



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

WEBSITE: www.2-1-196th.com

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Volume 8

“A Soldier Once And Always”

September 2018

Commanders Corner: I hope all of you had a great month of August. Summer is almost over, and it will be back to whatever your old grind is. And I suspect that grandchildren will be school bound as well.

From 25-30 August I attended the American Legion 2018 National Convention in Minneapolis, MN. My wife and I had a great time in Indiana with our youngest son and his new baby daughter so it was difficult to leave and come home before Labor Day. I'll tell you all a bit about the Convention in the next issue.

I always hope to meet some 2-1 Infantry members at these veterans' gatherings, and I do as well this time. I don't know if I can make the ADVA Reunion in Sept; too many travels this year away from home. In the event I don't make it, I hope those that do attend have another great reunion experience and meet some new 2-1 INF members.

God bless you and your families during the rest of this summer season and for any preparation you are involved in as grandchildren head off to school for the 2018-2019 year.



Remember our collective extended family, those Americans serving in our Armed Forces all over the world, and especially to the memories of those that gave the ultimate sacrifice.

Got a comment, idea or complaint, contact me at Commander.2.1.jgw@gmail.com.

John
Commander

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



Request for Articles: This month's Newsletter includes a nicely written letter from an officer to one of his enlisted soldiers. It speaks from the heart and tries to restructure what should have been brought up before concerning their relationship. The reason we are emphasizing this article is to point out to everyone who reads the Newsletter that it is an opportunity that allows all of us to express the views that might have taken place with all of us had we thought about the subject for any length of time. We want you to look into your experiences where you might have had a hard time talking about. Let someone else read your story, it may trigger an association to someone's life that needs to be brought to light. It does the heart good to get rid of difficult emotional items that are causing pain. I urge you to look into your 'foot locker' and if you have some item that would help other brothers, please send them to the editor. He will look it over and if appropriate place in our future 2/1 Chapter newsletter.

ADVA 2018 National Reunion: The 2018 National Reunion will be held September 26-30, 2018 in Oklahoma City, OK. Headquarters hotel is the Oklahoma City Wyndham Gardens Airport Hotel. If you have not secured your reservations it might be too late. Dates have been set and Registration forms are available at WEBSITE. Tours have been scheduled for Thursday and Friday including a visit to Fort Sill, OK where the latest ADVA monument is located, lunch is being provided at a Ft Sill mess hall and a visit to the Artillery Museum. There will be an Annual meeting of the 2/1 Infantry Chapter some time during the reunion, usually Saturday morning following the National membership meeting on Sep. 29, 2018. A Hospitality room as in past reunions will be available.

President, Pentagon put off Washington Parade: In a stunning move Thursday evening, the Pentagon announced that President Donald J. Trump's military parade through the nation's capital will be postponed until 2019. Department of Defense spokesman Col. Rob Manning told reporters that both the military and White House "have now agreed to explore opportunities in 2019," delaying the Nov. 10 parade championed by the president to honor the troops and commemorate the centennial of World War I. No makeup date for the procession has been scheduled but the Pentagon move came hours after The Associated Press and other media outlets reported that military officials pegged the price tag for Trump's event at \$92 million. That's at least three times higher than what White House budget director Mick Mulvaney told lawmakers it would cost during Capitol Hill testimony on Feb. 14, 2019.

Fort Gibson National Cemetery Final Resting Place for Oklahoma Sailor Killed at Pearl Harbor: On Dec. 7, 1941, Seaman 1st Class Eugene Woodrow Wicker, only 20 years old, was serving aboard the USS Oklahoma in Pearl Harbor when the Japanese launched their infamous surprise attack. Wicker was on duty that Sunday morning and sounded the alarm of the Japanese attack. But nine Japanese torpedoes quickly capsized the battleship and Wicker was one of 429 Sailors and Marines from the USS Oklahoma crew to die. By the time the military finally raised USS Oklahoma in 1946, remains of the crew could not be identified, and were buried in Pearl Harbor. Thanks to modern DNA technology, Wicker's remains were identified by the POW/MIA Accounting Agency. On Aug. 3, after more than 76 years, Wicker's remains returned to Oklahoma. The following day, the native of Coweta, Oklahoma was laid to rest with full military honors at Fort Gibson National Cemetery in Fort Gibson. Renee Miller, Eugene Wicker's great niece, attended the service at Fort Gibson on Aug. 4 and said she wished her dad and grandmother could have witnessed Wicker returning home. "The service was wonderful," said Miller. "I can't believe the full military service. Nanny would have been so proud. She was real close to him, and mourned him until she died. I just wish my dad could be here to see this." Miller said Wicker's homecoming means the world to the family. "He's going to live on," said Miller.

