in how expeditiously VA employees can be fired. With only a couple of months left as VA Secretary, Bob McDonald is making one final appeal to Congress to pass the reform bill that's the culmination of his two-year tenure. The 400-page Veterans First Act contains dozens of provisions to streamline the appeals process for disability compensation, allow more leeway in disciplining employees and grant VA medical staff the ability to work flexible hours, among other things. "We worked to design a new law. We've given a new law to Congress, and we've asked Congress to pass that new law," McDonald said. "I'm hoping it gets passed in the lame-duck session." But the legislation has garnered opponents, and one veterans service organization -- conservative-leaning Concerned Veterans for America -- is planning a major campaign to thwart efforts to move it through the Senate. After the bill was introduced, six large veterans service organizations came out in support of it: Vietnam Veterans of America, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Paralyzed Veterans of America, The American Legion, Disabled American Veterans and AMVETS. Concerned Veterans for America says the legislation is "watered down." With Trump elected president, Congress should wait to pass a stronger bill that would give the next VA Secretary more power to immediately fire employees, said CVA leader Dan Caldwell. Trump would likely be in favor of "more aggressive accountability efforts," Caldwell said.

Chelsea Manning Asks Obama to Cut Sentence to Time Served: A transgender soldier who is more than six years into a 35-year sentence for leaking classified government and military documents to the WikiLeaks website is asking President Barack Obama to commute her sentence to time served. In a commutation application released by her attorneys, Chelsea Manning said there was no historical precedent for such an extreme sentence for the leak of secret documents. Manning was arrested in 2010 and convicted in 2013 in military court of six Espionage Act violations and 14 other offenses for leaking more than 700,000 secret military and State Department documents, plus some battlefield video to WikiLeaks. At that point she was known as Bradley Manning. She is in custody at the military prison at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. "I am living through a cycle of anxiety, anger, hopelessness, loss and depression," she wrote in her application, dated Nov. 8. "I cannot focus. I cannot sleep." "She has lived under incredibly harsh conditions the last six years and spent more time in prison than anyone in U.S. history for giving information to the public," David Strangio Manning's defense attorney said. "I'm worried she won't survive much longer in these conditions."

VA and Social Security Partner for Faster Service: The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Social Security Administration (SSA) launched a new Health IT initiative that enables VA to share medical records electronically with Social Security Disability processors. This secure process will save time and money, resulting in better service for veterans and dependents who apply for Social Security Disability Benefits. For decades, SSA obtained medical records through a manual process. This new national initiative puts in place an automated process to obtain veterans' medical records entirely electronically. "This SSA-VA partnership is another example of VA's leadership in interoperability efforts among federal partners," said VA Secretary, Robert McDonald. "Increasing federal partnerships to improve operation and resource coordination across agencies is among VA's 12 Breakthrough Priorities for 2016."

As Wounded Warriors Dwindle, Marine Unit Faces Turning Point: By next year, the population of combat wounded troops assigned to the [Marines'](#) Wounded Warrior Regiment will likely drop to zero. But the unit has no plans to go out of business, Col. Scott Campbell, commander of the regiment, told Military.com in an interview. Rather, Campbell is overseeing a unit overhaul that includes a budget and staff reduction and a redesigned system for providing care that concentrates efforts on ill and injured troops least able to transition into civilian life without assistance. Activated in 2007 during the height of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the demographics had shifted significantly since the days when Marine battalions would suffer dozens of serious combat wounds in a single deployment. With fewer deployments and a very limited number of troops in ground combat situations in Afghanistan and Iraq, the average Marine assigned to the unit was now more likely to be a cancer patient or the recipient of a head injury from a car crash than a combat amputee. The command was overstaffed and overfunded, Campbell found. And a number of the unit's regular activities, while good for its public image, failed to effectively help the wounded, ill and injured Marines assigned to the regiment. So we reprioritized phone calls from the call center and focused on those that really continue to need the help." Campbell cut unit manning from 300 uniformed staff members to 175, most of whom are activated from the Marine Corps Reserve. He also trimmed about \$4 million from the command's annual budget of roughly \$20 million, he said. That's still a lot of money left in a Marine Corps scrimping to keep its aircraft flying and troops deploying, but Campbell said it pays to care for the 500 to 600 members of the regiment as well as an additional 400 outpatient Marines, and a call center that makes and fields tens of thousands of calls to troops in uniform as well as veterans. He brought the number of active-duty Wounded Warrior Regiment participants in the Warrior Games up from 56 percent to 85 percent between 2015 and this year, encouraging the regiment's East Coast and West Coast battalions to field participants with an eye to who would benefit most from competing in the games.

