



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

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Volume 3

"A Soldier's Footsteps"

November 2013

Commanders Corner: All of you can just eat your hearts out; I'm writing this from Hilton Head, SC where my wife Sam and I are taking, what I think, is a well deserved vacation. Spent a good part of September traveling (Nashville reunion, Kokomo reunion, Foxholes funeral and back in time for our annual pig roast. It's great to just have some time away and play a little golf and have a few beers without the daily demands of life. I hope your Halloween with the kids (probably grandkids) was good and you got your share of the treats. With Thanksgiving just around the corner I'm sure we all have some wonderful things in our life to be thankful for. One thing that really touched me was the passing of my great buddy, Terry "Foxhole" Loyd and it really got me thinking about how far we had come from our time in Vietnam. I really cherish the time I was able to spend with him in Kokomo; not knowing it would be the last. There will be a void in my life having lost him. This brings me to the point I'd like to make: we are all getting a little long in the tooth and, I for one, need to rethink some priorities. A priority I need to move up on my list is getting together with my "old" Vietnam buddies as often as possible because, we never know when someone will be lost to us. I was fortunate enough to have some of the guys attend the pig roast in October and I looked on them with a different light than I had in the years past when I just knew I would be spending time with them again. Well, it really doesn't work that way anymore. Aside from being thankful for my family, friends and life in general, I am truly thankful for all of the times I have been able to get together with you guys. There is nothing like it and we should all strive to see our buddies as often as we can whenever possible. Excuses are easy to make but, your true buddies can never be replaced. Veterans Day will have additional meaning this year! On a purely chapter level: remember; delinquent dues should be paid up to Don Hicks and the 2014 dues need to be paid up by the end of January; delinquent dues may be sent in with the 2014 dues; just be sure you let Don know what you are paying for. **Happy Thanksgiving!**
Keep safe and may the bond of battle never be broken!

Chuck



WWII, Korea Servicemen Identified: The Defense POW/MIA Office announced the identification of remains belonging to:

- Army Pfc. Norman Dufresne, 20, of Leominster, Mass. He is scheduled to be buried in his hometown tomorrow. In July 1950, Dufresne and elements of G Company, 2nd Battalion, 19th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division, were deployed astride hills along the Chinju-Hadong Road, just west of the Nam River deep within South Korea. The North Koreans launched a massive attack against their positions, forcing the Americans to fall back. Dufresne was reported as missing in action on July 30, 1950.
- Army Technician Fifth Grade Oneal Rush, 24, of Galivants Ferry, S.C. He will be buried Oct. 26, in his hometown. In August 1944, Rush, a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers soldier, and six other service members were aboard an C-47A Skytrain aircraft that departed from Shingbwiayang, Burma to Myitkyina, Burma, on an air supply mission. Rush and the six service members were reported missing in action when the airplane failed to reach its destination.



Chapter Member Receives National Award: Spenser Baba, National Finance Officer for the past 10 years, received the Americal Division Veterans Association *"Lifetime Achievement Award"* during the 2013 Nashville reunion. Spenser is a Charter member of the 2/1 Infantry Chapter. His efforts to streamline the ADVA financial records has contributed greatly to the financial success of the ADVA. His award highlighted the untiring efforts to bring on line state of the art communications giving a wider breath of transaction efficiency and record keeping. The award further states that on many occasions Spenser has devoted time and energy to assist other Executive Committee members in the performance of their AVA duties. The 2/1 Infantry Chapter is truly proud of his accomplishments serving the Chapter and ADVA.



VA Benefits Paid on Time: Now that appropriations have been enacted to reopen the federal government, the Department of Veterans Affairs is resuming normal operations, and that means benefits payments to 5 million disabled veterans, survivors, families and student-veterans will be paid as scheduled on Nov. 1. It also means all 56 VA Regional Offices have reopened, and all furloughed employees are back to work and claims processors will resume working mandatory overtime to help reduce the disability claims backlog. "We will fight hard to regain ground lost as a result of the government shutdown," said VA Secretary Eric Shinseki. "We remain committed to eliminating the disability claims backlog in 2015."