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Exchange Warns Military Shoppers of Impostor Retailer:

A retailer going by the name "Exchange Inc." is attempting to dupe military shoppers into big-ticket purchases but has no relationship to the Army and Air Force Exchange Service, AAFES said in a Wednesday announcement. Scammers have operated as Exchange Inc. to broker the sales of vehicles and vehicle parts, AAFES said in the announcement. It's not a new scam, officials said, but it's recently branched out to include the sale of boat engines. Some ways to tell whether you're dealing with an exchange impostor:

AAFES isn't allowed to sell vehicles in the continental U.S. If you're buying a vehicle stateside, you're not buying from the exchange.

The scammers frequently request payment via untraceable, generally unrefundable methods, such as third-party gift cards like Google Play cards.

The transaction comes via a classified ad or a resale website. AAFES only operates on installations and via the exchange web portal.

Shoppers should verify any suspicious payment requests by calling the AAFES customer service line at 800-527-2345, officials said. Those who believe they have been scammed can file a complaint through the Internet Crime Complaint Center at www.ic3.gov.

The John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2019 Passes the Senate.

The VFW thanks the more than 7,000 veterans and supporters who responded to the VFW Action Alert opposing a provision that would have dramatically increased TRICARE fees for current retirees. The final bill does not include the misguided proposal, but does include several provisions to improve the financial viability of the Armed Forces Retirement Home and expanding eligibility to disabled veterans and spouses who are not currently eligible. The bill would also authorize a 2.6 percent pay increase for America's service members; grant disabled veterans access to commissaries and Morale, Welfare, and Recreation facilities; require DOD to design and produce a medal or award for veterans exposed to radiation (Atomic Veterans); improve reporting, investigation and prosecution of sexual assault cases; expand eligibility for Military OneSource to one year after discharge.

National Guard Troops Providing Manpower at State's Borders:

In an attempt to stem a recent rise in drug trafficking at Arizona's borders, National Guard troops are assisting U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers with increased inspections. The Arizona Republic reported earlier this month that more than 40 Guard members have been helping U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers at the Nogales ports of entry south of Tucson for several weeks. Other smaller teams are stationed at Douglas and San Luis as part of Operation Guardian Support. Guard members are assisting by processing and inspecting passenger vehicles. Guard officials say illegal drugs have been found during some of those inspections. U.S. Customs and Border Protection officials say the Guard members' presence comes as the federal agency is facing a staff shortage throughout the state's six crossings.

Former NFL Star Leading the Charge for the Army's New Helmet System:

A company founded by a former Washington Redskins all-pro has been tasked with designing next-level padding technology to protect troops from impacts and blasts that can cause brain trauma. The Army recently announced a \$600,000 contract award for a new combat helmet padding system to Windpact, an impact technology company founded by former Redskins cornerback Shawn Springs. The contract falls under the Army's Natick Soldier Research, Development and Engineering Center program to improve soldier equipment. With the contract, Windpact aims to replace existing combat helmet impact systems with its patented Crash Cloud technology, an impact pad that uses a combination of foam and controlled air flow to provide enhanced protection at varying impact rates, according to a release. "I'm excited, because obviously when you're talking about the military, you're wanting to do something better for these soldiers who are suffering from traumatic brain injuries, concussions and any other forceful impacts ranging from bomb blasts to Humvee accidents," Springs told Military Times.