Drones Offer More Career Options for Guardsmen:

General: The unmanned mission for the Air National Guard has become a sweet spot for airmen not only looking to maintain a part-time Air Force career, but also to develop their skills at a time when the service is making strides in drone capabilities, the head of the National Guard Bureau said. "I saw many former F-16 units go kicking and screaming into the [MQ-1] Predator mission and now, almost, you can't go to one of these places [without them] telling you, 'We regret resisting this,' " Gen. Joseph Lengyel told defense reporters in Washington, D.C. Lengyel said Air Force leaders worried at first about how the remotely piloted aircraft mission would impact airmen in the long term as they aimed to rapidly grow the drone field. The service plans to add 2,500-3,000 personnel to the [remotely piloted aircraft, or RPA] enterprise as a whole through its Culture and Process Improvement Program, Air Combat Command spokesman Benjamin Newell told Military.com last month.



Hundreds of Enlisted Airmen Line Up to Fly Drones: The Air Force has narrowed down hundreds of airmen in the running to become enlisted drone pilots to enter the next phase of the program. The Air Force Personnel Center said 305 active-duty enlisted airmen were identified for an upcoming selection board tasked with picking the next enlisted group to attend remotely piloted aircraft training. Officials didn't disclose how many of those airmen will then be selected for formal training, set to begin in 2017. But they're seeing a surge of interest. The center received more than 800 applicants during this cycle. For comparison, the program normally gets around 200 applicants. Because of the boost, the center is processing potential candidates in groups. The Air Force last year announced it would begin training enlisted airmen to operate the unarmed RQ-4 Global Hawk remotely piloted aircraft. Officials in September touted that the Enlisted Pilot Initial Class, or EPIC, would begin on Oct. 12 with four of 12 total students training alongside 20 recently commissioned officers. "We have an incredibly talented pool of enlisted Airmen, and we're confident that this rigorous selection process will yield excellent enlisted aircrew who will continue to provide combatant commanders with the ISR they need to win today's fight," Senior Master Sgt. Rebecca Guthrie, career enlisted aviator assignments manager at AFPC said in a release. Candidates selected in Phase 2 "will need to get the required medical screening and commander's recommendation and submit completed application packages to AFPC no later than Dec. 16," the release said. If warranted, medical waivers will be due by Jan. 27, 2017.

Still Fighting: Vietnam Vets Seek Help for Rare Cancer:

They were the lucky ones who managed to make it home from Vietnam. Now, a half-century later, some veterans are finding out they, too, are victims of the war. The enemy is a known killer in parts of Asia: Parasites ingested in raw or poorly cooked river fish. These liver flukes attach to the lining of the bile duct and, over time, cause inflammation and scarring. Decades after infection, a rare cancer called cholangiocarcinoma can develop. Symptoms typically do not occur until advanced stages. Ralph Erickson, who heads post-deployment health services at the [Department of Veterans Affairs](#), said about 700 cholangiocarcinoma patients have passed through the agency's medical system in the past 15 years. In some instances, the government has acknowledged that the illness is "as likely as not" connected to veterans' time in service. By VA standards, that's enough to make them eligible for benefits. Less than half of those 700 submitted claims, however, in part because they were unaware of any possible link to service. Of the claims submitted, 3 out of 4 have been rejected, according to data obtained by The Associated Press through the Freedom of Information Act. As a result, some veterans are spending their final days fighting the VA. They say they were never told they could be at risk, even though they were deployed to a region where the worms are endemic. "Hard to believe," said veteran Michael Baughman, 64, as he sat in his living room in Danville, California, flipping through a photo album from his war days. "I dodged all those bullets, then get killed by a fish."

Extension of Presumptive Period for Gulf War Illness:

VA announced that it will extend to December 31, 2021, the date by which Gulf War veterans are able to apply for presumptive disability compensation for Gulf War Illness and other conditions associated with service in the 1991 Gulf War, such as chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia and functional gastrointestinal disorders. The presumptive period for these illnesses was set to expire on December 31, 2016. For information on research regarding the causes and effective treatments for Gulf War Illness, contact the local VA Hospital staff.