



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



WEBSITE: [www.b-2-1-196lib.com](http://www.b-2-1-196lib.com)

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Volume 3

"A Soldier's Footsteps"

September 2013

**Commander's Corner:** Hope you all had a wonderful Labor Day weekend and were able to enjoy family and friends. Labor Day, the first Monday in September, is a creation of the labor movement and is dedicated to the social and economic achievements of American workers. It constitutes a yearly national tribute to the contributions workers have made to the strength, prosperity, and well-being of our country. As former soldiers, you have also had a hand in the aforesaid contributions and provided an undeniable service to your country and should be very proud of yourselves and your brothers-in-arms. The annual Americal Division Veterans Association reunion (and our annual chapter meeting) is this month in Nashville, TN and I hope many of you will be able to attend. Details of the reunion are on our web site. I plan on getting there on Thursday afternoon and plan on having a great weekend. Last year in Atlanta I think there were around 500 attendees at the reunion. I am still pursuing having our own hospitality room but, the hotel personnel I have been in contact with for the last few months isn't having much luck getting us anything. We have been offered to use some of the ADVA's hospitality room and it may come down to that for us. We'll figure something out one way or another. This year there is no conflict with the annual Kokomo, Indiana Veteran's Reunion so I am planning on attending both events. If any of you venture up there I'll be camping out until Sunday and we have lots 146W thru 149W reserved. There are rooms to be had in Kokomo and there are shuttles that run out to the reunion site from several motels. If you want to camp, we'll find a place for you. Can't be any worse than places you've camped before. One last reminder, it's not too late to submit nominations for officers to be voted on in Nashville; just email one of the current officers with the nomination (s). Just an FYI, I have been in touch with personnel from the "new" 2/1 infantry which is now a unit of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Stryker Brigade Combat Team and they have expressed a desire to become involved with us "old" 2/1 guys. See note later in this N/L. I will try to pursue this further and see what develops. Our newest member is Mike Stout from E Company. Welcome to the chapter, Mike. I was informed by Jim Gales of the death of a fellow B 2/1 soldier, William Frank Hagen. He was with the 81mm Mortar Team and served in Nam from Aug., 1971 to June, 1972.

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

**Chuck**



**Three Korean War MIAs Recovered:** The Defense POW/MIA Office announced the identification of remains belonging to:

Pfc. Ronald C. Huffman, U.S. Army, K Company, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 38<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division, was lost on Feb. 12, 1951, during a battle near Saemal, South Korea. He was accounted for on Aug. 8, 2013. He will be buried with full military honors in Princeton, W.Va.

Sgt. Charles L. Scott, U.S. Army, C Company, 32<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment, 31<sup>st</sup> Regimental Combat Team was lost Dec. 2 1950 near the Chosin Reservoir. He was accounted for Aug. 7. He will be buried with full military honors on Sept. 5, 2013 in Lynchburg, Va.

Pfc. Herene K. Blevins, U. S. Army, 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, 31<sup>st</sup> Regimental Combat Team, was lost on Dec. 2, 1950, near the eastern banks of the Chosin Reservoir, North Korea. He was accounted for on Aug. 6, 2013. He will be buried with full military honors in Hagerstown, Md.

**Looking for a Replacement for Secy/Treas:** Your Chapter is actively soliciting for a replacement for our current Secy/Treas, Don Hicks. See the Commander's comments for details. Your entire staff will be up for reelection when we meet in Nashville in September 2013. If you are interested in serving in this capacity, reply directly to Chuck Holdaway or Rich Heroux.