Korean War Soldier Returning Home to Kentucky for Burial:

The remains of a Kentucky soldier who disappeared after a 1950 Korean War battle with high casualties will be returned home for a burial with full military honors. Army Pfc. Joe S. Elmore's remains were originally thought to be of a British soldier when they were discovered in North Korea in 1995, but they could not be identified. The remains were later buried in South Korea. Nearly 20 years later, the remains were disinterred and transported to the Defense Department's POW/MIA Accounting Agency, which seeks to identify missing and unidentified American soldiers. The agency used DNA and anthropological analysis to match the remains to Elmore. Elmore was 20 when he was killed during a battle on Dec. 2, 1950, in Hamgyeong Province, North Korea. He will be given a military funeral in Albany, Kentucky, on Aug. 18. The POW/MIA Accounting Agency said in a release that Elmore was among about 2,500 U.S. soldiers that were attacked in late November by overwhelming Chinese forces near the Chosin Reservoir in North Korea. The attacks pushed the U.S. forces to withdraw south and by Dec. 6, the Army had evacuated about 1,500 soldiers. The release said the rest had been captured, killed, or were missing in enemy territory. The agency says about 7,700 Americans remain unaccounted for from the Korean War.



Army is Growing, so Why are Soldiers so Afraid of Being Forced Out? A study published by the RAND Corp.: “Assessing the Needs of Soldiers and Their Families at the Garrison Level,” aims to bring to the front issues affecting morale and welfare in the Army, pinpointing them by location, including soldiers of all ages, family make-up and experience. And while researchers set out to evaluate a range of “needs,” from child care to mental health support, what they found was a plea from noncommissioned officers for more time and staff to be able to accomplish the range of duties placed on their units, and a question floating over the heads of many — what is my future in the Army? “Performance expectations were felt more keenly because of the broader context of a shrinking Army,” the report found. The effects of a drawdown is still looming over the Army, according to RAND’s research, despite the Army’s efforts in the past two years to grow the force through both recruiting and retention. Soldiers felt that “zero-defect” policies around conduct, leadership and promotion requirements could end their careers if they weren’t careful. “One respondent described how it is now harder for people to make mistakes without feeling as though their careers will be over, and there was a sense that rules or requirements for promotion or expectations for their performance are continually changing, which decreases their sense of control over their career and increases feelings of uncertainty,” Earlier this year, the Defense Department announced it would begin forcibly separating service members who are not able to deploy, for instance. “Respondents felt that these changes in Army retention policies had fostered a climate in which soldiers felt that they needed to be looking out for their own interests, because the Army would not necessarily be taking care of them as they had been told or believed it would in years past,” according to the report.

DoD Exempts Wounded Warriors from ‘Deploy or Get Out’ Policy: Service members wounded in combat will be exempt from the Defense Department’s new policy to be deployable in 12 months or face separation from the military, the Pentagon announced this week. The policy tweak came after criticism that DoD was going to remove personnel who were only in non-deployable status because of their combat injuries, when the overall goal of the program was to target the thousands of military personnel who for fitness, health or other administrative reasons have not been deployable. “Service members whose injuries were the result of hostile action, meet the criteria for awarding of the Purple Heart, and whose injuries were not the result of their own misconduct” are approved for retention. The policy also allows the service secretaries to identify individuals that they wish to exempt from the 12-month deployability requirement, “if determined to be in the best interest of the military service.”

Man Who Swindled Millions from VA Sentenced to 6 years: A contractor who operated parking lots for the VA in Los Angeles was sentenced for milking the agency of \$13 million and bribing the official who granted his parking contracts. Richard Scott of Santa Monica was sentenced to nearly six years in prison for conspiracy and wire fraud. He also was ordered to pay the VA \$12.6 million in restitution. He pleaded guilty. Scott, owner of Westside Service LLC, kept two sets of books for 15 years, stashing millions in unreported cash and millions more in over-reported expenses, a U.S. attorney’s statement said. Scott began bribing VA contracting official Ralph Tillman in 2003 and continued making “hush money” payments after his retirement to continue the scheme and attempt to avoid termination of his parking contract. Court documents show Scott underreported revenue by at least \$4.6 million and over-reported expenses by at least \$8.2 million. Scott and his wife agreed to forfeit all of the assets.

