



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

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Volume 7

“A Soldier Once And Always”

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Commanders Corner: First off, I need to introduce myself since I don't know many of you. I'm John Woyansky and I have the privilege and honor of being elected as Commander during the last ADVA Reunion, which I was not able to attend. Remember; they tell you not to volunteer for anything. My wife Lari and I had attended the 196th LIB Reunion in Louisville KY in July and could not hit two reunions in one year. Although I have been a member of the 196th LIB and ADVA associations for many years, only in the past several years have I associated with the 2/1 Chapter. I joined because 2/1 Infantry holds a dear place for me as I was a Platoon Leader in Alpha Company from Oct '71 to June '72. It was a good company in a good battalion. I felt good about joining the company the first day I met my platoon and my platoon sergeant PSG Robert Holyfield; good soldiers all. Since we were in the last combat brigade to leave VN, our war wasn't as horrific as those who served before us.

We were at Camp Perdue just to the east of the Da Nang Ridge line, and the next day the entire battalion was flying down to Chu Lai to perform security while the Americal Division stood down. Oddly enough, a couple of days earlier I had said good bye to my platoon members in Bravo Company 1st Battalion 20th Infantry (11th LIB) which stood down and heading back to the USA. I was with Bravo 1/20 INF from early July-Oct '71. 2/1 INF spent several weeks rotating between bunker guard duty and patrolling the area SW of Chu Lai. We got hit by Typhoon Hester OCT '71. Most of the rear area billets were destroyed. Once 2/1 returned to Da Nang, we did our turn on the Da Nang ridge line defense, a day or two in the rear as quick reaction force (QRF) and in the high country west of Da Nang. We did that all through the rest of '71 and early '72 until the start of the NVA Easter Offensive March '72. Around 12 April or so we were told to head out of the high country to the flat rice paddies to the east. Once there we could see other platoons coming in and before long the whole of Alpha was in the clearing. We were told to set up a PZ and get ready to be lifted out. Since we always did platoon moves we were quite surprised when enough lift ships came in to pick up the entire company. Another surprise was we ended up at Da Nang airbase and told we would board C-130s to fly north. After landing in Phu Bai on the runway with hundreds of ARVN wounded waiting for medical evacuation, I could hear the men grumbling about what the hell was going on here. We only heard cursory news about the Easter Offensive before this. We road marched about 2 Ks to an abandoned US compound and spent the night there. In the morning Alpha CA'd out to the field for interdiction patrolling to the SW of Phu Bai near some low hills.



Our first night on a narrow ridge was eventful. I elected not to dig in since it was near dusk and the position was so narrow along the military crest of the hill. Right after night fall a NVA mortar started to fire on an ARVN firebase to our NNW. We could see the flashes for the tube. My RTO Jack Burd and I started the call for fire, did the flash to bang and called in based on polar plot. We started corrections and within a few seconds we had a round go over us and detonate on the base of the hill to the east. We continued corrections and another round impacted on the west slope of our hill. By that time, I had given a fire for effect. The battery shot about 36 rounds and I guess we never got that third round that should have been where we were. Needless to say every move after that we dug in.

Our guys could hear what sounded like tank engines and track noise off to the NNW. We called in a 90MM Recoilless Rifle and some rounds, and Laws for each soldier as well just to be sure. However, other than NVA artillery/rocket troops, we never encountered any NVA infantry.

Sometime in June '72 2/1 INF flew back down to Da Nang for a couple of days and then headed back up to Phu Bai. My DEROS was coming up and the BDE would not extend officers, so I bid farewell to my Platoon which headed up north under SFC Devane my platoon sergeant.

Months later at Fort Hood Texas when I was assigned to 1/12 CAV (mech INF) I meet about seven of my soldiers who were ending their time in the Army in the same unit. They had told me that when the 196th LIB stood down, the platoon was sent to C/3/21 INF intact and then went home in late August '72. Everyone had gotten out alive. I hope in the future we can continue any traditions for 2nd BN 1st INF from its days in Vietnam through the present with [2nd Stryker Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington](#). My contact is Commander.2.1.jgw@gmail.com

Respectfully,

John

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

Veterans' Day Message: As yesterday's defenders of freedom, we want to welcome today's military service members into our ranks as veterans to become part of our elite group. Our common bond is the battlefield, whether it is service in the Persian Gulf, Korea, Kosovo, Vietnam or World War II; the war on terrorism or peace-keeping expeditionary campaigns. The courage and sacrifice of our veterans have made a difference in preserving and defending world peace. On this special day set aside to honor service members of all service components. Let us all demonstrate our appreciation for the service performed for the continuance of freedom and democracy to the United States of America.



