



2nd Battalion 1st Infantry Chapter,
Americal Division Veterans Association (ADVA)
WEBSITE: www.b-2-1-196lib.com



Volume 2

"A Soldier's Footsteps"

March 2012

Commander's Corner: We added two new members last month; Ron McMillan (A), Benjamin Buehler (C), Larry Ricci and George Santiago (E). We now have 67 members. Remember to actively recruit new members whenever possible.

My home town, Indianapolis, just finished hosting the Super Bowl and it was a great success. The crowds were wonderful and the game went down to a last second "Hail Mary" pass. The giants have always been one of my favorite teams and I was happy to see them succeed. Still a die hard Colts fan though! I spent the week before the Super Bowl in New Orleans and made sure I had a beer for each one of you. I had 2 for you, Juju.

I have received a few pictures from past reunions but, still need more. Remember, if you email pictures to please include the group having the reunion, the location, year and the names of any persons in the pix. I can't really start on a "Reunion Picture Gallery" until I have more pictures to work with.

As I am writing this I am watching probably the worst, in my opinion, Vietnam flick ever produced. I thought it might be decent since it was made in 2008 but, I was wrong. The title is "1968 Tunnel Rats" and, also in my opinion, would be a total waste of time to watch. Never thought I'd pass myself off as a movie critic but, the inaccuracies in this flick are amazing. U.S. soldiers use M16A2 and M655 Carbine Rifles, which were not developed until the 1980s, they have WWII uniforms, post-Vietnam era web gear, Norinco 84S rifles instead of AK-47s, and the worst "LZ/outpost/base camp" you could imagine. Obviously, no technical advisor was employed on the set.

I know it is relatively long time away, but, I hope you are making plans to attend the Atlanta ADVA Reunion in Atlanta. It would be great to have as many members as possible and Atlanta is a great place to hang out.

I hope all of you have had a good start to the New Year and have a good 2012. Remember to get your annual dues in to Don as soon as possible. And, let us know if you have any questions, suggestions and/or corrections. *Keep safe and may the bond of battle never be broken!*



Women in Combat Policy to Change: The Defense Department notified Congress February 9, 2012, it will open up nearly 14,000 jobs to military women that will place them even closer to the front lines of combat. Under a 1994 policy, women are restricted from formally serving in small ground units directly involved in combat. The reality of the last ten years of war however has been that many women serve in support positions—such as military police or medics—which place them in harms way. They are not formally assigned to combat units, but rather informally "attached" which means they do not get the crucial credit for combat duty that is needed for promotions to higher grades. Some of the jobs that will now be open to women include specialties such as tank or artillery mechanic, crew members on missile launcher, and field surgeons in forward deployed brigade combat teams. However, women will still not be permitted in front line jobs directly involved in combat such as infantry units or counterterrorism sniper teams. Over the last several years, advocates as well as some senior US military commanders have increasingly called for more ground combat jobs to be open to women. According to Pentagon statistics more than 140 women have lost their lives in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and more than 860 have been wounded. The new changes may not go into effect fully until later this year as Congress must have 30 days in continuous session to have a chance to voice objections if there are any.

Seal Movie on Target: Hollywood has finally produced a motion picture that America needs. "Act of Valor" released in February 2012 chronicles the actions of a SEAL team in the post-September 11, 2001 era. It is a magnificent tribute, pure and simple, absolutely devoid of any political undertones. The beauty of it all is that eight – seven of them still on active duty – SEAL's actually star in the movie. The action adventure also captures their family lives. At a time when we live in a society consumed by "reality" TV shows, *Act of Valor* is a welcome reminder that at least a few Americans are willing to sacrifice so that a majority can live in a make believe world.

Secretary/ Treasurer's Report: If you have sent your dues to the Secy/Treas and haven't received your membership card by the middle of March please email a note stating your name, etc. so I can make adjustment to my records and send out the membership cards as needed to nay-nay152@comcast.net. Reminder, if you haven't sent in yours dues yet then send them to: 2/1 196th chapter, % Don Hicks, 909 Mapleleaf St., Franklin, KY 42134

'If the wings are traveling faster than the fuselage it has to be a helicopter -- and therefore, unsafe.'

- Fixed Wing Pilot

Veterans Win PTSD Settlement: A federal judge has approved a settlement that will deliver better benefits to nearly 2,100 veterans who have been medically discharged since 2002 with post-traumatic stress disorder. Under the settlement, affected veterans discharged with PTSD will get lifetime health care and post-exchange privileges. The affected veterans had been discharged with disability ratings that were too low to receive such benefits. The class action lawsuit was *Sabo v. United States*. Similar legal efforts are currently underway. For more information, visit the [National Veterans Legal Services Program website](#) and the [ptsdlawsuit.com website](#).