New VA Secretary Promises Veterans Better Customer Service and More Medical Options: In his first public speech since taking over the Department of Veterans Affairs, VA Secretary Robert Wilkie reiterated his promises to push that bureaucracy towards more customer-friendly practices and more flexible access for beneficiaries. “VA exists to make life easier for veterans,” he told a crowd in Orlando, Florida. “So my prime directive is customer service. When a veteran comes in to VA, it is not up to him to get VA to say ‘yes.’ It is up to VA to give the veteran tools.” The comments echoed ones Wilkie made less than two months ago during his confirmation hearing on Capitol Hill, where he pledged to bring a more user-friendly experience to veterans navigating the massive federal bureaucracy. Unlike that testimony, Wilkie did not explicitly state he opposes privatization of department health programs during his AMVETS speech, although he appeared to back up that previous vow. Wilkie noted one of his first tasks as President Donald Trump’s newest Cabinet secretary will be overseeing sweeping health care reforms for the department signed into law in June. He said that work will include creating more “choices” for veterans seeking medical care, but also spoke of the importance of preserving the current VA health care system. “One absolutely essential option (for veterans) is the availability of care from professionals who specialize in treating America’s veterans,” he said. “Professionals who speak the language, who know what you have been through, who know what your special needs are. “That is not an option that the private sector can provide.”

Four-legged Military Heroes Will Soon have Their Own Award: Military working dogs, the beloved canines who have saved countless of troops on the battlefield, will soon have their own commendation. The “Guardians of America’s Freedom Medal,” created via legislation introduced by Sen. Robert Menendez, D-N.J., is the first official Defense Department commendation for military working dogs, the New York Times reported. Menendez announced the passage of the legislation recently at the U.S. War Dog memorial in Holmdel, New Jersey. The award, included in the latest defense authorization act, will be official when President Trump signs the NDAA. The legislation will allow each service to establish its own criteria for the award, Menendez said. Each service also will design its own version of the award. “These dogs endure multiple tours of duty. Some come back having lost limbs and others give their lives in service to their teams,” Menendez said. “Yet until now the U.S. military did not recognize the incredible service and sacrifice of working dogs and their handlers.” The U.S. War Dog Memorial, where Menendez made the announcement, features a bronze statue of a Vietnam War soldier kneeling next to his loyal canine companion. The memorial was built in 2006 next to the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Several hundred dogs are currently deployed to the Middle East.



“It is usually futile to try to talk facts and analysis to people who are enjoying a sense of moral superiority in their ignorance.”

Thomas Sowell, Social Theorist

The Pentagon to Double Size of ID Team as Analysis of Korean War Remains Begins: The Defense Department anticipates that it is doubling the size of its Hawaii-based team responsible for identifying Korean War remains after North Korea turned over 55 boxes last week believed to contain missing U.S. troops. The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency will expand its Korean War Program team of scientists from five to 10 people after receiving the first transfer of remains from North Korea in more than a decade, said Kelly McKeague, the director of the DPAA, the organization charged with searching for and identifying missing troops and prisoners of war. The team has already begun collecting DNA samples and examining teeth and bones to begin the process of identifying the individuals, McKeague said. That process could take anywhere from a couple of months to several years, he said, noting some remains recovered in the 1990s still have not been positively identified. The transfer, which took place July 27, followed an agreement made by North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and President Donald Trump when they met in June in Singapore. It was the largest unilateral turnover of remains from the North Koreans to the United States on record, but it was not immediately clear how many individuals were contained in the 55 boxes, said Dr. John Byrd, director of scientific analysis for DPAA. “It’s too early to tell,” he said. “You should not assume that one box is one person. There are many possibilities ... including that one person may be in two boxes.” In addition to human remains, Byrd said the boxes contained several artifacts that appeared to belong to American servicemembers who served in the Korean War, including canteens, boots and metal parts of uniforms.

