



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

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



Volume 6

“A Soldier Once And Always”

September 2016

**Commanders Corner:** I don't know how many of you are aware of the memorial brick project at the annual Kokomo Reunion facility but, the guys from B 2/1 have been participating for a couple of years now. What it entails is the placing of a memorial brick in the memorial garden area for guys that served in B 2/1 and were KIA or have passed on since returning to the states. Our initial involvement in this project was suggested by member Gerry “Bo” Borysiak and we started with Bravo guys that were KIA during our tour and then extended it to our comrades who passed away after returning home. We were able to negotiate an area in the memorial garden dedicated specifically for B 2/1 and have paid for the bricks through someone wanting to pay for placing a brick for a friend and from generous donations to help the fund. (See pictures on page 3). After requesting 3 more bricks for this year, we only have enough in the fund for 2 more bricks. Our thought for the future is for anyone desiring a brick to be placed in the memorial garden at Kokomo after their passing to forward the cost of a brick (\$25) to Bo who has volunteered to administer and keep an accounting of the fund. There is a specific format we use for the bricks and, by emailing Bo, he can provide you with the format and where to mail the money. Bo's email is [ger-ry321@hotmail.com](mailto:ger-ry321@hotmail.com). Or, you can contact any of the officers and we will get you in touch with Bo. Also, for chapter members from other companies, if you would like to get something started with the brick project, you need to find someone in your company that would be willing to be the administrator for the project. Bo can steer you in the right direction for making contact with the Kokomo people. I sent a couple of pix to our esteemed editor and, hopefully there is some room for them on the back page of this edition of the newsletter. For those of you that have never made the trip to Kokomo, Indiana for the Annual Veterans Reunion; it's well worth the trip and you never know who you will run into. Google Howard County Veterans for more information on Kokomo and have fun if you make the reunion in Albuquerque this month.

Chuck

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



**Civil War Veteran goes home via cross-country motorcycle ride:** Jewett Williams was born in 1843 in the small farming community of Hodgdon in northern Maine. He was drafted into the U.S. Army at Bangor, Maine, on Oct. 12, 1864. Williams served his last six months with the 20th Maine Infantry regiment fighting during the siege of Petersburg, Virginia, the Stony Creek (or “Applejack”) Raid and other battles, such as Peebles Farm, Hatcher's Run, White Oak Road, Quaker Road, Five Forks and Appomattox. After the war, Williams returned home to Maine before living in several different states. Upon moving to Michigan, he and his wife had their first child, who died at 19 months. They then moved to Minnesota where they had five more children before settling in Washington and then Oregon in the 1890s. Up until about 1919, Williams frequently spoke to local school groups during Memorial Day events. His wife died in 1920. Williams died in 1922, at the age of 78, after a three-month stay in the Oregon State Hospital for the Insane in Salem, Oregon. There, he was diagnosed with senility. His ashes were discovered in a copper can in 2004, shelved in a shed on the hospital's property alongside the remains of more than 3,600 other people. No one claimed Williams' remains until Maine historian Tom Desjardin, who was researching members of the 20th Maine stumbled across an online archive that housed Williams' record. The effort to transport Williams to his final resting place in Maine was a joint effort coordinated by volunteers, including the historian who found him, the Patriot Guard Riders, the Maine Living History Association, with support from the Togus National Cemetery, the adjutant general of the Maine National Guard and the Oregon and Maine state departments of Veterans affairs. This month, Williams' remains were claimed after 94 years then transported across the country from Oregon to Maine by the Patriot Guard Riders, a volunteer motorcycle group with members from across the nation whose mission is to honor U.S. military Veterans both living and dead. The Patriot Guard began its journey with Williams's remains on Aug. 1 in Portland, Oregon. Members of the guard have traveled by motorcycle with Williams' remains roughly 3,500 miles, across 19 states with transfers at each state line. The escort made a stop at the Appomattox Court House National Historical Park in Virginia, where a ceremony was held in Williams' honor August 18. As part of the 20th Maine Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Williams was at Appomattox Court House for the end of the Civil War, as Gen. Robert E. Lee surrendered to Gen. Ulysses Grant in a ceremony on April 12, 1865.