**Hasan Guilty of Murder for Fort Hood Rampage:** Army Maj. Nidal Hasan was convicted Friday August 23, 2013 in the 2009 shooting rampage at Fort Hood, a shocking assault against American troops at home by one of their own who said he opened fire on fellow soldiers to protect Muslim insurgents abroad, was sentenced to death on August 28, 2013. The Army psychiatrist acknowledged carrying out the attack in a crowded waiting room where unarmed troops were making final preparations for deployment to Afghanistan and Iraq. Thirteen people were killed and more than 30 wounded. Because Hasan never denied his actions, the court-martial was always less about a conviction than it was about ensuring he received the death penalty. A jury of 13 high-ranking military officers reached a unanimous guilty verdict in about seven hours. Hasan, a Virginia-born Muslim, said the attack was a jihad against U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. He bristled when the trial judge, Col. Tara Osborn, suggested the shooting rampage could have been avoided were it not for a spontaneous flash of anger. Death sentences are rare in the military and trigger automatic appeals that take decades play out. Among the final barriers to execution is authorization from the president. No American soldier has been executed since 1961.



**TODAY IS THE OLDEST YOU'VE  
EVER BEEN, YET THE YOUNGEST  
YOU'LL EVER BE SO  
ENJOY THIS DAY WHILE IT LASTS.**

## **Afghan War Vet Receives Medal of Honor:**

Army Staff Sgt Ty Carter on Monday became the fifth living recipient of the Medal of Honor from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan for his helping surround-force from winning a re-post in Afghanistan. "It was a blizzard of and steel" and the other defenders faced at Combat Outpost Keating in the 12-hour firefight, President Obama said. But the Americans pushed and ultimately retook the camp. Carter now faces another battle against post-traumatic stress. Despite the "nightmares, the heartaches, the anxiety" he experienced from the fight, President Obama said, Carter went back for another deployment to Afghanistan and has committed to working with others coping with stress. Obama noted Carter's courage in "the other battle" he has fought, saying that "Ty has spoken openly, with honesty and eloquence, about his struggle with post-traumatic stress." By his example, Carter "can help put an end to any stigma that keeps folks from getting help." This marks the first time since 1967 that two survivors of the same battle were awarded the Medal of Honor. Last February the President presented the award to Staff Sgt. Clint Romesha, who served with Carter at COP Keating.



## **HUD & VA Announce More Vouchers to Help Homeless Vets Get into Permanent Homes:**

The Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Veterans Affairs today announced the second round of HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) funding to local public housing agencies across the U.S. and Puerto Rico. The \$7.8 million will provide housing and clinical services for 1,120 currently homeless veterans. In May of this year, the two agencies announced \$60 million in HUD-VASH vouchers. The supportive housing assistance announced today is provided through the [HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing \(HUD-VASH\) Program](#) which combines rental assistance from HUD with case management and clinical services provided by VA. Since 2008, a total of 58,140 vouchers have been awarded and 43,371 formerly homeless veterans are currently in homes of their own because of HUD-VASH. "Our nation's veterans have sacrificed and given up so much for our freedom," said HUD Secretary Donovan. "These vouchers are helping America end veterans' homelessness one veteran at a time until we see not one veteran living on the street. I look forward to continue working with Secretary Shinseki and the Department of Veterans Affairs to target assistance to our homeless veterans." "These HUD-VASH vouchers are a vital tool in our effort to provide these brave men and women with the earned care and benefits that help them live productive, meaningful lives," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "So long as a single Veteran lives on our streets, we have work to do. But with the continued support of President Obama, Congress and our community partners, we will end homelessness among Veterans." HUD-VASH is a critical part of the Obama Administration's commitment to end Veteran and long-term chronic homelessness by 2015. [Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness](#) serves as a roadmap for how the federal government will work with state and local communities to confront the root causes of homelessness, especially among former servicemen and women. HUD's annual "point in time" estimate of the number of homeless persons and families for 2012 found that veteran homelessness fell by 7.2 percent (or 4,876 people) since January 2011 and by 17.2 percent since January 2009. On a single night in January 2012, 62,619 veterans were homeless. The grants announced today are part of \$75 million appropriated this year to support the housing needs of homeless veterans. Local public housing authorities provide rental assistance to homeless veterans while nearby VA Medical Centers (VAMC) offer supportive services and case management. This is the second round of the 2013 HUD-VASH funding. HUD expects to announce more HUD-VASH funding this year. VAMCs work closely with homeless veterans then refer them to public housing agencies for these vouchers, based upon a variety of factors, most importantly the duration of the homelessness and the need for longer term more intensive support to obtain and maintain permanent housing. The HUD-VASH program includes both the rental assistance the voucher provides and the comprehensive case management that VAMC staff provides. Veterans participating in the HUD-VASH program rent privately owned housing and generally contribute no more than 30 percent of their income toward rent. VA offers eligible homeless veterans clinical and supportive services through its medical centers across the U.S., Guam and Puerto Rico.