Troops, Families are Increasingly Dissatisfied with Tricare: Half a year into major changes in Tricare, a survey of more than 8,500 Tricare beneficiaries indicates that satisfaction is eroding with the Defense Department health care program. The online survey was conducted in June by the Military Officers Association of America, to provide a snapshot of what’s happening in the wake of Tricare changes this year. This survey showed increasing dissatisfaction with the Tricare program across all categories, including costs of medication, provider choice and access to providers. In February, costs for prescriptions increased at network retail pharmacies and through the online pharmacy program. And this year, with changes in the Tricare program and changes in regions, there have been fewer health care providers, and a number of families have had problems getting appointments for health care. Some families are also finding they’re paying more for certain medical care. MOAA conducted a similar survey in December, to determine a baseline of sorts for perceptions about Tricare, before the changes took effect in January. About 4,000 people responded to that survey. More than 50 percent of those who responded said they were “somewhat” to “very” concerned about being able to afford their medications. This is a “dramatic increase” from the December survey, when beneficiaries were “largely unconcerned” about being able to afford their prescriptions, said retired Navy Capt. Kathy Beasley, MOAA’s director of government relations for health affairs.

Dog Tag Returned from North Korea Belonged to Army Medic: The lone military identification tag that North Korea provided with 55 boxes of human remains last month belonged to Master Sgt. Charles H. McDaniel, an Army medic from Indiana who was killed in the opening months of the Korean War. The Army recently handed McDaniel’s slightly corroded dog tag to his sons, Charles Jr. and Larry, who were so young when their father perished that they have little memory of him. The dog tag is the first tangible touchstone of hope that some or all of the remains

in the 55 boxes will be identifiable by the team of forensic experts, anthropologists and other specialists who already are sorting them and preparing to send some of them to a laboratory in Dover, Delaware, for DNA analysis. Charles, 71, told reporters he was moved to tears when he got the phone call at home in Indianapolis last week informing him that his father’s dog tag had been returned. “It’s a very mixed, jumbled moment for us,” he said, referring to the emotions he and his brother feel so many years after having grown up without their biological father, never knowing for sure what happened to him in a war many Americans have forgotten.

Army Takes Serious Steps Toward Interim Cruise Missile Protection Capability: The Army is heading toward acquiring an interim cruise missile protection capability as part of an effort being spearheaded by the air-and-missile defense cross functional team within the service’s new Futures Command. The Army’s AMD CFT took on the Indirect Fire Protection Capability Increment 2 program as one of its priorities in April this year at the request of the Army Under Secretary Ryan McCarthy due to challenges with the baseline program and the need to prioritize the development of a cruise missile defense capability, Col. William Darne, the AMD CFT’s chief of staff, said at the August Space and Missile Defense Symposium. Originally IFPC Inc. 2 was to address rockets, artillery and mortar threats but then the Army decided to focus on cruise missile and counter-unmanned aircraft systems missions for the increment as the C-RAM threat was being met through a different system in the service’s inventory. “We are working with the program manager,” Darne said, “and it looks like the direction we are likely to head is we have to come up with an interim capability, something we can get very quickly out there to provide some capability, and then, meanwhile, also figuring out what we need to do with the program of record.” The move to acquiring an interim solution is a 180-degree turn from what the Army said at the Association of the U.S. Army’s Global Force Symposium also in Huntsville. When asked by Defense News then about the possibility of an interim capability for IFPC, Army AMD leaders said they were sticking to their plan to field IFPC in roughly 2023 and were focused on that mission.

Three Army Veterans Awarded for Responding to Insurgent Attacks in Afghanistan: Master Sgt. Timothy Nix, Chief Warrant Officer Michael Dunne and Chief Warrant Officer Brandon Seabolt have all been retired from the Army for years, but they received awards for their heroic actions while working in Afghanistan. All three received the Medal of Valor, the Defense Department’s highest civilian valor award while serving as contractors. “I just grabbed a weapon and ran out,” said Nix, who was serving as an irregular warfare analyst on the Aug. 7, 2015, IED attack on Camp Integrity. Enemy fighters had blown open the entrance of the base, following up with small arms fire, grenades and suicide vests. “The gate came off collapsing the guard tower out there,” said Dunne, an operations intelligence integrator, who joined Nix. Later that year, Seabolt was working as a counter-IED expert in Helmand province. While on a mission with U.S. Army and Afghan special operators, the group came under withering fire. “We entered the compound with about 10 people, and there were two of us left in the fight,” he said. He single-handedly fought off the insurgents until back-up arrived. “Each of these award citations serves as a moving testament — and a fitting reminder — that the work being done by those who fight on the front lines and protect us all is exceptional, essential and extraordinary,” said Lt. Gen. Darsie Rogers, the deputy director for combat support at the Defense Threat Reduction Agency.