**REMEMBER, ADVA reunion is scheduled for September 15-17, Albuquerque, NM. See you there!**

***We make a Living by what we get. We make a Life by what we give.***

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

-- **Army Sgt. James L. Campbell**, 18, was buried in his hometown of Waterford, Conn. On the night of Nov. 27, 1950, Campbell, who was assigned to the 31st Regimental Combat Team, was attacked and forced into a fighting withdrawal from their positions on the east side of the Chosin River in North Korea. .

-- **Marine Pfc. James F. Mansfield**, 19, was buried Aug. 27 in his hometown of Plymouth, Mass. In November 1943, Mansfield was assigned to Company K, 3rd Battalion, 8th Marines, 2nd Marine Division, which landed against stiff Japanese resistance on the small island of Betio in the Tarawa Atoll of the Gilbert Islands. Mansfield died on the first day of battle, Nov. 20, 1943.

-- **Marine Pfc. George H. Traver**, 25, was buried Aug. 28, in his hometown of Chatham, N.Y. In November 1943, Traver was also assigned to Company K, 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division. Traver died on the first day of battle, Nov. 20, 1943.

-- **Navy Lt. Julian B. Jordan**, 37, of Dawson, Ga., was buried Aug. 29 in Bremerton, Wash. On Dec. 7, 1941, Jordan was assigned aboard the USS Oklahoma, which capsized after sustaining multiple torpedo hits as the battleship was moored off Ford Island in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The attack resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen. With the exception of the USS Arizona, no single ship at Pearl Harbor suffered more fatalities..

-- **Marine Pfc. Anthony Brozyna**, 22, of Hartford, Conn. was buried Aug. 31 in Arlington National Cemetery. In November 1943, Brozyna was assigned to Company G, 2nd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division. Brozyna died on the first day of the battle, Nov. 20, 1943.

-- **Army Capt. Elwood J. Euart**, 28, was buried Aug. 31 in his hometown of Pawtucket, R.I. On Oct. 26, 1942, Euart was assigned to Headquarters, 103rd Field Artillery Battalion, 43rd Infantry Division, aboard an Army transport ship that struck two mines near Espiritu Santo Island, New Hebrides, in the Republic of Vanuatu. The ship was beached on a nearby coral reef and evacuated. Hearing that men were trapped inside, Euart entered the sinking ship to help the men escape. The ship rolled and slid off the reef an hour later. Euart was one of only two crewmen lost. The captain was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross in 1943.

-- **Army Pfc. William R. Butz**, 19, of Glendive, Mont., is being buried today in Vancouver, Wash. He was declared missing in action on Dec. 12, 1950, after his unit was heavily attacked by enemy forces near the Chosin Reservoir in North Korea. Butz was a member of Company K, 3rd Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division.

-- **Navy Ensign John C. England**, 20, of Alhambra, Calif., is being buried Aug. 13 in Colorado Springs, Colo. On Dec. 7, 1941, England was stationed aboard the USS Oklahoma when the battleship suffered multiple torpedo hits and capsized as it was moored off Ford Island in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

-- **Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. Robert W. Ward**, was co-piloting a B-26C Marauder bomber that was shot down near Philippsweiler, Germany, on Dec. 23, 1944. Ward and one other of the nine-member crew were reported killed in action. He was assigned to the 559th Bombardment Squadron, 387th Bombardment Group, 9th Air Force. Interment services are pending.

-- **Marine Corps 1st Lt. Stanley Johnson**, was co-piloting a UH-34D Choctaw helicopter when it was shot down west of Tam Ky Town in South Vietnam on Dec. 3, 1965. Three Americans and nine Vietnamese soldiers were killed in the crash. Interment services are pending.