Lowe's Fires Shot Heard Loud & Clear By Every Military Wife In America: Lowe's is an American company that has made it known in the past that they are proud to be a part of this great nation. They have continually shown their support for our military, and now they have made an announcement that will help those in our military as well as their families. The company will be changing their military discount program in order to improve it for those defending our country. They will be expanding the program to include more members of the military as well as their family members. I think we can all agree that those who put their lives aside to defend our freedom deserve everything they can possibly get. Lowe's has explained that they have expanded their online discount to give military members free shipping as well. After seeing all sorts of stories in which members of our military are treated with such disrespect by ungrateful Americans, it is very welcome to see them being catered to. The men and women defending our country deserve a lot more than discounts, but this is a very welcome start.



Health Care, Benefits, and Homelessness Authority Act of 2017: Public Law 115-62, the Department of Veterans Affairs Expiring Authorities Act of 2017, was enacted into law. The bill extends a number of current authorities in veterans' programs, including Health Care, Benefits, Homelessness, and other matters. The provisions extends, by two years, authority for VA to provide nursing home care to veterans with service-connected disabilities; to provide assistance and support services for caregivers; to continue a pilot program for child care for certain veterans in order to allow them to receive health care; to extend a pilot program offering women veterans counseling in retreat settings; and to support beneficiary travel and grants for innovative transportation for veterans living in highly rural areas. It also allows VA to reimburse veterans for beneficiary travel to Vet Centers in the same manner as if they received services within VA health care facilities for one additional year. A pilot program to provide neurobehavioral therapy and services to veterans with traumatic brain injuries was extended only by three months pending the submission of a final report to Congress due this December. The Act also allows VA to continue to provide rehabilitation and vocational benefits to active duty service members with severe injuries for one more year. This authority allows VA to address immediate rehabilitative needs of service members while their probable medical discharges are pending.

Coast Guard Cutter Forward Returns Home from Hurricane Response: One hundred crew members aboard the Coast Guard Cutter Forward are back home after responding to three major hurricanes. The Forward was originally deployed Aug. 25 for a counter-narcotics mission in the Eastern Pacific Ocean. However, the deployment soon turned to hurricane relief as the Forward was diverted to the Texas Gulf Coast. Coast Guard officials said the Forward responded following hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria. Along the Texas coast, the Forward served as a search and rescue platform offshore until rescue communication was reestablished onshore. Officials say the Forward led a group of seven other cutters to safety before Hurricane Irma hit the Florida Keys, providing them with food and fuel. The Forward arrived in the Keys hours after Irma made landfall — and was one of the first responders at Cajale and Marathon Keys. A helicopter crew aboard the Forward searched for people who the Forward were also sent ashore with relief supplies.

Trump Presents Medal of Honor to Vietnam War Medic: President Donald Trump presented the nation's highest award for valor to a former Green Beret medic for his heroism on a secret operation during the Vietnam War. At a White House ceremony, Trump presented the Medal of Honor to retired Army Capt. Gary Michael "Mike" Rose for treating as many as 70 wounded soldiers during Operation Tailwind from Sept. 11 to Sept. 14, 1970. For many years after the war, Rose never spoke of the operation until it was declassified in 1998. "For many years the story of Mike's heroism has gone untold. Today we gather to tell the world of his valor and proudly present him with our nation's highest military honor," Trump told the audience. Trump described the sacrifices Rose made while acting as the only medic for the 136-man force on Operation Tailwind. "Helicopters dropped the unit into Laos; before they even touched the ground, enemy fire struck three men," Trump said. As the unit pushed deeper into enemy territory, it ran into more enemy forces, and took more casualties. Rose, a sergeant at the time, moved through the enemy fire to treat the mounting numbers of wounded men. Gunfire was so intense that Rose had to crawl from position to position to treat the wounded. During an assault by a company-sized element of North Vietnamese Army, one of the Montagnards was wounded 40 to 50 meters outside the company area. Rose ran, crawled, and maneuvered his way to this wounded man, shielding the soldier with his own body as he treated him. Rose then dragged the wounded soldier back to the company with one hand while holding back and engaging the enemy with his weapon in the other hand. "Soon after they returned to their unit, a rocket-propelled grenade exploded nearby and shot smoldering metal into Mike's back and into his leg," Trump said. "He was seriously, seriously wounded. The shrapnel left a gaping hole in Mike's foot. For the next, excruciating 48 hours, he used a branch as a crutch and went on rescuing the wounded." The company had taken so many wounded that a medevac helicopter was called. So intense was the enemy fire, the medevac pilot aborted the mission, and the severely damaged helicopter crashed a few miles away. Rose's unit was able to break out of their defensive position. Rose improvised litters for the wounded, which now numbered over half the company. The enemy attacked from all sides. Rose's unit set up a perimeter around the LZ. The extraction helicopters arrived, but Rose waited to board the last bird, firing at the enemy while he hobbled up the loading ramp. Shortly after takeoff, the helicopter was "hit by enemy fire," Trump said. Then Marine door gunner was shot through his neck. Rose rushed to his aid and saved the Marine's life before the helicopter crashed. "Mike was thrown off the aircraft before it hit the ground, but he raced back to the crash site and pulled one man after another out of the smoking and smoldering helicopter as it spewed jet fuel from its ruptured tanks," Trump said. "Trump said. "Mike, I have to say, your will to endure, your love for your fellow soldier, your devotion to your country inspires us all. ... Nations are formed under the strength and patriotism that lives in the hearts of our great heroes."