## **Copays to Increase for Some TFL Retirees:**

Beginning Oct. 1, 2013, approximately 12,000 TRICARE for Life (TFL) beneficiaries who are in VA Priority Group 8 will be responsible for paying 80 percent of the cost of care they receive at VA medical facilities. The reason? Medicare is prohibited from reimbursing government medical facilities, so when a TFL beneficiary chooses to obtain care from a provider Medicare can't reimburse, then the beneficiary ends up paying a higher copay, which starting Oct. 1 will be 80 percent. In letters sent earlier this month, TRICARE recommended that those affected should seek care from Medicare-authorized providers in order to avoid the increased costs. This change only impacts TFL retirees in VA Priority Group 8. Other VA-authorized TFL beneficiaries will continue to pay standard VA copays, which generally range from \$15 to \$50 per visit for non-service connected care. VA care for service connected conditions remains free of charge.

**A woman asks a man who is traveling with six children, "Are all these kids yours?"**

**The man replies, "No; I work in a condom factory and these are customer complaints".**

**My wife and I had words,  
But I didn't get to use mine.**



**Expert: Possible DoD Firings 'Tip of the Iceberg':** The U.S. Defense Department's possible plans to fire some 6,300 civilian employees next year if automatic budget cuts continue may just be "the tip of the iceberg," according to a former budget official. The Pentagon's base, or non-war, budget is set to be sliced by \$52 billion to about \$475 billion in fiscal 2014, beginning Oct. 1, under automatic cuts known as sequestration unless Congress and the White House agree on an alternative deficit-reduction plan. Any deal appears unlikely, though, as Republicans and Democrats remain at an impasse over taxes and spending. The job cuts would take place instead of mandatory unpaid leaves of absence known as furloughs, according to a planning document first reported by Tony Capaccio, a reporter at Bloomberg News. The number of layoffs may rise as officials review other sources of overhead costs, according to Gordon Adams, a professor at American University and a former White House budget official during the Clinton administration.



**2013 ADVA National Reunion:** Check-in on Wednesday, September 11, 2013, Thursday September 12 trip to Fort Campbell and 101st Airmobile Division, Friday September 13 trip to Tennessee Vietnam Veterans Memorial (one of the nicest in the country), then Country Music Hall of Fame, Dinner and then Grand Ole Opry; Saturday September 14 meetings as usual and Saturday night Banquet. Out on Sunday, September 15. The reunion will be housed at the Millennium-Maxwell House Hotel at 2025 Rosa Parks Blvd., Nashville, Tennessee 37228-1505. Friday will highlight the annual memorial service and culminate with dinner and a trip to the "Grand Ole Opry. Saturday we will hold our annual meeting and elect new officers. See the ADVA Journal or visit our [2/1 website](#) for more details.