-- **Navy Seaman 2nd Class Vernon N. Grow, Machinist's Mate 1st Class Earl L. Melton, and Ensign Verdi Sederstrom**, were stationed aboard the USS Oklahoma when the battleship suffered multiple torpedo hits and capsized as it was moored off Ford Island in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The USS Oklahoma's 429 casualties were second only to the USS Arizona's that day. Interment services are pending.

-- **Marine Pvt. Emmett L. Kines, Pvt. Frank F. Penna, Pfc. Wilbur C. Mattern, Pfc. Ronald W. Vosmer and Sgt. Fae V. Moore**, were killed in action when the 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, landed Nov. 20, 1943, against stiff Japanese resistance on the small island of Betio in the Tarawa Atoll of the Gilbert Islands. They were part of the 2d Battalion. Interment services are pending.

**Army Surgeon General Skeptical of Marijuana for PTSD Treatment:** Lt. Gen. Nadja Y. West, the Army Surgeon General, is wary of endorsing the first trials approved by the government for using marijuana to treat veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD. West noted she was an Army officer and the military still considers marijuana an illegal substance despite growing public support for its decriminalization. If service members test positive for marijuana, they can be subject to a "wide range of actions," she said. In addition, research has found "that using marijuana has a lot of adverse health effects," West said at a breakfast with defense reporters. Marijuana "is more dangerous, with some of the carcinogens that are in it, than tobacco," West said. "The impact that it has long-term on certain areas of the brain, especially young people developing, that's been proven -- irreversible damage to the hippocampus and things like that that can really have impacts on individuals long-term," she said. However, the surgeon general, who succeeded Lt. Gen. Patricia Horoho in the position last December, said she would look at the results of the government-approved trials of marijuana for PTSD treatment "so long as it's evidence-based." She said some chemical components of marijuana short of a full dose might prove useful in treating PTSD. "I'm for looking at that," she said. "We're looking at all modalities," but "I don't know if we need to have the full spectrum of what's in marijuana as it's typically administered -- if that's necessary," she said. "We should always, at least, have an open mind to look at things in an evidence-based way for something that could be useful for our soldiers," West said. Currently, the various therapies available in the military have proven to be about 80 percent effective in easing the symptoms of PTSD, she said. In April, the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Food and Drug Administration, approved the first-ever clinical trials backed by the government of marijuana as a treatment for PTSD in veterans. The trials were expected to begin next month with combat veteran volunteers at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore and at the Scottsdale Research Institute in Phoenix.

**Free Flu Shots:** From now through March 31, 2017, all veterans enrolled in the VA health care system can receive free flu shots at any Walgreens or Duane Reade pharmacy. The joint outreach health initiative is designed to help serve veterans closer to where they reside. Veterans must bring their VA identification cards with them, as well as another photo ID, and complete a short four-question application, which will be used to automatically update their VA Electronic Health Records. No appointments are necessary.



**North Korea Plants Mines Inside DMZ:** The American-led U.N. Command in South Korea accused North Korea of planting land mines near a truce village inside the Demilitarized Zone that divides the two Koreas. Much of the border, one of the world's most dangerous flashpoints, is strewn with land mines and laced with barbed wire. But South Korean media said no land mines had been planted in the area of the truce village of Panmunjom until North Korea placed an unspecified number there. The U.N. Command said in a statement that it "strongly condemns" any North Korean action that jeopardizes the safety of personnel in the DMZ. It said it wouldn't speculate on why North Korea placed the mines there. Yonhap news agency, citing an unidentified South Korean government official, said the North apparently planted the mines to prevent front-line North Korean soldiers from defecting to South Korea via Panmunjom. North Korea's state media didn't immediately respond to the U.N. Command statement. Panmunjom, jointly overseen by North Korea and the U.N. Command, is where an armistice that ended the 1950-53 Korean War was signed and is now a popular tourist spot for visitors from both sides. Under the Korean War armistice, the two sides are barred from carrying out any hostile acts within or across the 4-kilometer (2.5-mile) -wide DMZ. Still, they have accused each other of deploying machine guns and other heavy weapons and combat troops inside the zone. More than a million mines are also believed to be buried inside the DMZ. North Korean mines occasionally have washed down a swollen river into South Korea, killing or injuring civilians. In August 2015, land mine blasts maimed two South Korean soldiers and caused tensions between the two Koreas to flare.