EVERYTHING I NEEDED TO KNOW IN LIFE I LEARNED AS AN INFANTRYMAN IN VIETNAM.

Artificial Intelligence May Help Match Veterans with Civilian Jobs: One of the problems military veterans have long faced is matching their skills learned in the armed forces to the needs of civilian employers, an issue Congress continues to grapple with in the fiscal 2019 spending bills. Many military jobs translate perfectly into the civilian sector — repairing an Abrams tank is much like repairing any heavy piece of machinery, for example — but many combat and leadership skills do not, on the surface, directly transfer. The Department of Veterans Affairs’ Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program is at the forefront of helping veterans find the right job after military service. The program’s counselors help assess capabilities of veterans and help men and women veterans find the right job. But the VR&E program, as it is known, is often short of counselors and funding. Federal law requires that there be one counselor for every 125 veterans seeking full-time work. But the program never quite reaches that ratio. VR&E would have to have added 266 new full-time counselors to meet that requirement, but the Veterans Benefits Administration only added 61 full-time workers for 2018, and slashed the budget for estimated overtime for counselors from nearly a million dollars to \$500,000 through 2019, leaving more veterans unassisted, according to the American Legion. But now a startup company that uses artificial intelligence may be able to make up some of this gap in matching veterans to the right civilian jobs. SkillMil, a San Francisco-based startup, was founded by a former Navy submarine commander, Noel Gonzalez in 2016, during his time at the Stanford Research Institute. Gonzalez’s company has designed software, driven by artificial intelligence algorithms, that translates the byzantine array of military job codes into an assessment relevant to civilian employers. And then SkillMil seeks to link veterans to civilian jobs that will fit their skills. The software is still in the stage of testing and fixing bugs, but SkillMil has already retained six companies with more than 2500 veterans waiting for help, Gonzalez said. Last year, using SkillMil’s beta version of the software, the company matched 40 percent of a test group to jobs, with an 80 percent satisfaction rate, and lower job turnover than usual, Gonzalez said. Normally, during the first 18 months after veterans leave the military, they have high job turnover and go through three or four companies before they find the right fit and stable employment, Gonzalez said. He traces that to the VA’s dependence on counselors and the relative inaccuracy of human matching.

VA Secretary Axes Union Bargaining Policy: Employees at the VA will no longer be able to use collective bargaining on issues indirectly related to their professional conduct, VA Secretary Robert Wilkie announced. Under U.S. Code, collective bargaining does not cover issues of “professional conduct or competence,” as they have to do with direct patient care or clinical competence. In addition, issues of peer review and employee compensation under that title are also non-negotiable. A 2010 memorandum of understanding approved by then-Secretary Eric Ken Shinseki, however, said that issues that are indirectly related or not related at all to patient care are negotiable. The MOU arose out of a working group comprised of both labor and management representatives. Wilkie rescinded that MOU, characterizing the change as part of the agency’s commitment to veteran care. “President Trump has made it clear that we want our providers laser-focused on caring for veterans and that’s exactly what we’re doing here,” said Wilkie. “This move ensures that unions can’t bargain on issues related to our providers’ professional conduct or competence, essentially patient care. Our nation’s heroes deserve no less.”

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Army, Air Guard and Air Reserve Assist to Fight California’s Largest Wildfire: Wildfires have been raging across the western United States this summer, and like many natural disasters, elements of the Army and Air National Guard, and the Air Force Reserve have been mobilized to assist local communities. One of the states worst hit by forest fires has been California, which is battling more than 15 major fires, including the Carr Fire and the Mendocino Complex Fire, burning more than 178,000 acres and 256,00 acres, respectively, according to California’s Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, or Cal Fire. The Mendocino blaze is now the largest wildfire in California’s history. The fire has destroyed more than 110 homes and roughly 100 other structures. Here’s a quick rundown of what National Guard and Air Force Reserve are doing to help. The California Air National Guard’s 195th Wing and the 163rd Attack Wing are conducting reconnaissance and surveillance mission. Air Force imagery experts and analysts monitor the fire via an MQ-9 Reaper, using the drone’s sensors to collect and send precise data. UH-66 Black Hawks dispense 600 gallons water buckets at the Mendocino Complex Fires. The 146th, 152nd and 153rd Airlift Wings equipped with C-130 Hercules aircraft out of CA, NV and CO, have flown over 150 missions discharging up to 3,000 gallons of fire retardant in less than five seconds, covering an area one-quarter of a mile long by 100 feet wide.

