



Volume 2

"A Soldier's Footsteps"

October 2012

Commander's Corner: The ADVA annual reunion is now over and I want to thank all the guys and their ladies who were in attendance; the overall attendance of just under 500 people. I had a great time seeing all of you who attended and hope we have more 2/1 guys next year in Nashville. I think our hospitality room was a good enough success to warrant having one for next year's reunion. I believe the tentative dates are set for the 2nd weekend in September. It looks like it will be the weekend before the big Kokomo Veteran's reunion and hopefully, some of you will be able to take enough time off to attend both. I heard a rumor Ernie and Rich are planning on doing both and you know I will happily participate in both events. We had a slight change in the proposed elections. When the subject of the biennial elections was brought up a proposal was made by 2/1 Chapter member Carl Jacob that we continue with the current officers for the next term to allow the chapter more time to acquire stability and facilitate a smoother transition for new officers in the future. This motion was discussed during the chapter meeting and was seconded and approved by all in attendance. Looks like you will have to put up with the 3 of us for a while longer. Currently, the chapter looks financially stable but, we have a few members who have not paid their annual dues for 2012. These individuals will be contacted by one of the officers in the near future with a reminder to pay their 2012 dues. Annual dues are designed to be collected starting in January of the every year. Provisions have been made to keep track of anyone paying dues for multiple years. We have officially received our Chapter Charter from the Americal Division Veterans Association so, its full speed ahead let's get this thing rolling!

Chuck

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

Combating Illness: We have recently received word that another of our comrades is in need of our prayers as he deals with a surgery to rectify a condition with his intestine and a hernia. Gerry (BO) Borysiak will receive surgical procedures during the first part of October 2012. Please take a moment to ask our resourceful Commander from above to watch over our fellow comrade to ensure his continued recovery and to guide the surgeon's tools as he attempts to remove the obstruction that causes Gerry's ailments. We wish him a successful operation and a speedy recovery.



Editors Notes: Newsletters are uploaded to the 2nd Battalion Chapter ADVA Website. If you missed an issue or would like to look at one from the past 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 to 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.

Congressman Calls Vet Jobs Bill Unfair, Wasteful: Senator Tom Coburn, R-Okla., who helped block a vote last week on the Veterans Jobs Corps bill says he opposed the law in part because it would have duplicated existing federal jobs programs and given post-9/11 vets an unfair advantage over other veterans in targeted fields. Sen. Coburn, said there are six veterans' jobs training programs under the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Labor that should be consolidated under the VA. Coburn said the programs are not working, citing the Government Accountability Office's conclusion that overlaps in various programs result in inefficiencies. "Instead of creating a new program we owe it to our veterans and taxpayers to understand why what we are already doing isn't producing results," Coburn said. Under an amendment to the bill offered by Coburn, the six programs – the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program, the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Project, the Local Veterans Employment Representative Program, the Transition Assistance Program, the Veterans Workforce Investment Program and the Vocational Rehabilitation for Disabled Veterans Program – would have been placed under the VA and reviewed to ensure they're working. However, Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev., the majority leader, would not allow amendments. Coburn also said the \$1 billion jobs bill would have created a "distinct preference for veterans of the current war in Afghanistan and the most recent war in Iraq by stating that these jobs are primarily for veterans who have served since September 11, 2001."

Absentee Voting Begins: The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) encourages service members, spouses, voting-age dependents and overseas civilians who want to vote to visit FVAP.gov to register and request their absentee ballots. If voters do not receive their ballot by October 6, FVAP recommends they complete and mail the back-up Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) to their local election office. If, after submitting the FWAB, they receive their State absentee ballot, they should also vote and return it. If both ballots are received by the deadline, only the State ballot will be counted. It is also very important that election officials have your correct current address. Of the 67,000 ballots received at overseas APO/FPOs for the 2010 election, 20,000 were redirected to another address and 13,000 were returned to sender.