Disability Process Streamlined: The recently updated Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) Directive-Type Memorandum (DTM) includes several major changes to streamline the process for wounded warriors. The Department of Defense uses IDES to determine a Servicemember's fitness for duty. If the Servicemember is found medically unfit for duty by DoD, then they are informed of the proposed VA disability rating before they leave the service so they know the approximate amount of compensation and benefits they will receive from the VA. For more information on the recent updates, read the [Warrior Care Blog](#)

Persian Gulf Claims Deadline Extended The Department of Veterans Affairs has extended the presumptive period for Persian Gulf War veterans to file claims for undiagnosed illnesses. The new deadline is Dec. 31, 2016. The Department of Veterans Affairs estimates that 25-35 percent of veterans of Desert Shield/Desert Storm have undiagnosed and chronic multi-symptom illnesses, such as chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, irritable bowel syndrome and concentration problems. For more information, visit VA's [Gulf War Illnesses website](#).

By Now Everyone Has Seen This, But Still Worth a Post: U.S. Special Forces troops flew into Somalia on a nighttime helicopter raid early Wednesday, freed an American and a Danish hostage and killed nine of the kidnappers in a mission that President Barack Obama said he personally authorized. The Danish Refugee Council confirmed that the two aid workers, American Jessica Buchanan and Dane Poul Hagen Thisted, were freed and "are on their way to be reunited with their families." The raiders came in very quickly, catching the guards as they were sleeping after having chewed the narcotic leaf qat for much of the evening, a pirate who gave his name as [Bile Hussein](#) told the Associated Press by phone. [Hussein](#) said he was not present at the site but had spoken with other pirates who were, and that they told him nine pirates had been killed in the raid and three were missing.

VA Changes Emergency Care Policy: The Department of Veterans Affairs has announced a change in regulations regarding payments for emergency care provided to eligible veterans in non-VA facilities. The new regulation extends VA's authority to pay for emergency care provided to eligible veterans at non-VA facilities until the veterans can be safely transferred to a VA medical facility. More than 100,000 veterans are estimated to be affected by the new rules. For more information about emergency care in non-VA facilities, visit the [VA website](#).

Tip of the month: Telemarketers: These people don't care if your state has a "do not call list" or not, they will try calling anyway. The best option for dealing with telemarketers is saying "Hold On, Please" and put down the phone instead of hanging up on them. When you eventually hear the phone company's 'beep-beep-beep' tone, you know it's time to go back and hang up your handset, which has efficiently completed its task and used up the caller's time. They are usually paid by the call and it cuts into their productivity and sales. Do you ever get those annoying phone calls with no one on the other end? This is another telemarketing technique where a machine makes phone calls and records the time of day when a person answers the phone. This technique is used to determine the best time of day for a 'real' sales person to call back and get someone at home. If you notice there is no one on the other end, immediately start hitting your # button on the phone, 6 or 7 times as quickly as possible. This confuses the machine that dialed the call, and kicks your number out of their system.

Public comment is requested on VHA Pandemic Influenza Ethics Guidance: *Meeting the Challenge of Pandemic Influenza: Ethical Guidance for Leaders and Health Care Professionals in the Veterans Health Administration.* The goal of the Notice is to ensure that Veterans and VA staff who may be directly affected during a severe infectious disease outbreak have an opportunity to contribute to the development of ethical concepts and processes that will guide VA emergency planning. The 60 day comment period will close April 9, 2012. The Notice, *Guidance* and related links can be accessed at: http://www.ethics.va.gov/activities/pandemic_influenza_preparedness.asp. If you have comments on this guidance that you would like to share with local leaders and Integrated Ethics staff, please feel free to contact Dr. Jill Lowery at jill.lowery@va.gov



Editors Notes: *Newsletters* are uploaded to the 2nd Battalion Chapter ADVA Website. If you missed an issue, look on the Website. The Web address is identified in the heading of the N/L. If you have anything relating to this N/L, email or write them at the following addresses; Email: rheroux1@nc.rr.com or gcarder@columbus.rr.com. Snail mail: Rich Heroux, 2005 Montgomery Road, Franklinton, NC 27525-7300 or Gary Carder, 1725 Demorest Road, Columbus, OH 43228.