**Chapter Members Honor Deceased Comrades:** Pictured are the members who attended the initial placing of memorial bricks at the Kokomo, IN Vietnam Veterans Memorial. They are from left to right; Benny Cowart, John Careccia, Cdr. Chuck Holdaway, Marlin "Eggy" Egeland, Gerry "Bo" Borysiak, Mike "Frenchie" Kosteczko and Julious "Juju" Drescavage.



## **Pentagon: Prison Inmates Produced Thousands of Defective Helmets:**

Contractors sold the U.S. Army and Marine Corps thousands of ballistic helmets made by prison inmates containing numerous defects including "serious ballistic failures," according to a new Defense Department Office of Inspector General report. The IG launched two joint investigations with the Defense Criminal Investigative Service, supported by elements of the U.S. Army, regarding allegations that Federal Prison Industries and ArmorSource LLC manufactured and sold Advanced Combat Helmets, or ACH, and Lightweight Marine Corps Helmets, or LMCH, to the military that failed to meet contract specifications and were ultimately defective, according to the report recently released. In May, 2008, FPI was awarded contract to manufacture LMCH helmets for an initial cost of \$23,019,629. The FPI produced approximately 23,000 helmets at its facility in Beaumont, Texas, of which 3,000 were sold and delivered to the DOD. "However, the FPI did not receive payment for these 3,000 helmets because more than half of them were subsequently determined to be defective, and all 23,000 helmets were ultimately quarantined," according to the report. "The investigations further disclosed that the ACH helmets produced by FPI were also defective, and that both the ACH and LMCH helmets posed a potential safety risk to the user." These investigations "did not develop any information to indicate military personnel sustained injury or death as a result of the defective ACH helmets," according to the report. However, 126,052 ACH helmets were recalled, and monetary losses and costs to the government totaled more than \$19,083,959. Both investigations determined that FPI had endemic manufacturing problems at FCI Beaumont, and that both the ACH and LMCH were defective and not manufactured in accordance with contract specifications, according to the report. The investigations found that the ACH and LMCH had numerous defects, including serious ballistic failures, blisters and improper mounting-hole placement and dimensions, as well as helmets being repressed, the report states. "Helmets were manufacturing with degraded or unauthorized ballistic materials, used expired paint (on LMCH) and unauthorized manufacturing methods. Helmets also had other defects such as deformities and the investigations found that rejected helmets were sold to the DOD," according to the report. The investigation found the following deficiencies:

- Finished ACH helmet shells were pried apart and scrap Kevlar and Kevlar dust was added to the ear sections, and the helmet shells repressed;
- Helmets were repressed to remove blisters and bubbles in violation of contract specifications;
- LMCH and ACH had edging and paint adhesion failures, respectively;
- FPI did not obtain approval from the DOD before it changed the manufacturing process;
- LMCH Certificates of Conformance were prepared by inmates at the direction of FPI staff and signed by FPI staff months after the LMCH helmets were delivered falsely certifying that the helmets were manufactured according to contract specifications and had the requisite material traceability;
- LMCH helmet serial numbers were switched or altered.

A surprise inspection by OIG and military personnel on January 26, 2010, discovered inmates at the Beaumont FPI facility openly using improvised tools on the ACH helmets, damaging the helmets' ballistic material, creating the potential for the tools' use as weapons in the prison and, thereby, endangering the safety of factory staff and degrading prison security, according to the report. The FPI Beaumont facility that manufactured the ACH and LMCH helmets was closed and its entire staff transferred to other duties within the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