Americal Division Veteran's Reunion and Annual Chapter Meeting: To those reading this issue of the Monthly Newsletter who were not in attendance at the recently concluded 2012 ADVA reunion I can only say that you missed the most outstanding assembly of veterans in the last 25 years. The ADVA staff who put this together received praise from the 450 members attending the reunion. Atlanta, GA was a great site. The hotel accommodations were excellent. Service could not have been more pleasant for those who stayed in the hotel and for those who chose to commute. Highlighting the weekend activities was the bus tour to Fort Benning, Maneuver Center of Excellence, where the dedication of the American Division memorial took place on the Infantry Museum's "Walk of Honor". A more fitting place for this mag-



nificent tribute to our Division would be hard to imagine. Everyone who attended the ceremony stood in awe as the parts of the memorial were uncovered. Soldiers from the Division's laudable past were on hand to unveil the portion of the memorial pertaining to their part of the courageous history of the Americal Division through WW II, Korea, The Cold War, and Vietnam. All of our Congressional Medal of Honor winners were proudly displayed as was the heraldic symbols of the many components serving in the Division throughout its elaborate history. A simple memorial service honoring our departed members was conducted as part of the ceremony. The trip through Fort Benning along with the visit to the 1st Battalion 46th Infantry "Mess Hall" where we all ate lunch was another highlight. Although some of us had not participated in the mess hall experience for quite sometime it was completely different that we have expected. The dinning room staff were very gracious to us going out of their way to ensure we had a enjoyable experience. They fed approximately 600 people within an hour. I might also add that the variety of main dishes and the servings were excellent. I sometimes wish we had this type of dinning encounter when we were serving our country. Following lunch we were transported to the newly constructed "Infantry Museum" located just inside the main gate of the fort. Words can not adequately portrair the exhibits displayed in the museum. The three floors are jam packed of our nation's Infantry narrative. Outside the museum there is a huge parade field where many graduation ceremonies are conducted. Along with the museum building the Infantry Foundation have assembled

what they refer to as a World War II "Company Street." The street is complete with an orderly room, barrack, mess hall, chapel, supply room and headquarters buildings. Each building is complete with everything in its place as you might imaging during the period. There is even a building that General G.S. Patton used while serving in the field complete with sleeping quarters and living room. All of this has to be seen to bring it in prospective. Following the days activities many attendees settled in for an evening visiting the numerous hospitality rooms. There was much to drink and eat. Our Chapter had for the first time a hospitality room sponsored by the members. On Saturday the ADVA conducted the annual membership meeting. Approximately 25 new members were present. After the role call a short business session was held. Chapter members assembled after the ADVA meeting where the members present voiced their support for the existing members of the Executive Committee to remain in place for another year. Saturday evening's formal dinner was overcrowded. Every table was filled and some who did not make prior arrangements were turned away. The festivities were handled in a professional fashion. All agreed the events of the past few days were some of the very finest. All thanks to the members of the ADVA Legacy Committee for their energy in presenting us all with a memorable reunion.



ROTC Commissioning Ceremony The Hard Way: After four long years in the Providence College Army ROTC program, earning my commission the hard way (something I always loved to tell the West Point Lieutenants) we were faced with our Commissioning Ceremony at 0730 hrs. I was my 1968 Class Commencement Weekend Chairman, and had been running a cast of 25 fellow movers and shakers for months in putting together celebration activities for our 900 strong class, the last nite before graduation myself and a few buddies went downtown for a few chill drinks. I remember is telling one of my ROTC buddies to make sure he wakes me up. Well, he was also drinking, forgot my request, and finally did wake me up - after the ROTC Commissioning Ceremony. My classmate said, "Jerry- 'Fitzie' (Major Fitzpatrick) is looking for you and he's mad as hell!" Of our 90 new LT's, only yours truly was missing. So I proceed (still a bit hung over) to get dressed in uniform, sitting on and crushing my "bus driver cap," and ditty-pop down to the ROTC department. I go up to Fitzpatrick (that's Major to you) and he says -"Hughes- we ain't waiting for any goddamn second lieutenant ••raise your right hand." I did so, then turned around, saluted our Sgt Major, handed him a buck, and that's how I got sworn into this man's army. Gerry (LT) Hughes

XM25 'Punisher' Finds Home in Infantry

Squads: The Army's shoulder-fired 25mm airburst weapon that many soldiers call "the Punisher" is slowly winning the approval of the infantry after a decade of scrutiny. The boxy, futuristic-looking XM25 Counter-Defilade Target Engagement System recently completed a 14-month battlefield assessment and is on its way to earning a permanent position in the infantry squad beginning in 2014, Army weapons officials said. XM25 is an offshoot of the Objective Individual Weapon program that began in the 1990s to create an effective direct fire weapon system that calculates the range to a target with a push of a button and transfers the data to the electronic fuse built into the 25mm round. When fired, the projectile is designed to explode directly above targets out to 600 meters, peppering enemy fighters with shrapnel. The XM25 has created a lot of excitement in the infantry community, but it has also attracted its share of criticism from door-kickers that the five-shot, 14-pound weapon system is more of a burden than a benefit to combat units. In March, elements of 75th Ranger Regiment refused to take XM25 with them for a raid on a fortified enemy compound in Afghanistan, sources familiar with the incident said. After an initial assessment, Ranger units found the XM25 too heavy and cumbersome for the battlefield. They also were concerned that the limited basic load of 25mm rounds was not enough to justify taking an M4A1 carbine out of the mission, sources say.