**News from the Current 2nd Battalion 1st Infantry:** On June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Regiment celebrated the Army's 238<sup>th</sup> birthday and dedicated the three classrooms in the Battalion Headquarters in honor of our Battalion's Medal Of Honor recipients. During the dedication ceremony, each of the fallen heroes' Medal of Honor citations was read, and three plaques commemorating their brave actions were displayed in front of the Battalion formation. The McMahon and Winder rooms were dedicated to SPC Thomas McMahon and PFC David Winder, A Company medics who heroically gave their lives in Vietnam. SPC McMahon was mortally wounded by artillery fire as he provided aid to wounded soldiers. He was posthumously awarded for his valorous actions of March 19, 1969. PFC Winder crawled across approximately 100 meters of open terrain under fire, administering aid to fellow soldiers until he was mortally wounded. PFC Winder died on May 13, 1970. The third classroom was dedicated to Marion Maus for his valorous actions in the Sierra Madre Mountains in 1886 against Apaches led by Geronimo. 1LT Maus continued his service, becoming a Brigadier General. The dedication was followed with lighter spirit as Command Sergeant Major Roome and the youngest soldier in the Battalion, PV2 Cook, cut the Army's birthday cake, symbolizing the link between our brothers and arms who served generations before us and the Legionnaires serving today. The ceremony was an excellent opportunity for 2-1 Infantry to showcase their unit pride and the accomplishments of all the individuals who have filled the Legion's ranks for over 222 years.



I became confused when I heard the word "Service" used with these agencies: Internal Revenue 'Service'; U.S. Postal 'Service'; Telephone 'Service'; Cable TV 'Service'; Civil 'Service'; State, City, County & Public 'Service'; Customer 'Service'

This is not what I thought 'Service' meant.

But today, I overheard two farmers talking, and one of them said he had hired a bull to 'Service' a few cows.

BAM!!! It all came into focus. Now I understand what all those agencies are doing to us.

**Marines, Soldiers Get Biometrics Tool That ID'd Bin Laden:** Marines and soldiers deployed to Afghanistan have received a new biometrics tool to help distinguish potential Taliban fighters. The device is a SEEK II — Secure Electronic Enrollment Kit and Multimodal Identification Platform — built by Cross Match Technology. The device is probably best known for SEALs identifying Osama Bin Laden on the raid in which the former head of Al Qaeda was killed. Marines have received 334 SEEK IIs over the past year, according to Corps officials. The devices have been sent to the I, II, and III Marine Expeditionary Forces, as well as the Command and Control Training and Education Center of Excellence on Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va. The Army also took part in the program, but it's unclear how many SEEK IIs soldiers have received thus far. When we hear back from the Army, we'll update those numbers. The SEEK II collects biometric data on individuals by recording finger prints, an iris scan, and a facial image scan. It then compares that data to a watch list that can include up to 120,000 people. Thus far, Marines have used the SEEK II to scan and enroll 19,000 people in Afghanistan. Of those 19,000, 300 have been placed on a watch list, according to the Marine Corps.



**How does the ACA Impact Veterans?** Under the ACA, most individuals will be required to have minimum essential health-care coverage for themselves and their dependents. If people do not have the minimum coverage, they will have to make a payment when filing taxes for each month they lack coverage. This payment will either be a flat fee or a percentage of taxable household income. For example, you would pay \$95 or 1 percent of your taxable income for 2014, \$325 or 2 percent in 2015, \$695 or 2.5 percent in 2016, etc. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care meets the law's standard for coverage. Therefore, veterans already enrolled in VA health care would not be eligible for assistance in lowering the cost of their health insurance premiums, if they were to purchase additional health-care coverage outside of VA. Veterans may still purchase private health insurance, on or off the marketplace, to complement their VA coverage. If veterans are enrolled in VA, they do not need to take additional steps to meet the health-care coverage standards of the ACA.

**What if a veteran is not currently enrolled in the VA?** VA wants all veterans to receive health care that improves their health and well-being. Veterans and other beneficiaries wishing to enroll in VA health care can [apply here](#) for enrollment at any time.

**Where can veterans learn more on how the ACA will affect them?** Last week, VA began sending letters to enrolled veterans to highlight its [web page](#) on the ACA, and to answer any questions about the requirements of the law. The bottom line: the ACA does not change VA health benefits or veterans' out-of-pocket costs. And if you are not enrolled in VA health care, you can apply at any time. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your veterans health-care benefits and the Affordable Care Act, please contact The Veterans' Administration.