A Moment in Time: Hamilton Fish. Born in New York State in 1888, his life would mirror a long family tradition of service in both the government and the military. He graduated from Harvard in just three years, before the outbreak of World War I. He was named company commander in the 369th Infantry Regiment – more famously known as the "Harlem Hellfighters." Fish was vocal in his faith in his company in the that they will followers." In the heat of battle in July 1918, he wrote charges, "I am proud to be post of honor est confidence do their duty to ultimately, the Hellfighters' record bore out Fish's faith. The regiment lost no ground, had no POWs taken and was the first to reach the Rhine, while spending more time on the front lines than any other American regiment. Back in the United States, Fish was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1920. He first introduced a resolution was to return the body of an unidentified U.S. soldier to Arlington National Cemetery. This honoring of the unknown soldier was the first step toward the construction of the Tomb of the Unknowns, which honors all such soldiers. He served in the House until 1945, and in the early 1930s was a strong opponent of Communist influences in the United States. Fish worked in the insurance business for decades. Married four times, he died in New York in 1991, at 102.



DOD Budget Breaks Faith With Troops: The requested Fiscal Year 2013 budget for the Department of Defense, which the Veterans organizations believe contains negative military pay and benefits proposals that will become "deal breakers" with the troops. One proposal recommends 1.7-percent military pay increases for 2013 and 2014, and a mere half percent in 2015. Tied to pay changes is DOD's concurrence to create a Military Retirement Modernization Commission, which some in Congress already said should also examine the non-taxed status of military allowances, such as separate rations, housing and combat pay. The second proposal would force military dependents and retirees to pay more for their TRICARE health programs. DOD recommended a three-tiered annual enrollment fee for Tricare Prime—based on the amount of retirement pay received—which over the next five years would quadruple existing fees for some working age military retirees. DOD also proposed instituting a one-tier annual enrollment fee and increased deductibles for Tricare Standard and Extra programs, a three-tiered fee for Tricare for Life coverage, and new pharmaceutical co pays for everyone except uniformed service members. Defeating these negative Quality of Life proposals are top Veteran legislative priorities.

It used to be only death and taxes now, of course, there's shipping and handling, too.

Korean War MIA Identified: The Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office recently announced the identification of remains belonging to Army Cpl. William R. Sluss, 21, of Nickelsville, Va. In late November 1950, Sluss and elements of the U.S. 2nd Infantry Division were attacked by Chinese forces near Kunu-ri, North Korea. On Nov. 30, 1950, Sluss was listed as missing in action as a result of that heavy fighting. In 1953, returning Americans who had been held as prisoners of war reported that Sluss had been captured by the Chinese and died in the spring of 1951 as a result of malnutrition.



This cartoon was in the Chicago Tribune in 1934. Look carefully at the plan of action in the lower left corner.

Vietnam Vet Awarded Silver Star after 45 years: In 1967, 475,000 troops fought in Vietnam. The Packers and Chiefs played in the first Super Bowl and Dr. Paul Taylor fought as a member of the U.S. Forces. An officer in Taylor's unit recommended him for the Silver Star but the officer was medically evacuated and the paperwork was lost in the shuffle. Taylor's former commander resubmitted the award recently, and learned that it would require approval from a member of Congress, because so many years had elapsed. On Sergeant Taylor's last operation, he was needed to temporarily take command of Second Company and lead it against a battalion of Viet Cong. During a four hour period, Sergeant Taylor's company made contact with the enemy six times; and each time routed the numerically superior Viet Cong forces from their positions. Taylor was seriously wounded in the fight, but continued to lead his element until contact with the enemy had broken off.

"Today, the problems we face exist because the people who work for a living are outnumbered by those who vote for a living."

Freedom and Jeff: This is the kind of story you need when it seems like the world is spiraling out of control....not many people get a picture of this proud bird snuggled up next to them! *Freedom* and Jeff have been together 13 years this summer. When *Freedom* was found as a baby in 1998, she could not stand and both wings were broken in 4 places. She was emaciated and covered in lice. Jeff made the decision to give her a chance at life, so she was taken to a local vet's office. From then on, Jeff was always around her. She was placed in a huge dog carrier loaded up with shredded newspaper for a bed. Jeff would sit and talk to her, urging her to live, to fight; and she would lay there looking at him with those big brown eyes. She also had to be tube feed from 4-6 weeks, and by then she still couldn't stand. It got to the point where the decision was made to euthanize her if she couldn't stand in a week. Jeff did not want to cross the line between torture and rehab, and it looked like death was winning. She was going to be put down that Friday, and Jeff was supposed to