Veterans Reunion at Kokomo, IN: While many attended the Americal Division Veterans Association reunion in Atlanta, GA., Nine Chapter members went to the Kokomo Indiana Veterans reunion taking place during the same weekend. Many of our group have been attending this affair for about 19 years. The following regulars and friends were there; Terry "Foxhole" Loyd and his wife Juliana or "Mrs. Foxhole", Michael "Frenchie" Kosteczko, Terry "Whitey" Whiteside and his wife Pat from Canada some place north of North Dakota. Julius "Juju" Deriscavage made it this year for the 2nd time and John "Big John" Careccia came along with Juju for his 1st reunion. Gerry "Bo" Borysiak and Chuck "Holiday" Holdaway were absent. Bo had health issues and Holiday who is the current Commander of the 2/1 Infantry Chapter had to be at the Atlanta reunion. Friday morning started off with a wake up at about 0900. It was a dripping rain and 56 degrees. Our lawn chairs were wet despite being under the shelter we put up every year. I dried off the top of my cooler for a seat under the shelter and found myself just sitting there leaning on Foxhole's B 2/1 Guidon off the shelter by the road. Three veterans strolled by the truck pointing at the Guidon. They talked among themselves a bit and moved on. In just a few seconds they came back standing in the road talking again. So I decided to go closer say "Hello", and see what they were up to. Right off one of the three asks me if I served with Bravo 2/1 Infantry?. I proudly responded

YES! All three start talking among themselves again about how Bravo was that sorry unit in Vietnam and how they always had to go out and rescue from enemy attacks. They said, "Bravo company was always receiving the worst of any battle. It started to get under my skin and I must have showed my irritation. Then they all of a sudden stick out their hands for me to shake and say----"we also served with Bravo 2/1 Infantry. *They got me good!* All three served with 3rd platoon and with Big John Careccia. A 4th member of the third platoon showed up a bit later and we spent the day together. Another incident occurred at the Kokomo reunion. A few months prior to the reunion, Juju offered both Bo and me a Vietnam era pack. I responded immediately that I



left to right Jerry Walker, Bob Ashbrook, Ted Kelley, John Careccia, Bennie Cowart

wanted the pack; Bo did not respond so Juju informs me he will souvenir me the pack at Kokomo. I told Juju all the ways I planned to use the pack on some of the 4 day trips I go on to other Bravo events, I told him how many beers can be carried in the pack at our pilgrimage to the Indianapolis 500 race with Holiday. On Thursday afternoon Juju unloaded the much sought after pack. We look it all over, Juju reminds me how we got that 80 pound pack on our backs and I am a happy camper. We lean it against a post holding up the shelter. When he and Big John get ready to go back to their hotel for the night, Juju informs me he has changed his mind! I ain't givin ya the pack he says. I go on and on about all the use I will make of it. I was not just gonna set it in a closet some place etc, etc, etc. Nope; not givin ya the pack, changed my mind, is all I get out of Juju. Friday morning arrives and he and Big John arrive back at the camp site, Juju tells me he's givin me the pack after all. I'm elated. Several hours later he says I'm gonna give the pack to another veteran. Now, I knew he was messing with my mind, but still not sure about the 1st time and he won't tell me. Long story short----- I got a really cool original Vietnam era pack and I'm gonna use it. See More...[You Tube Kokomo 2012](#)

Bruce Nielsen

Congress Clears CR: The Senate worked overtime to clear a six-month continuing resolution. The measure, cleared by the House earlier this month, extends funding through March 27, 2013, with a 0.6 percent increase for most programs and agencies. With the beginning of the fiscal year looming (October 1) and all 11 appropriations bills still awaiting passage, the must-pass funding bill was the last item on the agenda for those congressional members hoping to get back to the campaign trail. The President is expected to sign the bill soon.