Former Army Captain Receives Medal of Honor at White House: President Barack Obama presented the Medal of Honor to former Army Capt. William D. Swenson in a recent White House ceremony citing Swenson's heroism during a six-hour battle that followed a deadly Taliban ambush in Afghanistan four years ago. Swenson is the first Army officer to receive the nation's highest military honor for action in Iraq or Afghanistan. Guests included soldiers and marines who fought alongside Swenson and the families of service members who died in the battle. Swenson's heroic actions in saving more than a dozen lives during a 2009, battle in Kunar Province. Cpt. Swenson is the second recipient to receive the Medal of Honor that day. Meyer, a Marine Corps



at the time, was honored two years ago. Swenson served with Combined Security Transition Command Afghanistan's Task Force Phoenix in support of 10th Mountain Division's 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, as an embedded advisor to the Afghan border police. Cpt Swenson said the honor is for all who served that day and for the families of those who were killed in the battle. After finding out his noncommissioned officer, Army Sgt. 1st Class Kenneth Westbrook, was injured, Swenson risked his life to aid him. Swenson continued to fight the enemy and risked his life getting Westbrook to the medevac. Risking his own life again, Swenson then drove an unarmored vehicle straight into the kill zone to rescue injured Afghan forces, Obama said. He returned into the path of enemy fire again, when he and a Humvee crew recovered the four fallen service members.

At the time of Pearl Harbor , the top US Navy command was called CIN-CUS (pronounced 'sink us'); the shoulder patch of the US Army's 45th Infantry division was the Swastika, and Hitler's private train was named 'Amerika.' All three were soon changed for PR purposes.

Veterans Hand Salute Shows Respect: In 2008, an amendment to the U.S. Code authorized veterans and members of the armed forces when not in uniform to render the military hand salute at appropriate occasions. Despite the congressional action, the military hand salute remains an uncommon occurrence. This Veterans Day, you are encouraged to deliver the hand salute and let the community groups and sports franchises know they should amend their flag ceremonies and opening events to include recognition of veterans and members of the armed forces and a military hand salute to the flag. Participation encourages patriotism and stands as a reminder to the more than 22 million U.S. veterans.



VA Releases Caregiver Expansion Report: VA released a congressionally mandated report on expanding the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers to caregivers of veterans of all eras. The *Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010* created a wide range of benefits for caregivers of severely disabled post-9/11 veterans, including a monthly stipend, training, mental health counseling and respite care. Although VA stated that they have the capability to provide these benefits, they could not recommend that Congress do so without first increasing funding for the program. VA estimates that fully expanding the program would cost between \$1.8 and \$3.8 billion. VA stated that if they had to find the funding within its current budget, it would diminish their ability to provide direct-to-veteran healthcare services. The VFW supported the original *Caregiver Act*, but has consistently called for a full expansion, which would properly recognize the sacrifices of all severely disabled veterans and their families. Currently, the Senate VA committee has cleared legislation (S. 851), which would provide these services to veterans of all eras. The VFW testified in support of the bill and will continue to work with Congress to ensure it is funded and implemented. [Learn more](#) about current caregiver program benefits.

"I expect to pass through the world but once. Any good therefore that I can do, or any kindness I can show to any creature, let me do it now. Let me not defer it, for I shall not pass this way again."

Army Drafts Plans for Worst-Case Budget Scenario: U.S. Army leaders are preparing for the worst-case budget scenario, unsure whether Congress will act to avert automatic cuts known as sequestration, the service's top civilian said. The Army will prepare two budgets for fiscal 2015; one that assumes the across-the-board spending reductions remain in effect and one that doesn't. "I wish I could tell you better days lie ahead," said Department of the Army Secretary John McHugh told a crowd during the opening ceremony of the Association of the US Army exposition. "Sadly, I can't." The Defense Department faces about \$500 billion in automatic cuts through 2021. That's in addition to almost \$500 billion in reductions already included in 2011 deficit-reduction legislation. The first installment totaled about \$37 billion and began March 1 after lawmakers were unable to reach an alternative agreement on taxes and spending. The second installment totals about \$52 billion and is set to take effect Jan. 1. The largest branch of military service is downsizing amid the financial pressures and the winding down of the U.S.-led wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