**Soldier Gives a Lesson in Patriotism at Rio Olympics:** Army Reserve 2nd Lt. Sam Kendricks won a bronze medal in the pole vault at the Olympics, but his moment in Rio now seems likely to be remembered for something he did during a qualifying run. As he began his sprint down the track, the stadium PA began playing the National Anthem during a gold medal ceremony. When the athlete heard the sounds of the "Star-Spangled Banner," he stopped dead in his tracks, turned to look for the flag and stood at attention. Kendricks comes from Mississippi and serves in the United States Army Reserves with the 655th Transportation Company. He said that it's the journey, not the destination, that makes the difference. "They say back home, and jokingly in track circles, that if you win a medal it will change your life," Kendricks said. "I think your life is changed on the way to that medal, honestly. With all the journeys and sacrifices that you make, all the training that you do, and the people you leave at home to watch. That is what is really the value of the (medal). I'm glad I have something tangible to bring home and show for it. I know that everybody in Oxford will love to see it. But the journey, like my coach says, is the goal. Not necessarily the medals. And it's very fun to come and compete, but not necessarily the end of all things."

**US Intelligence Still Sorting Out NSA Hack:** The U.S. is still probing the extent of a recent cyber leak of what purports to be hacking tools used by the National Security Agency, the nation's top intelligence official said. "We are still sorting this out," James Clapper, director of national intelligence, said at an event at the Nixon Presidential Library and Museum in Yorba Linda, California. "It's still under investigation," Clapper said. "We don't know exactly the full extent — or the understanding — of exactly what happened." The tool kit consists of malicious software intended to tamper with firewalls, the electronic defenses protecting computer networks. The leak has set the information security world atwitter — and sent major companies rushing to update their defenses. The rogue programs appear to date back to 2013 and have whimsical names like EXTRABACON or POLARSNEEZE. Three of them — JETPLOW, FEEDTROUGH and BANANAGLEE — have previously appeared in an NSA compendium of top secret cyber surveillance tools. The documents have been leaked by a group calling itself the "Shadow Brokers," although many have floated the possibility of Russian involvement. CIA Director John Brennan, who appeared with Clapper at the event, called cyber threats the most serious issue facing the nation. "This administration, the intelligence community is focused like a laser on this and I would say the next administration really needs to take this up early on as probably the most important issue they have to grapple with," Brennan said.

**VA to Launch Service Animal Pilot Program:** The Department of Veterans Affairs announced this week the creation of the first program specifically for veterans suffering with their mental health who may be eligible for a service dog. The pilot, created by the new VA Center for Compassionate Intervention, foresees being able to enroll up to 100 veterans. Individuals selected for the new program will be chosen based on their medical team's belief that the veteran's daily life would be improved by having a service dog. Veterans interested in the program are encouraged to talk to their health care provider or medical team. For more information, please view: <http://www.militarytimes.com/articles/va-pilot-to-cover-service-dogs-for-mental-health-conditions>.

**Army General Testifies No One Swayed Him in Bergdahl Case:** The Army general who ordered Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl's court martial testified Wednesday that he wasn't swayed by negative comments from a powerful U.S. senator, saying that he takes his duty "very, very seriously." Gen. Robert B. Abrams, the four-star head of U.S. Army Forces Command, found himself in the unusual position of defending his objectivity against a defense effort to remove him from the case. Abrams referred the case to a general court-martial rather than a lower-level tribunal in December, weeks after U.S. Sen. John McCain indicated there would be repercussions if Bergdahl weren't punished. Wearing a short-sleeved white dress shirt and blue pants, Abrams asked a prosecutor curtly "Where do you want me?" as he strode toward the witness stand. He grew testy when a defense attorney asked him to explain why he wasn't afraid of McCain, who leads a Senate committee with the power to approve or scuttle assignments for top military commanders. "I have served my country for 34 years. I am at the highest rank I am ever going to attain," he replied, adding that he has a mandate to ensure a fair trial for Bergdahl. "I take that duty and responsibility very, very seriously." Addressing defense attorney William Helixon as "counselor," Abrams added, "Up to this point no one — and I mean no one — has tried to influence me in any way." In two motions, the defense had questioned whether Abrams faced improper conflicts. The judge, Army Col. Jeffery Nance, ordered Abrams to testify because of a reference in one of the motions to the general destroying dozens of letters from Bergdahl supporters and critics. It's unusual for a four-star general to testify in a court-martial hearing, said Eric Carpenter, a former Army lawyer who teaches law at Florida International University. The defense motion to disqualify Abrams cites his prior role advising former U.S. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel during efforts to return Bergdahl from captivity. It also raises questions about whether Abrams considered defense objections to the findings of a preliminary hearing. If granted, a disqualification would allow a different commander to decide whether a court-martial is needed. Under the judge's questioning, Abrams said he consulted with a military lawyer and concluded he didn't need to keep the approximately 100 letters. He said it's common for officers to send trash to shredders or incinerators Abrams said he wasn't influenced by the letters and none came from government officials, current service members or anyone with firsthand knowledge. "I can tune out all of that outside noise because I understand my duty and my accountability," he said.