To: SGT Paul Terry "Foxhole" Loyd

Hello Foxhole...

I trust you are doing better post your arm development and I am hopeful full use will soon return. I am glad to hear you are out of the hospital, and for sure Juliana is both taking well care of you and also knows what's best. So, listen up troop!

I have been meaning to write this letter for many years now, but life always seems to get in the way...and it has been many years since we last saw each other, so the opportunity has escaped me on saying it in person.

Many years ago, in a hotel room in St. Louis, Missouri I personally recognized and thanked you for coming with SGT Paul Thomas and my RTO Whittier to look for the Vietcong sniper who had killed the 2nd Platoon's Point Man and had the entire 2nd platoon pinned down. I had put the three of you in for an Army ARCOM with VALOR, but it appears Uncle Sam never came through on the paper-work. My eighteen-year late hotel room presentation hopefully was some solace and recognition. I still choke up when I think of how brave you were!

But what I really want to say in this letter is how proud I am of you, and what a great job you did as one of my Squad Leaders! I know I have never expressed that openly, and I suspect our mutual ball busting of each other the past 43 years was our way of showing mutual respect and yes – love.

God you were an ornery cuss! But tough as nails, brave beyond a doubt or fault. And yes – I suspect I cut you no slack, but we all had a job to do and I dare say – we all performed well!

People forget how young we all were. Don't know your exact age at the time, but I suspect 20 -21-ish.

I was 22 when I arrived in the Platoon. It was seasoned NCO's like you that showed me the way, which only helped to get us all home safely and in one piece.

Now that we are both older and wiser, we can look back and feel confident we did the best job we were capable of at the time...and there were some horrible missions I called on you. Like the time we went to the lake with the captured Vietcong. I make no excuses, as I put the safety of the entire platoon before the one enemy soldier. I truly believe if a chopper came into the area to remove the detainee, every Vietcong and NVA would know where we were, and who knows where that intell would have led us the next 24 hours. But the day still wears heavily on many of us. Nevertheless – thank you for coming.

You were a good Squad Leader Foxhole, and I know the men assigned to you are thankful for that too! I know I was always comfortable and confident when I went on patrol with you as point squad.

...and yes, I know you love this Lieutenant and here's a reason you probably don't even remember.

At the 196 LIB St. Louis Reunion in 1988, we were all in a hotel hospitality suite when SGT Baker from another Bravo Company Platoon started picking on me, showing disrespect. You overheard, came over and would have started fisticuffs on my behalf, right there, a full 18 years after the war. It was okay for 1st Platoon members to pick on their Lieutenant, but not for anyone else. Much appreciated good buddy!

I will always remember how gracious you were to my son Jerry Younger and I when visiting your southern Indiana farm, and those are special days in both Jerry Jr and our memories and hearts! He stills talks about those days.

Look, I know how much you have personally struggled since the war....and I believe you have well fought the good fight. You have maintained your personal strength and integrity as an individual, and I am sure Juliana can well attest to that as well. But just know that you have never been alone. Not only me, but the entire Platoon have always been in the background, interested in your progress and silently cheering you on. Sucks to hear that, eh?

What else can I say...you are one of my life's heroes.

So today, may I also officially waive the *"Foxhole – You owe my one gook"* request.

I think we got our share, and then some...

The guy is probably in a Vietnamese bar today telling about how close he came to see-ing his last sunset from a passing tired combat weary gang of U.S. Army grunts. He deserves that drink!

Thank you, good buddy for making me whom I am today...and getting my young ass home in one piece. Continue to fight the good fight! I'm root'in for ya!

LT Jerry

1st PLT, B Co, 2/1, 196 LIB, Americal Division

(ed. Note: Foxhole passed September 27, 2013 from illness after a brave long fight)