G's Letter Changes Lawmaker's Mind on Afghanistan: Sarah Sitton knew her husband Matt, an Army staff sergeant, was upset he and his men were forced to trudge through fields laden with improvised explosive devices. She knew he was so concerned he wrote a letter essentially predicting his own death to U.S. Rep. C.W. Bill Young, who attended the same Largo church as the Sittons. What surprised her was how much impact the letter would have. Young this week reversed his position on Afghanistan, a change of heart he says came in part because of Sitton's letter. In a position opposite that held by most leaders of his party, the influential Republican is now calling for U.S. troops to leave the country ahead of the 2014 deadline called for by President Barack Obama. He also has called a hearing for 10 a.m. Thursday to ask the agency in charge of protecting troops against IEDs to explain why so many are still dying and suffering horrific injuries despite an annual budget of nearly \$3 billion. Sitton was killed Aug. 2 by an IED in the same field he had complained about in his letter. He was 26. "I don't feel Matt's service was in vain," said Sarah Sitton, who now is raising the couple's 10-month-old son, Brodey, on her own. "Because with him leaving that letter behind to the Congressman, I hope that it saves others that may come in the future." Young, the senior Republican in the House of Representatives and the chairman of the influential House Appropriations Committee Defense Subcommittee, said he has "always supported the war efforts." But Young said two issues -- troops like Sitton killed and maimed by IEDs, and the growing number of troops killed by Afghan forces they are training -- moved him to waver from his commitment not to second-guess military leaders. "There isn't much they are fighting for now," she said. "They are just keeping people safe who don't want to keep themselves safe. We are building roads they can't build for themselves, clearing towns they can't clear for themselves. We are just doing things that don't have much to do with what we went over there to do."

VA Completes Over 1 Million Compensation Claims in 2012: The Department of Veterans Affairs announced today that the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), which oversees the delivery of disability compensation and other benefits to the nation's Veterans, processed over one million disability claims during fiscal year 2012, marking the third year in row VBA claims processors have exceeded the one million mark. In August, VA had its most productive claims processing period in its history, completing a record 107,462 claims and surpassing the previous monthly record of 103,296 set in 2010. This high level of production is accompanied by an increase in the overall accuracy of rating decisions, which has risen from 83 to 86 percent since September 2011, as determined by VA's national quality assurance program. While claims production is at historic highs, incoming disability claims have increased nearly 50 percent since 2008, outpacing VA's current claims processing capacity. VA's goal is to process all disability claims within 125 days, at a 98 percent accuracy level, and eliminate the claims backlog in 2015. This year, VBA is beginning a nationwide organizational transformation to increase its claims decision output by retooling procedures and deploying paperless data systems that will speed claims processing and improve quality. All 56 VBA regional offices will be operating under the new organizational model by the end of 2013.

When I read about the evils of drinking, I gave up reading. ~ ~ *Paul Hornung*

Two MIAs Identified: The Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office announced the identification of two servicemen who were missing in action from World War II and Korea. Returned home are:

*Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. Samuel E. Lunday, 20, of Marianna, Fla. On April 24, 1943, Lunday and four other U.S. servicemen were flying a C-87 Liberator Express aircraft from China over the Himalayan mountains to their home base in India. Radio communications were lost following take-off and the crew was never heard from again. Eleven aerial search missions were unable to locate the aircraft or crew.

*Marine Pfc. Richard S. Gzik, 19, of Toledo, Ohio. On Dec. 2, 1950, Gzik and the other Marines of M Battery, 11th Artillery Regiment, 1st Marine Division, came under attack on the west side of the Chosin Reservoir in North Korea. Gzik was killed in action and buried. The fighting withdrawal of U.N. forces later that month prevented the recovery of his remains.

JPAC Strives to Bring Home POW/MIA: Somewhere deep underwater and on the battlefields of World War II are more than 73,000 Americans missing in action. Thousands more are unaccounted for in Korea, the jungles of Vietnam, and other conflicts. Each year on the third Friday of September, Americans recognize, remember, and honor prisoners of war and service members missing in action. Each day the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, or JPAC, is striving hard to bring those service members home to their families and loved ones. JPAC conducts global search, recovery, and laboratory operations to identify Prisoners of War and Missing in Action, or POW/MIA, around the world and return them home. Its detachments in Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, and Hawaii assist in-country support during investigation and recovery operations. The mission begins with investigating the locations of MIA and those service members killed in action who haven't been returned home. JPAC actively negotiates with representatives from foreign countries to maintain positive relationships and the ability to gain country access. Gaining access isn't guaranteed and has proven an obstacle in North Korea and countries with little or no relationship with the United States. Recovery teams are comprised of anthropologists, linguists, medics, explosive ordinance disposal technicians, and other additional experts, depending on the mission requirements. Reports of the locations of downed aircraft or ground losses help the teams to locate MIA, find their remains, and bring them back home. Anthropologists set up excavation sites and sift through every ounce of soil dug for remains of service members. More than 1,800 Americans have been identified since the accounting effort began.



"YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN."

Battling suicidal thoughts: A Soldier's story

Sgt. 1st Class Joshua Ferguson's life has been the Army since he went through basic and Advanced Individual Training at Fort Sill when he was 19 years old. He went on to airborne school at Fort Bragg, and eventually became part of the 1st Battalion (Airborne), 501st Infantry. That unit was reformed in 2005 as the 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division at Fort Richardson, Alaska. From there Ferguson was deployed to Afghanistan, and then Iraq, where he was wounded in 2007.

After having his left leg amputated, struggling through multiple surgeries and rehabilitation, he eventually found himself facing depression and considering suicide. "We were hit by an explosively formed projectile while on patrol near Hillah, Iraq," Ferguson said. "I felt that we were lucky because normally when one of those hits a vehicle, four out of five people in the vehicle get killed. Everybody in our vehicle was injured, and my injuries were the worst. They eventually amputated my left leg, and there was extensive nerve damage in the right leg." Ferguson's best friend was Sgt. 1st Class James Joslin, B Company, 4th BCT. They had been friends since they served in the 82nd Airborne in the '90s. He remembers when he heard Ferguson had been wounded. "When we were deployed to Iraq, I was up in Fallujah and he went down to Hillah. After a while I got a two-line text message from him that said, 'Hey dude, they done blowed me up!'" Joslin said. "By the time I got that message, he was at Walter Reed because he got hit while on patrol. I was in-country for another eight months, and there was absolutely nothing I could do about it." Ferguson didn't let his injuries slow him down. He was fitted with a special experimental prosthetic leg designed for high-activity patients. Ferguson said. "I wanted to go back on active-duty with the prosthetic leg." After Ferguson was back home things started getting harder as he became a lot more aware of his injuries. "I wasn't surrounded by people with similar injuries, in similar situations. People were treating me differently without meaning to. "When he first got back to Alaska there was a smokescreen that he was putting up. It wasn't the meds, it was his overarching desire to make everything normal again. He was trying to tough it out, be the alpha dog he had always been. He wanted to do it all by himself, to do everything," Joslin said. "He started going too hard, too fast, and doing too much. He hurt himself again, which caused him to have to go back to Walter Reed." "I was going through a lot of stuff at that time. Getting back up to Alaska was such a high, but then I had to deal with being stuck in a wheelchair. Everything kept breaking on my artificial leg. I felt like I was letting my wife and family down because we had to move back to D.C. for me to have more surgeries. I got to a pretty dark place emotionally," Ferguson said. Ferguson was lucky though, because he had his wife, Danielle. She was as strong as he was and as determined to not abandon him, but be there every moment. He explained often people would know there was something wrong with him but they didn't know what to do. My wife and Joslin knew there was something going on. I don't know if there was a rumor I was extremely suicidal or what, but there were times when my moods would change and the way people dealt with me would change. "And, Joslin was just there, when I needed him. Because, often the hardest part is being alone with yourself." Joslin understood what Ferguson was doing and was very concerned about how to help him. I was fortunate and blessed to have my wife Danielle, and my buddy Joslin. They encouraged me to contact Army One Source, and they hooked me up with a [psychiatrist] and that helped. Not everybody has got somebody to talk to, but there are groups that can help," he said. Joslin put it in more straight forward terms. "If you make yourself available to those who are hurting, you will see the signs. But friendship is work. Family is work. If you make yourself available to your buddy, eventually you will talk about what's going on," he said. "But if you make yourself unavailable, you will find that your buddy hasn't shown up at work for a couple of days, and somebody will find him in his garage." "Everybody will say 'Well, didn't you know? No, I was too busy.' What were you doing that was so time-consuming, and kept you so busy that you couldn't talk to you friend? Be there for your buddies, for your friends. Get them help before it is too late," Joslin said. Ferguson still struggles with adjusting to life with the prosthetic leg, and he's on more medication than he wants to be. But, he feels like he is making progress towards the future. A future that is different than what he envisioned, but a future he wants to be part of. He has a wife and three small children, and he wants to be there for them. That's what kept him from slipping into that dark place and not coming back out. "Soldiers who find themselves in that dark place, having those feelings, should get help," he said. "Don't leave that legacy to your kids, if you know what I mean. Because sometimes in life you have the feeling it doesn't really matter whether you are there or not, but it matters to your kids, your family and your friends."