to go to the Thursday, couldn't thought of euthanized. immediately to her cage; she was, her own, a beautiful eagle. She was ready to live. The scene almost brought Jeff to tears. That was a very good day. The vet team knew she could never fly, so the director asked Jeff to glove train her. Jeff got her used to the glove, and then to jesses, and they started doing education programs for schools in western Washington. Jeff and *Freedom* wound up in the newspapers, radio (believe it or not) and some TV. In the spring of 2000, Jeff was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, stage 3, which is not good (one major organ plus everywhere), so he wound up doing 8 months of chemo. Lost the hair - the whole bit. When Jeff felt good enough, he would go to Sarvey and take *Freedom* out for walks. *Freedom* would also visit him in his dreams and help fight the cancer. This happened time and time again. Fast forward to November 2000 the day after Thanksgiving, Jeff went in for my last checkup. He was told that if the cancer was not all gone after 8 rounds of chemo, then my last option was a stem cell transplant. Anyway, they did the tests; and Jeff was to come back Monday for the results. On Monday Jeff was told that all the cancer was gone. So the first thing he did was get up to Sarvey and take the big girl out for a walk. It was misty and cold. He went to her flight and jessed her up, and they went out front to the top of the hill. He hadn't said a word to *Freedom*, but somehow she knew. She looked at him and wrapped both her wings around him to where he could feel them pressing in on his back (He was engulfed in eagle wings), and she touched his nose with her beak and stared into my eyes, and they both just stood there like that for a very long time. That was a magic moment. They have been soul mates ever since. This is a very special bird. On a side note: Jeff and *Freedom* have had people who were sick come up to them when they are out, and *Freedom* has some kind of hold on them. There once was a guy who was terminal who came up

them and was allowed to hold her. His knees just about buckled and here he could feel her power course through his body. There are so many similar stories. Jeff never forgets the honor he has of being so close to such a magnificent spirit as *Freedom*.

5 1-year-old Mom Holds Her Own During Basic Combat Training: Sgt. Sandra Coast, Company B, 2nd Battalion, 10th Infantry Fort Leonard Wood aims her M16 rifle during the final days of her Basic Combat Training. The 51-year-old mother is one of the oldest Soldiers to have completed BCT. According to the U.S. Army Recruiting Command, the average age for an Army Reserve recruit is about 23. From 1982 to 1993, Coast devoted her life to the U.S. Navy. She gave up her lifestyle as a Sailor to raise her son, Jeff, who ironically led her back to the military she left behind years ago. After graduating High School he joined the Marine Corps and she decided to join the Army Reserve. Her previous years of military service allowed her to join the Army Reserve well past the age someone without prior service could join. She was stunned to learn that as a paralegal specialist she would have to go back to basic training -- this time, Army-style. "I wasn't quite expecting to be running around with an M16 and all of this gear," Coast said. She started preparing for Basic Combat Training months prior to stepping foot on Fort Leonard Wood. The APFT may have been a breeze for Coast, but she said one of the hardest things for her to adjust to was the divide in life stages between her and her fellow roommates. Pfc. Jeff Coast didn't think his mother was serious when she expressed interest in joining the Army, but recently he started seeing a side of her that was new to him. Sgt. Sandra Coast feels like she made it through basic training because of the support family, friends and even outsiders. On the plus side, she will be able to work near her son's reserve unit. Being in Army Basic Combat Training left Coast with a new respect for combat Soldiers -- and a new respect for herself.

DoD Raises Nearly \$16 Million in CFC Contributions: The Defense Department raised nearly \$16 million in contributions during the 2011 Combined Federal Campaign, marking its fifth consecutive year raising more than \$15 million. This is DoD's eighth consecutive record-setting year and the fifth years in a row raising over 15 Million. The funds raised during the yearly effort will have a huge collective impact even during difficult times for individuals and families. This commitment in the department continues to be truly remarkable. The funds will be used for projects from the earthquake and tsunami in Japan [to] the deadly outbreak of tornados in the American South and Midwest to the continued uncertainty and turmoil in the global economy, the past year reminds us of just how important it is to extend a helping hand to others. What is given extends access to medicine and medical care to some of the most improvised parts of the world. What is given fights hunger from poverty with technological and agricultural education. Contributions also provide emergency relief to disaster-stricken areas and promote women's health, freedom and dignity.

'Whoever said the pen is mightier than the sword, obviously never encountered automatic weapons.'