DoD Loses Flexibility to Blunt Sequestration Cuts: The backroom battling over last week's government funding bill had one key casualty -- a clause granting federal agencies such as the Defense Department greater flexibility to cope with forced spending cuts known as sequestration. The controversial cuts began in March under a provision of the 2011 Budget Control Act, and have roiled the federal government ever since. The Pentagon has been especially frustrated by the spending cuts, which are scheduled to take effect again in January and hold the base DoD budget to \$475 billion -- some \$50 billion below President Barack Obama's 2014 budget proposal. Congress' vote last week to reopen the government essentially continued sequestration along with current spending levels. Pentagon officials say the arbitrary, across-the-board nature of the cuts makes it difficult to comply because of the complexity and systematic nature of DoD spending, and have testified before congressional panels that they need flexibility. Under the newly passed resolution, defense leaders have no ability to use money for higher priority purposes -- like operations and maintenance -- rather than on purchases that could be delayed, DoD Comptroller Robert F. Hale said Thursday at the Pentagon. Hale said his office has had discussions with leaders from the various military services about reining in spending early in the fiscal year to prepare for sequestration. Even without the provision, McConnell took to the Senate floor Wednesday to praise sequestration as a critical law that Republicans will insist continue during long-term budget negotiations that will begin later this fall.

VA to Pilot Dental Insurance Program: A new VA program will soon allow all enrolled veterans and CHAMPVA beneficiaries to purchase private dental insurance at a reduced cost. Created by the *Caregivers and Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010*, this three year pilot program known as the VA Dental Insurance Program (VADIP) will offer a wide array of affordable plans to veterans and eligible dependents through Delta Dental and MetLife. Monthly premiums will range from \$8.65 to \$52.90, depending on level of coverage selected. Participation in this program is entirely optional and dental service connection is not required. Enrollment begins on Nov. 15, 2013, with coverage beginning on Jan. 1, 2014. For more information, visit: <http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/vadip/>

He that is good for making excuses.... is seldom good for anything else.
(Benjamin Franklin)

Former Marine Dies Protecting Students in Shooting: A student at a Sparks, Nevada middle school opened fire with a semi-automatic handgun on campus just before the starting bell recently, wounding two 12-year-old boys and killing a math teacher who was trying to protect children from their classmate. The unidentified shooter killed himself with the gun after a rampage that occurred in front of 20 to 30 horrified students who had just returned to school from a weeklong fall break. Authorities did not provide a motive for the shooting, and it's unknown where the student got the gun. Teacher Michael Landsberry was being hailed for his actions during the shooting outside Sparks Middle School. "In my estimation, he is a hero. ... We do know he was trying to intervene," Reno Deputy Police Chief Tom Robinson said. Both wounded students were listed in stable condition. One was shot in the shoulder, and the other was hit in the abdomen. Among people or going on an indiscriminate shooting spree. "We came flying down here to get our kids," said Mike Fiorica, whose nephew attends the school. "You can imagine how parents are feeling. You don't know if your kid's OK." The shooting happened on the school's campus and ended outside the school building, according to police. About 700 students in 7th and 8th grades are enrolled at the school, in a working class neighborhood.

Ranger's Salute Strikes Patriotic Chord Across US: A photo of a wounded Army Ranger saluting his commander from a hospital bed in Afghanistan has become a symbol of fortitude, sacrifice and honor. The photo of Army Cpl. Joshua Hargis, with the 3rd Ranger Battalion, went viral after his wife, Taylor, posted it on her Facebook. It immediately struck a patriotic chord with people across the nation. Hargis was injured Oct. 6 when a suicide bomb and several improvised explosive devices detonated during an operation southwest of Kandahar. Four of his fellow soldiers were killed, and several others were injured. While Hargis was in a hospital in Afghanistan, his commander presented him with a bedside Purple Heart Medal. Those present thought Hargis was unconscious throughout the visit, but then saw his right arm stir in an effort to render the customary military salute.



KAREN BLEIER/AP/Newscom

Arlington Cemetery Will Allow Small Mementos:

Arlington National Cemetery is relaxing its policies to allow family members of those buried in its section for those who died in Iraq and Afghanistan to leave behind small mementos and photos to honor those soldiers. Section 60 is the part of the cemetery that is home to most of those killed in recent fighting. Families in that section had been leaving photos and mementos at their loved ones' gravesites, though cemetery policy strictly regulates such impromptu memorials. Responding to complaints, cemetery staff cleaned out some of those memorials recently. Then families who had left the mementos complained about their removal. Patrick Hallinan, the executive director of the Army National Military Cemeteries and Arlington National Cemetery, met with Section 60 families and worked out a compromise that will allow displays through the fall and winter months when the grass doesn't need cut often, said cemetery spokeswoman Jennifer Lynch. Officials emphasized that items that are unsightly, anything affixed to headstones, dangerous items such as tobacco, alcohol, ammunition, and glass, as well as any item that might pose a risk to workers or visitors. Lynch said the cemetery will review its regulations and policies to see if long-term accommodation can be made. Officials said small mementos will be permitted. Photos will be allowed, but cannot be taped to headstones —

