



## 2nd Battalion 1st Infantry Chapter,

### American Division Veterans Association (ADVA)

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Volume 10

“A Soldier Once And Always”

August 2020

**Commanders Corner:** Greetings to all my 2/1 Infantry Brothers and to all members that served with our sister units. June has come and it appears that our country is opening up some but unfortunately the virus continues to cause many problems through many areas of the country. I blame much of the problems on our young people who have never taken the virus seriously. Even during the beginning of the lockdown in March and April I would see many groups of young people who lockout of schools roaming about in groups with no face mask. Today I visited the grocery store to pick up some items and face mask are required but once I got inside I noted many people with no mask and they tended to be young people. I asked the manager why they were not enforcing the mask rule and he replied that they try but it's mostly impossible.



The last several weeks with the protesting and riots have been very disappointing in that rules and laws have been abandoned by our political leaders and in fact they have encouraged the mayhem. Unfortunately the last few weeks have brought back many bad memories of what we all faced as we returned from Vietnam and faced the Vietnam Riots and unrest and I find those days to mirror what we came home to but maybe for different reasons. The political leaders at that time did very little also so I am not too optimistic that things will be different now. It took our great country years to recover then and I can only hope it will be better this time around.

Looking forward we have the 4<sup>th</sup> of July coming up and I hope you all will be able to celebrate the independence of our country with your family and reflect how you have contributed to that independence with your many sacrifices. Most celebrations where I live have been cancelled but it allows us more time with our loved ones who are the most important. I will be flying many American flags at our home.

Again I hope this month's newsletter finds everyone well. Please don't forget that Rich can always use any input or news that you might want to share. Also if there are any suggestions that you might have on newsletter content Please give Rich feedback. I think he does a great job but I am sure that he would appreciate your feedback and suggestions.

August 7 is Purple Heart Day. On that date in 1782, George Washington established the Badge for Military Merit – forerunner of the Purple Heart. The award we know today was created in 1932, the bicentennial of Washington's birth, The National Purple Heart Hall of Honor estimates that roughly 1.8 million Purple Hearts have been awarded.

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

**Dwight Sypolt.**

Commander

**From H Duckworth O'Brien's "A Grunt's Life":** *Light Infantry:* Light Infantry is the Army's term To describe a fast, mobile, minimally-equipped fighting unit able to be deployed at a moment's notice to confront the enemy. This description was another think-tank idea that failed miserably in translation to actual combat in the boonies. Some soldiers carries as much as 95-100 pounds strapped to and stuffed into a rucksack laced to the frame of their backs. In some divisions, these men would leave their base camps and be in the field for weeks at a time. They were resupplied in the bush when possible, but not always in a timely manner. Therefore, they humped extra canteens of water, several days of C-rations, spare socks, personal items like cameras, tape recorders, ponchos, tent poles, as much ammo as possible (including fragmentation and smoke grenades) and extras like additional M-60 ammo, claymore mines, C-4 explosives, radio batteries and binoculars. Then add 10 pounds plus flak vest and their individual weapon and the weight mounts up fast.

**Chapter Activities:** **Chuck Holdaway** has almost completed an updated contract with the hotel and we have come to an agreement on a couple of sticking points. Should have the okay from the Reunion Oversight Committee to sign it in a couple of days.

**The National Army Museum** will be the first and only to tell the 245-year history of the U.S. Army in its entirety. Construction in the Museum has continued with a focus on completing the installation of the exhibits, the Veterans' Hall, Medal of Honor Garden, and Café Terrace. All workers and contractors are following the rules and regulations outlined by the CDC and the Governor of Virginia. As you may know, the government considers construction to be an essential service, as it helps keep our country and our economy on the move. Opening date for the Museum has been placed on hold because of COVID-19. Stay tuned for a new date TBA,

**Soldier Who Ran Over, Immobilized Shooter on Bridge gets Army's Highest Peacetime Award:** A soldier who officials say saved "countless lives" by driving his vehicle into a gunman who was shooting at people on a busy bridge near Fort Leavenworth, Kan., has been awarded the Soldier's Medal for heroism. Retired Master Sgt. David Royer was presented the medal the week of July 13, for his actions on Centennial Bridge, which links Kansas and Missouri, in late May, when he saw a man get out of a vehicle and start shooting. "I assessed the situation very quickly, looked around and just took the only action that I felt I could take," Royer said. "I accelerated my truck as quickly as possible and struck the active shooter and pinned him underneath my truck." The Soldier's Medal is awarded to a member of the armed forces who, while serving with the Army, distinguishes themselves by heroism not involving actual conflict with an enemy. It is the Army's highest and most prestigious peacetime award for valor.