- General MacArthur -



Time to Make Arrangements for the 2012 ADVA Reunion:

It's not too early to decide to make plans for the 2012 ADVA reunion in Atlanta, GA. This note is intended to alert you to join us for an anticipated "Hot" time. Atlanta is chock-full of fun things to do and see. It is the capital city of the South making it a well traveled tourist adventure land. The ADVA staff is working to make this year's event everyone will long remember. We are scheduled to participate in the dedication of the Americal Division monument in the "Walk of Honor" near the newly opened National Infantry Museum at Fort Benning. As part of this memorable event the attendees are invited to eat lunch at the 2/46th Infantry Regiment Mess Hall. What a treat this will be for the ladies who have seldom had the opportunity to dine in this fashion. The lunch may even be an experience for all of us "Grunts". An application is part of your latest Americal Journal. You can also find an application via our Chapter and ADVA WEBSITES. Make your reservations early. Let's make this another banner reunion. Our annual membership meeting will also be conducted at this time.

VA Expands Agent Orange Ship List: The Department of Veterans Affairs has added 47 vessels to its list of Navy and Coast Guard ships whose crews may have been exposed to the defoliant Agent Orange. Former servicemembers who served aboard these "blue water" ships, as well as the more than 200 others listed in VA's database from 1962 to 1975, may be eligible for disability compensation. Vessels recently added to the roster include the hospital ship Repose, which operated in close coastal waters from 1966 to 1970, and the transport ship General R.M. Blatchford, which landed elements of the 1st Infantry Division at Vung Tau in October 1965. For online inventory visit (<http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/shiplist/index.asp>).

PTSD Cases Top 200,000: According to VA statistics, a steady increase in the number Iraq and Afghanistan veterans seeking VA care for Post-traumatic stress disorder pushed the total number to more than 200,000 by mid- 2011. By mid June 2011 the total number of PTSD cases was 211,819. The total number represents about 16% of the 1.3 million who have fought in the wars since 2001. Pentagon official data also shows that more than 200,000 troops are afflicted with TBI –Traumatic brain injury.

'Tracers work both ways.'

Proposed Changes to DoD Medical: TRICARE Prime annual enrollment fees for retired families (currently \$520) would rise as high as \$820 starting October 1, 2012, and rise to as much as \$2,048 within five years, with fees based on military retired pay amount. TRICARE Standard beneficiaries would start paying a \$140 annual family enrollment fee and a slightly increased deductible (\$320) starting Oct 1, with the enrollment fee and deductible rising to \$250 and \$580, respectively within 5 years. These would be flat fees for all Standard beneficiaries. Retirees and family members age 65 and older would start paying an annual TRICARE For Life (TFL) enrollment fee of up to \$135 per person starting this Oct. 1. This fee also would be graduated based on retired pay amount, and would rise to as much as \$475 per year within 5 years. Pharmacy copays for retail and mail-order brand-name medications would more than double (from \$12 to \$26) starting Oct 1. Copays for non-formulary medications that currently cost \$25 would also more than double, to \$51, and availability would be mostly restricted to the mail-order venue, with only limited retail access. The brand-name and non-formulary copays would rise to \$34 and \$66, respectively, within 5 years.

Stolen Valor Case Upheld: By a 2-1 decision, the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver recently reversed a lower court's decision that the Stolen Valor Act of 2005 violates First Amendment free speech protections. Courts in California, Georgia and Missouri have considered similar cases. In the Colorado case, defendant Rick Strandlof had founded a veterans group in Colorado Springs, and said he had received the Purple Heart and Silver Star, although the military had no record that he ever served. The California case, *U.S. v. Xavier Alvarez*, is currently before the U.S. Supreme Court, primarily because the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco overruled by 2-1 a lower court verdict against Alvarez, a member of the local water district board, who claimed at a public meeting that he was a retired Marine and Medal of Honor recipient. Alvarez, too, had never served in the military.

VA Budget Deals With Homelessness and Jobs: The Department of Veterans Affairs sent Congress a proposed budget of \$140 billion for fiscal 2013 on Monday, which includes a 33 percent increase in funding to tackle homelessness and a \$1 billion request for a new Veterans Job Corps. In a statement, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki said the proposed budget would also fund services for newly discharged vets, improve access to benefits, bring down the disability claims backlog, and beef up the department's information technology program. More than half the \$140 billion requested is already spoken for. The VA says \$76 billion is intended to cover mandatory expenses such as disability compensation and pensions. About \$64 billion is discretionary spending to cover programs ranging from the proposed jobs package to ending homelessness to construction at VA facilities.