**Past Deadline, Feds See No End in Sight for Veteran Homeless Crisis:** Federal agencies now say they cannot predict the end of homelessness among veterans, a national crisis that President Barack Obama hoped to stop by 2015. Six years after Obama set his goal, he announced Aug. 1 that veteran homelessness in the country had decreased 47 percent since 2010. Though the 2015 goal was missed, Randy Brown of the nonprofit National Coalition for Homeless Veterans said Obama attracted attention to the issue and created a sense of urgency behind the effort, which increased funding to record highs. In most years since 2008, Congress has appropriated about \$75 million toward a voucher program to house homeless veterans. However, lawmakers allocated \$50 million in 2011 and \$60 million in 2016. HUD and the Department of Veterans Affairs, the two federal agencies most involved with battling the problem, recently announced funding for the first half of 2016 -- approximately \$39 million that the agencies say has the potential to house about 5,300 veterans. The latest point-in-time count, which are compiled every January, showed there were about 40,000 homeless veterans left to house, and 13,000 of those veterans live on the streets, according to VA and HUD estimates released Aug. 1.

## ON BEING A HERO

May I tell you briefly about one of the worst days of my life? It was the hot and muggy summer day of my second grade picnic. My father stopped at a local deli and had a sandwich especially made for me, along with some cupcakes. Around the lunch hour, I left my sandwich bag against a tree as I climbed a sliding board. An upper class girl came along and stole my made-for-me-lunch. I was too shy to go after her.

Soon thereafter it began to pour and the picnic was called off. They crammed eight to 10 of us kids into the back of a station wagon and proceeded to give us ice popsicles, no doubt to pacify us. With the windows fogging up in the heat and humid wagon, that sticky, dripping feeling on my hands is still with me today.

Last Saturday I pedaled my trusty Schwinn down to Walden Books to meet a true American hero, Colonel Floyd “Jim” Thompson. Jim was then 68. Hew was America’s longest-held prisoner of war and lives in Key West. For nine years under extreme hardship in Vietnam, he continued to believe in his country, his family and his God. Believe me my popsicle day pales in comparison. Although a combat Infantry Vietnam veteran myself, I was able to go home in one year. Jim did not have that luxury. His story, ***Glory Denied*** by Tom Philpott, depicts his and his family’s many experiences and personal sacrifices during his captivity and upon his return home. As the cover jacket declares, “Like our nation, Jim suffered from the malaise that accompanies a lost cause once called glorious.”

He looked quite dapper in a yellow sports coat white shirt and tie. Even with his stroke he was able to firmly shake my hand as I said: “Welcome home, brother!” The older we get, the more we learn that the world is a small place. As I sat out in front of the store and perused his book, a photo of his original Special Forces A-Team at the time of his March, 1964 capture jumped off the page at me. Kneeling in the front row was Sgt. Frank Rose, assigned to me in early 1968 at Fort Bragg, N.C. during my tour with the 7th Special Forces (Green Berets).