**Veterans Services and Where to Find Them:** Veterans of the United States armed forces may be eligible for a broad range of programs and services provided by the VA. Eligibility for most VA benefits is based upon discharge from active military service under other than dishonorable conditions, and certain benefits require service during wartime. If you are new to the VA, the federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents and Survivors booklet will help you get started. It may be downloaded via internet by using the following; [http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits\\_book/2012\\_federal\\_benefits\\_book\\_final.pdf](http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book/2012_federal_benefits_book_final.pdf)

**HealthCare:** VA health care offers a variety of services, information, and benefits. As the nation's largest integrated health care system, VA operates more than 1,400 sites of care, including hospitals, community clinics, community living centers, domiciliaries, readjustment counseling centers, and various other facilities.

**Benefits and Services:** VA administers a variety of benefits and services that provide financial and other forms of assistance to Veterans, their dependents and survivors. Major benefits include Veterans' compensation, Veterans' pension, survivors' benefits, rehabilitation and employment assistance, education assistance, home loan guaranties, and life insurance coverage.

**Burial and Memorials:** Burial and memorial benefits are available for eligible service members, Veterans, reservist, National Guard members and eligible family members. Service include internment, headstones and markers, and Presidential memorial certificates. VA operates 128 national cemeteries in the United States and Puerto Rico, together with oversight and management of 33 soldiers' lots, confederate cemeteries, and monument sites.

**Veterans Benefits Fact Sheets;** visit <http://www.vba.va.gov/VBA/benefits/factsheets/#BM1>



Julius (Juju) Driscavage and 10 of his old friends came together to watch the 150<sup>th</sup> birthday parade of Mahanoy City, PA. Juju still lives in the home he was born. He invited his friend to watch the huge parade on his front porch. But first they had a few refreshments at the small bar in the house that was used by the family during the early 1900s.

**The first American serviceman killed was killed by the Russians ( Finland 1940); highest ranking American killed was Lt. Gen Lesley McNair, killed by the US Army Air Corps. So much for allies.**



**Veterans Eligible for Retroactive Benefits:** Provisions of a federal law that went into effect Aug. 6 now entitles eligible veterans who submit fully developed claims (FDCs) for the first time to retroactive, service-connected disability benefits for up to one year. These provisions remain in effect until Aug. 5, 2015. The retroactive benefits, to be awarded by the Department of Veterans Affairs, are a result of a comprehensive legislative package (Public Law 112-154) enacted by Congress and signed into law by President Obama on Aug. 6, 2012. Veterans have an even better reason to submit fully developed claims for their disabilities. Not only

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do these FDCs through adjudication faster, veterans submit a claim for active fits. This should make the FDC option even more attractive to our veterans, and help VA reduce its claims backlog at the same time. 2,700-plus accredited veteran representatives nationwide are available to help any veteran from any war era with his or her disability claim. Teams of experts have worked with several VA regional offices (VAROs), identifying best practices for creating and processing FDCs, and providing more training to its service officers. FDCs require no further documentation from veterans submitting the claims. As a result, decisions are made on them much faster than for traditional claims that need more development. While the current average processing time for traditional claims to be decided is about 260 days (which contributes to the backlog), the average for FDCs is about 114 days (keeping them below the 125-day threshold that puts a claim into backlog status).

The percentage of FDCs being submitted by veteran service officers has increased at all eight VAROs. They are: Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Nashville, Indianapolis, Denver, Oakland, Calif.; Reno, Nev.; and Togus, Maine. Several increases show substantial improvement from fiscal 2013's first quarter to the end of its third quarter in June. For example, in the second quarter of fiscal 2013, service officers at the Oakland VARO submitted 5,598 claims; 1,262 of them, or about 22 percent, were FDCs. In the third quarter, the percentage of FDCs increased to 2,475 out of 5,519 total claims – nearly 45 percent.

VA's under secretary for benefits, Allison Hickey, said the department "strongly encourages veterans to work with veterans service organizations to file fully developed claims and participate in this initiative, since it means more money in eligible veterans' pockets simply by providing VA the information it needs up front. At the same time, it helps reduce the inventory of pending claims by speeding the process."