**The National Mounted Warrior Museum planned at Fort Hood, Texas:** Plans to build the first phase of an \$11 million mounted warfare museum at Fort Hood, Texas, have been approved after nearly 10 years of planning, fundraising and designing, the foundation spearheading the facility announced. The National Mounted Warrior Museum, which is slated to open in 2022, will feature the story line of America's war fighting from the Revolutionary War to the conflicts of today. Construction will take about a year and could begin as early as September, said Bob Crouch, a retired Army lieutenant colonel and vice president of the National Mounted Warfare Foundation, which has led efforts to build the museum. Fort Hood officials will make the final decision on when crews can begin work. "The intent is to do a groundbreaking ceremony," Crouch said, noting any plans will follow necessary guidelines of the corona virus pandemic. "We're hoping things are at a point where we can make a big deal out of it."



**Marine Corps Begins Shutdown of Tank Battalions:** Marines with 1st Tank Battalion recently watched the last of their unit's tanks depart Twenty-nine Palms, California. Marines surrounded an oversized flatbed as the tanks were loaded up onto the vehicle and driven away. Followed by the deactivation ceremony for Alpha Company, 4th Tank Battalion, at Camp Pendleton, California. The unit is the first of several companies facing deactivations. The change is part of an aggressive plan the Marine Corps' top general set in place called Force Design 2030. The plan will set Marines up for future fights, defending ships while at sea and operating in hotly contested spots near the shore. To be ready for those missions, the Marine Corps must get smaller to get better. That includes cutting all tank battalions and getting rid of the vehicles.

**Marine Corps Marathon Canceled for 1st Time in Its History:** Marine Corps Marathon officials announced recently that the traditional fall race will be canceled for the first time in its 45-year history. The 2020 in-person Marine Corps Marathon events scheduled to take place in and around Washington, D.C., from Oct. 23 to Oct. 25 will now go entirely virtual. Rick Nealis, the Marine Corps Marathon Organization's director, said, "We understand this is disappointing news for many, but we could no longer envision a way to gather together in compliance with safety guidelines."

**VA Patient Deaths from Corona virus Hit 1,200:** Veterans Affairs leaders declared that their corona virus response in recent months has been a "great success," with active case numbers falling and department hospitals beginning to resume normal operations. VA Secretary Robert Wilkie added that department staff are still "routinely putting their lives on the line and sacrificing time with their families to care for veterans, most of whom are older and are therefore more vulnerable to the virus." As of Thursday morning, 1,200 patients in the VA health system have died from complications related to [the virus](#). That's up almost 10 percent from one week ago, and a significant rise from the 512 reported deaths at the start of May.

**Pres. Trump vows bases named for Confederate leaders 'will not be changing':** President Donald Trump vowed on Friday that military bases named for Confederate leaders "will not be changing" despite congressional momentum on the issue, another increase in tensions over the issue of Confederate symbolism in the military. Trump's latest tweet on the topic comes amid reports of White House anger directed at Defense Secretary Mark Esper for last week effectively banning display of the Confederate battle flag at all Defense Department sites. CNN this week cited multiple insider sources that Trump was unhappy with Esper's move, saying that the flag should be seen as a symbol of historic pride and not as a connection to America's slavery past. The outlet also said the relationship between the two men is strained, but Esper's job appears safe for now. Pentagon officials declined comment on the report. On Friday, Trump took to social media to announce he had been discussing the annual defense authorization bill with Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Jim Inhofe, R-Okla., "who has informed me that he WILL NOT be changing the names of our great Military Bases and Forts, places from which we won two World Wars (and more!)"

**Air Force A new video shows Russian military vehicles harassing a US convoy in Syria. It isn't the first time:** U.S. and Russian military vehicles in northeastern Syria appear to be skirmishing in an undeclared road war that has largely escaped the rest of the world's attention. "The encounters happen a few times each month and, thus far, have been resolved without escalation," said Army Col. Myles Caggins, a spokesman for the U.S. military-led coalition in Syria and Iraq. Most recently, a video has emerged on Twitter that shows an encounter between U.S. M-ATVs and Russian vehicles in Al Hasakah, Syria, in which a Russian commander reportedly berated a U.S. service member for following Russian vehicles. Brett McGurk, the former U.S. envoy to the international coalition that is fighting ISIS, tweeted "Mr. President: Pick up the phone and tell Putin to stop harassing our troops." The video shows an American M-ATV following two vehicles that are flying the Russian flag. It then abruptly cuts to show two U.S. M-ATVs and a white pickup truck on the side of the road. A man speaking Russian on a radio can be heard and later another Russian vehicle emerges in front of the U.S. vehicles, indicating the convoy may be blocked from going forward. The U.S. military currently has about 600 troops in northeast Syria and roughly another 150 service members at the Al Tanf Garrison as part of the war against ISIS.