The U.S. Military was Supposed to get Much Bigger Under Pres. Trump. Here's Why it Hasn't:

Wearing a Navy cap and an olive-green jacket emblazoned with the USS *Gerald R. Ford*'s emblem, President Donald Trump stood on a soon-to-be-commissioned Navy aircraft carrier in March and promised American sailors "one of the largest spending increases in U.S. history" and a "major expansion of our entire Navy fleet." It was the president's latest declaration of military expansion. Weeks earlier, he stood before Congress for the first time in his early presidency and laid out his vision for the U.S. military. "To keep America safe, we must provide the men and women of the United States military with the tools they need to prevent war. If they must, they have to fight, and they only have to win," Trump told lawmakers at the time. "I am sending Congress a budget that rebuilds the military, eliminates the defense sequester and calls for one of the largest increases in national defense spending in American history." Months later, Trump is no closer to realizing his dream of a U.S. military fueled by 12 U.S. navy carriers, modernized fighter jets and new unmanned aircraft. Instead, a budget deal brokered by congressional Republicans is expected to do little to increase defense spending beyond the Obama administration's budget. And the Pentagon won't see a cent of that money unless a bipartisan bill makes it through Congress to get rid of old limits on defense spending. "The politics are that the president actually has very little power when it comes to the budget," said Todd Harrison, director of defense budget analysis at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. Trump ran for office promising that he would radically increase spending to prop up a military facing its 16th year of war in the Middle East. He said he would expand the Navy to 350 ships from its current fleet of 274 and increase the planned size of the Army to 540,000 soldiers. All those promises meant that the U.S. would "deter, avoid and prevent conflict through our unquestioned military strength," Trump said. Then he took office, and sent a budget request to Congress in May that barely moved the needle. It called for only \$18 billion more in funding for the Pentagon than the \$603 billion that President Barack Obama had planned for, including funds for only eight more ships while allowing the Army to shrink below 480,000 soldiers. Defense hawks were immediately critical, with Senator John McCain calling it "inadequate."

Tillerson in Pakistan with a Tough Message on 'Safe Havens':

US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson was in Pakistan to deliver a message on the importance of fighting extremists and driving them from hideouts on Pakistani territory. He met with Pakistan's Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Foreign Minister Khwaja Mohammad Asif and the heads of the army and intelligence services. Tillerson told Abbasi that Pakistan is "so important regionally to our joint goals of providing peace and security to the region and providing opportunity for greater economic relationship." Abbasi said Pakistan is "committed in the war against terror." "We have produced results and we are looking forward to moving ahead with the US and building a tremendous relationship," he said. "The US can rest assured that we are strategic partners in the war against terror and that today Pakistan is fighting the largest war in the world against terror," Abbasi said. "We appreciate the understandings that we agreed and we appreciate the engagement." In Afghanistan Tillerson told reporters that Pakistan's cooperation on counter-terrorism is essential for a good relationship with the US. His comments echoed those of other top US officials who have been pressing Pakistan on the matter. He said Pakistan needs to "take a clear-eyed view" of its position and act. "Pakistan needs to, I think, take a clear-eyed view of the situation that they are confronted with in terms of the number of terrorist organizations that find safe haven inside of Pakistan," he said. "

U.S. Soldiers in Niger Were Pursuing ISIS Recruiter When Ambushed:

The U.S. Special Forces unit that came under attack in Niger earlier this month had been pursuing a senior militant according to U.S. officials. The officials did not provide the name of the target, whom one of the officials described as an ISIS recruiter. The soldiers did not succeed in catching him. Marine Gen. Joseph Dunford, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told reporters the Green Berets set out on a reconnaissance mission, and that the intelligence suggested there was a low risk of contact with the enemy. He also said the military was investigating whether the mission changed as it unfolded. One theory, said an official with direct knowledge of the military's investigation, is that the soldiers were gathering information about the target, and, after learning his whereabouts, decided to pursue him. A big question would then be whether the unit got authorization, and whether the risks were assessed. It's also possible that the 30 Nigerien troops the Americans were accompanying decided to pursue the target, the official said. NBC News reported Monday that military officials believe the unit was set up, and that residents in a village they visited provided information about their location to the militants who later ambushed them. It was unclear, the officials said, whether the villagers tipped off the target the Americans were pursuing. The Niger mission was carried out under the broader auspices of Operation Juniper Shield, a program initiated under the Obama administration and reauthorized under the Trump administration, according to multiple U.S. military officials. Juniper Shield is intended to "disrupt or neutralize" terror organizations affiliated with Al Qaeda and the Islamic State operating across North and West Africa, primarily through the killing or capturing of members of its senior and intermediate leadership. A subset of this operation, Juniper Micron, is focused specifically on supporting the French counterterror and stabilization mission in Mali, Operation Barkhane. A subset of these missions is a terrorist organization based in Mali and Libya known as Al-Mourabitoun. Al-Mourabitoun isn't well known by the American public or policymakers, but the group and its affiliates have an extensive history of activity across West Africa and the Sahara. Al-Mourabitoun has been tied to a string of deadly attacks that have killed hundreds since the group's formation in 2013. Those attacks have grown in sophistication while increasing in lethality and frequency.

Congress Authorizes COLA Increase for Veterans:

The U.S. Senate passed H.R. 1329, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2017. This legislation would increase the rates of VA disability compensation, dependency compensation for surviving children and spouses, as well as the clothing allowance for veterans. Earlier this year, the House passed H.R. 1329, which now waits President Trump's signature. Once signed into law, the expected 2 percent increase will become effective on Jan. 1, 2018.

Mattis Goals Readiness, Partners, Reform: Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis has sent a fiscal new year message to the Defense Department's military and civilian workforce giving his guidance on priorities. "We must be prepared to deal with an increasingly complex global security situation, characterized by an accelerated decline in the management of the rules-based international order," he warns, citing North Korean provocations, Russian violation of international borders, China's efforts to intimidate neighbors and Iran's continued violence that threatens Middle East stability. Mattis describes three "lines of effort" he wants DoD to pursue:

- Restoring readiness**
- Strengthen existing alliances**
- Business reforms**

U.S. Army Pacific Must be Ready for Fight of the Future: Amid rising tensions in the Pacific theater, the top Army commander in the region wants soldiers to be ready for the future fight, not ones from the past. “Nobody wants war, that’s for sure. Nobody prays for peace harder than a soldier,” Gen. Robert Brown, commander of U.S. Army Pacific, told Army Times. “But we have to be ready.” Brown said preparing for the future fight focuses on multi-domain battle and joint integration. “We want to use the new things we’ve learned,” he said. “And so that’s one of the challenges — as we’re developing ways that will work better in the future and validating them in exercises ... then you have to incorporate that.” The U.S. military is already successful at joint fighting, but Brown says it needs to get even better. “We’ve got to move from a joint interdependence where we depend on each other to a true joint integration,” he said. This includes leveraging all of the domains — air, land, sea, cyber and space — and making sure information can be shared among the services. “So maybe you can’t do it on land alone, but if you maneuver in cyber, that opens up an opening in the air that then opens up an opening on the ground, and you end up presenting multiple dilemmas to those that would do you harm,” he said. “[It gives] yourself multiple options, which is what we want.” Brown said the Army will send a multi-domain task force to Pacific Pathways during 2019. The exercise, which made its debut in 2014, employs a unit through a “training pathway.” The unit spends three to four months in a series of exercises with foreign militaries. The task force consists of about 1,000 troops who will go to Japan or Australia, for example, during the exercise. “They’ll be able to have capabilities we’ve never had before, such as extensive cyber capability and space capability,” Brown said. “They’ll be integrated better than they’ve ever been before with and sea, all from what used to be a traditional land force only.” The task force will experiment with such capabilities as air and missile defense, electronic warfare and long-range fires, among others. The Army will take lessons and feedback from the task force to see how to better integrate those capabilities into future training scenarios and real-world missions.