**A Combat Infantryman's Lament:**

Of all the Medals Upon our Chest
 From the Battles and War we knew,
 The one admired as THE VERY BEST
 Is the one of Infantry Blue. It is only a rifle upon a wreath,
 So why should it mean so much?
 It is WHAT IT TOOK TO EARN IT
 That gives it that Magic Touch.
 To earn this special accolade..
 You faced the enemy's fire
 Whether you survived or not
 God dialed that one desired.
 For those of us who served the cause
 It is the Combat Infantryman's Badge...
 That really tells the story
 You faced the enemy's fire
 Whether you survived or not
 God dialed that one desired.
 For those of us who served the cause
 It is the:
COMBAT INFANTRYMAN'S BADGE...

**News from the Current 2nd Battalion 1st Infantry:**

From September 16 through September 20, 2-1 Infantry Battalion, "Legion", participated in Expert Infantry Badge Testing. We kicked off the week with a PT test at the Brigade Headquarters. 889 soldiers from the 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 266 of them from 2-1, were on the field at 0430 on Monday morning. The PT test was followed by day and night land navigation, and everyone who made the initial cut continued on to the EIB test lanes. EIB testing has transitioned to three lanes: Urban, Patrol, and Traffic control point. The concept behind the new test format is to put the EIB tasks in the context of real life, tactical scenarios rather than individual test stations. The EIB candidates had 20 minutes to complete each lane while performing at least 8 of the 10 EIB tasks to standard. The final event for those who completed the lanes was the 12 mile foot march, conducted on Friday morning. Candidates had to complete the march in 3 hours with a 35lb ruck. At the EIB award ceremony on Friday afternoon, 144 soldiers from the 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 44 of them Legionnaires, received their Expert Infantry Badge. 2-1 Infantry had four "true blues", to include the top Infantryman in the Brigade. 1LT Trahan, the HHC/2-1 executive officer, earned the top honor for getting all go(s) on the lanes, finding all of his points in land navigation, and having the fastest ruck time among the true blues. The true blues were awarded Army Achievement Medals and 1LT Trahan earned the Army Commendation Medal.



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

Burma Shave



Memories of the 2/1 Infantry Chapter Reunion Nashville, TN Sep. 13-17 2013



Members and their families gathered at the famous Millennium Maxwell House Hotel, Nashville, TN for the Annual Americal Division Veterans Association (ADVA) reunion. The three



day event filled the conference hotel and the overflow had to stay at two hotels within walking distance. The 2/1 Chapter although mostly staying at the Millennium Hotel were unable to have a secluded hospitality room. This however did not deter the members and families from having a great time. We secured a large section of the Americal Division hospitality room and cordoned the space for our Chapter. The Chapter had seventeen members present making this one of the largest attendees in recent years. Local activities kept those who wanted to visit the city of Nashville and surrounding area busy with tours to about everywhere that was of any significance. The rest just hung about the hospitality room and had a blast. Everyone indicated they had a wonderful time and looked forward to our next year's visit to Huston, Texas. We tried to capture some of the more

significant activities for your enjoyment.



Some chose to tour Fort Campbell, KY, and the 101st Airmobile Division, a short distance from the reunion site. There the group observed demonstrations of individual soldier skills taught to soldiers attending the arduous and complex war-fighting tactics used by the Division's Air Assault School. Many attended the home of Honor rotunda where Medal of Honor recipient articles and memorabilia are stored and are exhibited.

The annual Memorial service was held at the Nashville Vietnam Memorial just around the corner from the Tennessee state house. A large number of attendees were present as local dignitaries offered words of sympathy for the many soldiers who were lost during the Vietnam war as well as other conflicts. A wreath of honor was placed near the memorial by several of the Americal Executive Committee.



Tennessee State Capitol Building

Part of the crowd attending the ADVA Memorial Service



Tennessee Vietnam Memorial statue located on the grounds of the state capital



Col. (Ret) David Taylor & Commander, Larry Swank lay the commemorative wreath at the Tennessee Vietnam Memorial





Reunion Serenades



**Grand Ole Opry
& Minnie Pearl**



**Members awaiting
the Dinner.**



**Listening to the Commander &
Secretary/Treasurer**