I immediately ran back into the store and a mutual smile came over our old warrior faces. For it was our men that we lived, fought and would die for. And if you don’t mind me saying here, we loved. Although, the Vietnam conflict divided our country, I honestly believe that citizens no longer confuse the soldier with the war. So Jim, let me be the first to tell you today that we love you, that we are proud of your sacrifices and thankful for them. Please understand that they were not in vain. I know that I was able to take my own son to a picnic one day in a free land. Again “Welcome home brother!”

*Jerry “rowboat” Hughes moved to Key West a year later and rented a small one bedroom cottage directly on the water on Stock Island. It came with a 10 foot rowboat. These are his first impressions of coming to the Keys on a personal journey to improve his life.*



# **THE GREAT RACE**

## **To Finish is to win!**

It was late June 1990 or maybe 1991, when my good friend Rich Heroux, while serving in the U.S. Army at Fort Ben Harrison invited me to ride with him and his grandson to Evansville Indiana and watch the participants in “The Great Race”. I never forgot that day because I was “hooked”, and later when the movie “Bucket List” hit the screens, I chalked up “The Great Race” near the top of my List. I have always been enamored with antique and classic vehicles. My first classic was and still is my Grandfather Hollister’s 1937 Chevrolet. In 1968, while serving in Vietnam, my Grandfather passed away and I received the “37” as part of his estate. Then in late 1980’s, I acquired my second classic from my Grandfather Gardner. It was a 1949 Dodge power wagon pumper firetruck. Mt Grandfather was the primary operator of the fire truck and had driven it new from the factory for the Montrose, PA Fire Department. I have since donated it back to the Montrose Fire Department where it is on display.

I had never seen the movie—”The Great Race” starring Tony Curtis and Natalie Wood. However, it is based on a true adventure in the early 1900’s when five countries participated in a Great Race from New York to Paris, France. The modern day Great Race is a follow-on to that wonderful story about automobiles in times past. Every year the race across the United States on a prepared different route. Three years ago the race went from Minneapolis, MN to Mobile, AL crisscrossing the Mississippi river 12 times. Two years ago, the route was from Maine to Florida along the Eastern seaboard.. This past year, the route was from St. Louis to Santa Monica CA. Each race covers about 1400 miles.

The current day Great Race is a timed “Race”. Each participant begins every day with a starting time (to the exact second) and is required to make between 5 to 9 time checks throughout the day’s race. Time check locations are unknown to the participants. Beginning each of the ten days of racing, each team (Driver and Navigator) is given a driving instruction booklet of approximately 20 to 30 pages with about 200 individual instructions to follow. Special speedometers allow the teams to maintain any given speed to the nearest 1/2 mile per hour (easier said than done). Also, each team builds a series of “Time Charts” that help calculate the seconds from a stopped position or when making a turn at a reduced speed.

My greatest thrill is just to be part of the adventure participating with other car enthusiasts from all over the country that make special arrangements to witness the race. That is Fun! Crows of people attend the various activities throughout the day for 10 consecutive days. They are there at the start of each day’s race during our lunch and at the end of the day’s racing. There is competition, the winner is the one who beats the course, not the other racers. The comradery amongst the racers is phenomenal. Everyone assists and helps everyone else participating in the race.

My navigator, Glen Floe, an Army friend from Wickenburg, AZ and I drove a 1959 Edsel this past year. About 120 cars enter this event each year and less than 100 finish. Our Edsel Corsair, car #10 was in the middle of the pack when we arrived at Santa Monica, CA.

My desire is to participate in the 2017 Great Race with my lovely wife Dorothy while celebrating our 50th Wedding Anniversary. Our son, James, who owns the automobile would drive and I would devote my time to navigator. We would be driving a 1968 Ford Torino. This the exact car we purchased when we were first married. The Ford Torino has been completely restored and is mechanically ready to go. Only cosmetics to include a good paint job is required to be on the road again in the Great Race.

***Harry Hollister***  
***Lampasas, TX***

***Note: Mr. Hollister served in the U.S. Army prior to his retirement in early 1990s. He lives in Lampasas, TX. I thought you would like to read about his passion for The Great Race.***