DARPA: We Want Autonomous Drone Swarms for War Fighters: Raytheon and Northrop Grumman have been awarded Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency contracts to develop drone swarms for urban combat environments. DARPA’s OFFensive Swarm-Enabled Tactics, or OFFSET, program, aims to equip small infantry units with swarms of 250 or more robotic aircraft and ground vehicles. Under the Phase I research contracts, Raytheon BBN Technologies and Northrop Grumman will develop easily deployed and monitored platforms to bolster forces in urban canyons. “Each team will serve as a swarm systems integrator tasked with designing, developing and deploying an open architecture for physical and virtual environments,” said a DARPA spokesman. “Each system would include an extensible game-based architecture to enable design and integration of swarm tactics, a swarm tactics exchange to foster community interaction, immersive interfaces for collaboration among teams of humans and swarm systems, and a physical test bed to validate developed capabilities.” In addition, every six months DARPA will invite “sprinters,” or third parties, to work with the agency and the two contractor teams. The sprinters will focus on swarm tactics, swarm autonomy, human-swarm teaming, virtual environment and physical test bed. The focus of this effort is the generation of swarm tactics for a mixed swarm of 50 air and ground robots to isolate an urban objective within an area of two square city blocks over a mission duration of 15 to 30 minutes. Operationally relevant tactics to achieve that mission include performing reconnaissance and establishing a perimeter around an area of operation.”

An Old Colonel Looks at General Kelly: A thousand years ago when I was about to begin my military career, a wise old retired Marine colonel, a veteran of the carnage at Tarawa, gave me some advice. A thousand years ago when I was about to begin my military career, a wise old retired Marine colonel, a veteran of the carnage at Tarawa, gave me some advice. Paraphrased here, he said: So you want to be a career soldier? Good for you. But remember that the longer you stay in uniform, the less you will really understand about the country you protect. Democracy is the antithesis of the military life; it’s chaotic, dishonest, disorganized, and at the same time glorious, exhilarating and free — which you are not. After a while, if you stay in, you’ll be tempted to say, “Look, you civilians, we’ve got a better way. We’re better organized. We’re patriotic, and we know what it is to sacrifice. Be like us.” And you’ll be dead wrong, son. If you’re a career soldier, you may defend democracy, but you won’t understand it or be part of it. What’s more, you’ll always be a stranger to your own society. That’s the sacrifice you’ll be making. I’ve been thinking a lot about that old colonel in the aftermath of White House Chief of Staff John Kelly’s remarkable press conference the other day over the president’s call to the widow of an Army soldier killed in Niger. There’s been a lot of commentary about the general’s attitude toward civilians who hadn’t sacrificed — who weren’t of the “one percent” who had — and it seems to me that most of it misses the point. Masha Gessen’s *New Yorker* article, “John Kelly and the Language of the Military Coup,” comes close, given President Donald Trump’s tendency to hire retired generals who complement his own authoritarian leanings. Certainly we need to be alert for the next three years — having at Trump’s elbow a retired general who disdains civilians should raise some concerns. But the larger point that strikes me, as a retired infantryman, is the self-pity in the general’s tone. *Look at us; we’ve made sacrifices that you don’t appreciate. The only good American is one in uniform, or, ultimately, the ones under tombstones in Arlington.* Sadly, this kind of sad, pitying flag-waving impresses too many of my fellow citizens the same way that the insubordinate Douglas MacArthur did in the 1950s — and MacArthur is said to be a favorite of Trump’s. Let’s be frank. There’s nothing “glorious” or “sacrificial” about choosing to be a soldier. We give up personal freedom for the privilege of serving our country, and we enter a closed-off profession that is enormously satisfying, but can also be physically, emotionally, and intellectually demanding. We accept the risk that some of us get killed or wounded. In return, the country gives us decent pay, an early retirement — some bodies get pretty broken up in twenty or thirty years — and health care. It’s not a bad deal. But the other sacrifice — the one the colonel talked about — is that few of us quite fit into the “dishonest, disorganized and glorious” mess is American democracy. That makes us good bureaucrats and maybe good chiefs of staff, but not someone who has a gut-level understanding of democracy — the role of a free press, for example, or the give and take of backroom dealing. We chose the life we lived. Being part of the “one percent” doesn’t make us any more entitled than any other citizen. And while we’re happy that the public respects military service, too much respect makes us a little uneasy, for the reasons the old colonel said. We are privileged to serve, not the other way around. Kelly is understandably upset that Trump — acting on the general’s advice — publicly fumbled a call to a young widow. Part of the general’s problem is that he serves a president without empathy for anyone but himself. Another is that the same president has now politicized Kelly’s private grief.

There is a saying among us veterans; “That it is those who have fought for Freedom that life has a special flavor; the protected will never know”. You have never lived until you have almost died.