FDCs can be filed digitally through the joint VA-Department of Defense online portal, [eBenefits](#). VA encourages veterans who cannot file online to work with an accredited veterans service organization that can file claims digitally on behalf of veterans. While submitting an FDC provides a faster decision for any compensation or pension claim, only veterans who are submitting their very first compensation claim as an FDC are potentially eligible for up to one year of retroactive disability benefits under the newly implemented law.



**N**ational Prisoner of War/Missing in Action (POW/MIA) Recognition Day is September 20, 2013. In honor of that day, the National Park Service, the Friends of Andersonville, and Georgia Southwestern State University (GSW) are hosting the 8th Annual POW Convocation program the morning of Wednesday, September 18. In addition, a special community program has been added to the calendar on Thursday evening, September 19 at the Rylander Theater. The public is invited to both of these free events in observance of the 60th anniversary of the end of the Korea War and the 10th anniversary of Operation Iraqi Freedom. This year's featured speaker is Bill Norwood. Held as a POW between 1951-53, Mr. Norwood founded the Korean War Ex-POW Association in 1976. Iraq War POW Shoshana N. Johnson will speak in a special community program at 7:00 p.m., Thursday, September 19, at the Rylander Theater in downtown Americus, Georgia. A second-generation Army Veteran, Ms. Johnson joined the U.S. Army in September, 1998. She received orders in February, 2003 to deploy to Iraq as a Food Service Specialist (92G) with the 507th Maintenance Company, 5/52 Battalion 11th Brigade. On March 23, 2003, during Operation Iraqi Freedom, Johnson's convoy was ambushed in the city of an-Nasiriyah. She received a bullet wound to her ankle, causing injuries to both legs, and was captured along with several other members of her company as prisoners of war. House raids conducted by U.S. Marines resulted in the successful rescue of Johnson and six fellow POWs on the morning of April 13. Her military decorations include the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, and the Prisoner of War Medals. The first black woman to be held as a POW in U.S. history, Johnson tells her story in the bestselling memoir, *I'm Still Standing: From Captured Soldier to Free Citizen - My Journey Home*. Ms. Johnson will also be at the National Prisoner of War Museum at Andersonville National Historic Site on September 20 from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. and from 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. in observance of National POW/MIA Recognition Day. These programs begin a series of area events in recognition of National POW/MIA Recognition Day. The annual "The Ride Home" event will bring the Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall to the GSW campus. The wall is a three-fifths replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. and is nearly 300 feet in length. Other ceremonies to remember military service members still listed as Missing in Action and to honor former POWs will also occur on the campus of GSW.

**V**A **Expands VSOC Program:** The Department of Veterans Affairs announced recently it is expanding the availability of services through the VetSuccess on Campus (VSOC) program to an additional 62 new locations this fall – bringing the number of VSOC schools across the country to 94. "VetSuccess on Campus is an innovative approach to help Veterans in the often difficult transition from military service to academic life," said Allison A. Hickey, VA's Under Secretary for Benefits. "Placing experienced VA counselors directly on college campuses strengthens VA's partnership with institutions of higher learning and creates myriad opportunities to help Veterans succeed." This expansion triples the number of on-campus VA vocational rehabilitation counselors available to help ease Veterans' transition to student life and assist them in achieving their educational and career goals through VA's [Post-9/11 GI Bill](#) and other education benefit programs.



## *The Last Doolittle Raiders Reunion*



*When asked to identify the base from which they flew, President Franklin Roosevelt replied, "Shangri-La." In April, in Fort Walton Beach, Florida, the surviving Doolittle Raiders gathered publicly for the last time. They once were among the most universally admired and revered men in the United States.*

There were 80 of the Raiders who, in April of 1942, just four months after the attack on Pearl Harbor, embarked on one of the most courageous and heart-stirring military operations in this nation's history. The mere mention of their unit's name, in those years, would bring tears to the eyes of grateful Americans. Now only four remain.



After Japan's sneak attack on Hawaii, with the United States still licking its wounds, something dramatic was needed to turn the war effort around. Even though there were no friendly airfields close enough to Japan for the United States to retaliate, a daring plan was devised. Sixteen North American B-25s, twin-engined "Billy Mitchells," were modified so that they could take off from the deck of an aircraft carrier. This had never before been tried. The 16 five-man crews, under the command of then Lt. Col. James Doolittle, who himself flew the lead plane off *USS Hornet*, knew that they would not be able to return to the carrier. They would have to hit Japan and then hope to make it to China for a safe landing. On the day of the raid, the Japanese military caught wind of the plan. The Raiders were told that they would have to take off from much farther out in the Pacific Ocean (more than 600 miles) than they had counted on. They were told that because of this they would not have enough fuel to make it to safety. They went anyway. They bombed Tokyo, then flew as far as they could. Four planes crash-landed in China; 11 crews bailed out, and three of the Raiders died. Eight more were captured; three were executed. Another died of starvation in a Japanese prison camp. One crew made it to Russia. The Doolittle Raid sent a message from the United States to its enemies, and to the rest of the world: We will fight. And, no matter what it takes, we will win. Of the 80 Raiders, 62 survived the war. They were celebrated as national heroes, models of bravery. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer produced a motion picture based on the raid; *"Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo,"* starring Spencer Tracy and Van Johnson, was a patriotic and emotional box-office hit, and the phrase became part of the national lexicon. In the movie-theater previews for the film, MGM proclaimed that it was presenting the story "with supreme pride." Beginning in 1946, the surviving Raiders have held a reunion each April, to commemorate the mission. The reunion is in a different city each year. The city of Tucson, Arizona, as a gesture of respect and gratitude, presented the Doolittle Raiders with a set of 80 silver goblets. Each goblet was engraved with the name of a Raider. Every year, a wooden display case bearing all 80 goblets is transported to the reunion city. Each time a Raider passes away, his goblet is turned upside down in the case at the next reunion, as his old friends bear solemn witness. Also in the wooden case is a bottle of 1896 (Doolittle's birth year) Hennessy Very Special cognac.



When there are only two surviving Raiders, they would open the bottle, at last drink from it, and toast their comrades who preceded them in death. As 2013 began, there were five living Raiders. Then, in February, Tom Griffin passed away at age 96. What a man he was. After bailing out of his plane over a mountainous Chinese forest after the Tokyo raid, he became ill with malaria and almost died. When he recovered, he was sent to Europe to fly more combat missions. He was shot down, captured, and spent 22 months in a German prisoner of war camp. The selflessness of these men, the sheer guts ... there was a passage in the Cincinnati Enquirer obituary for Mr. Griffin that, on the surface, had nothing to do with the war but that, nonetheless, punctuates the depth of his sense of duty and devotion: *"When his wife became ill and needed to go into a nursing home, he visited her every day. He walked from his house to the nursing home, fed his wife and at the end of the day brought home her clothes. At night, he washed and ironed her clothes. Then he walked them up to her room the next morning. He did that for three years until her death in 2005."* So now, out of the original 80, only four Raiders remain: Dick Cole (Doolittle's co-pilot on the raid), Robert Hite, Edward Saylor, and David Thatcher. All are in their 90s. They have decided that there are too few of them for the public reunions to continue. The events in Fort Walton Beach this week will mark the end. It has come full circle; Florida's nearby Eglin Field was where the Raiders trained in secrecy for the Tokyo mission. The town is planning to do all it can to honor the men: a six-day celebration of their valor, including luncheons, a dinner and a parade. If you find yourself near Fort Walton Beach this week, and if you should encounter any of the Raiders, you might want to offer them a word of thanks. I can tell you from first hand observation that they appreciate hearing that they are remembered. The men have decided that after this final public reunion they will wait until a later date -- some time this year -- to get together once more, informally and in absolute privacy. That is when they will open the bottle of brandy. The years are flowing by too swiftly now; they are not going to wait until there are only two of them. They will fill the four remaining upturned goblets, and raise them in a toast to those who are gone.