**B-1s Return to Guam:** A pair of B-1B Lancer bombers recently deployed to Andersen Air Force Base in Guam to conduct training as part of a bomber task force mission. The B-1s, from the 28th Wing at Ellsworth Air Force Base in South Dakota, will support Pacific Air Forces as they train with allies, partners and joint forces, PACAF said in a release. These bombers are from the 28th Wing's 37th Expeditionary Bomb Squadron. Roughly 170 airmen deployed with them. "Our team has been actively preparing for [bomber task force] operations to ensure we're ready and capable of meeting any requirement across the globe," squadron commander Lt. Col. Lincoln Coleman said in the release. "We are excited for the opportunity to integrate with our partners and allies in the Pacific theater and increase our joint lethality." A KC-135 Stratotanker from the 909th Air Refueling Squadron at Kadena Air Base in Japan refueled the bombers on their way.

**A REAL MAN IS... the kind of man that when his feet hit the floor each morning the devil says, "Oh Crap, he's up!"**

**Confederate flag effectively banned from military installations:** The conversation around what the Confederate flag represents and whether it's appropriate to fly has been put to bed in the military, at least when it comes to displays on Defense Department installations. Defense Secretary Mark Esper issued new guidance recently for allowable flags, not explicitly banning the Confederate one, but laying out a set of criteria for allowable flags that does not include it. "Flags are powerful symbols, particularly in the military community for whom flags embody common mission, common histories, and the special, timeless bond of warriors," he wrote in a memo, adding, "The flags we fly must accord with the military imperatives of good order and discipline, treating all our people with dignity and respect, and rejecting divisive symbols." The display of Confederate flags in general has come under much discussion in recent years, reaching a fever pitch this summer, as protests against racism and police brutality — particularly against Black men and women — have surged. For the military services, which have expressed a belief in inclusivity, the display of Confederate flags — whether in offices or group housing — became a target of new policies. The Marine Corps led the way in June, banning the flag service-wide. Rather than specifically target the Confederate flag, Esper's guidance narrows down the types of flags that can be displayed, effectively banning any that reflects pride or affinity for a movement, political cause or fandom, including Black Lives Matter, LGBTQ rights and any number of professional or college sports teams.

**Military Stolen Valor Cases on the Rise:** Investigators at the National Archives have taken steps to make their research resources more available to federal and local law enforcement to deal with what they suspect is an uptick in "stolen valor" cases to obtain benefits or loans during the COVID-19 pandemic. "We believe they're doing it," said Jason Metrick, assistant Inspector General for Investigations at the National Archives. "It's a matter of exposing or finding it." The archives have jurisdiction over the nation's repository of military records at the National Personnel Record Center (NPRC). "We see lots of ID theft" by individuals seeking to claim a veteran's identity to get a credit card or a loan, Metrick said. In an interview Monday, Metrick and Waleska McLellan, special agent in charge at the Office of Inspector General in the National Archives and Records Administration, said their initiative is focused on putting out the word their resources are there to help in stolen valor cases. "We have a responsibility to protect these records" from misuse, McLellan said. "We want to let folks know we're here," Metrick added. Some law enforcement agencies "may not know we exist." McLellan and Metrick said the initiative is not intended to go after that 30-something blowhard at the end of the bar who just has to tell anybody who will listen about how tough he had it on Iwo Jima. Money or some type of tangible benefit is the key element in bringing federal charges against an individual falsely claiming valor awards," the fact sheet states. Congress passed a bill in 2005 to criminalize false claims about military service and awards. But in the landmark 2012 case of *U.S. v Alvarez*, the Supreme Court ruled that the bill was an unconstitutional violation of free speech rights. In essence, the court ruled that lying in itself is not a crime. Lawmakers went back to the drawing board and passed the Stolen Valor Act of 2013, making it a crime punishable by up to one year in jail to make false claims about military service and awards with the intent of seeking monetary gain, employment or other benefits available to veterans.

**Number of American troops in Afghanistan drops to 8,600 as Taliban make big changes ahead of expected talks:** The Taliban have put the son of the movement's feared founder in charge of their military wing and added several powerful figures to their negotiating team, Taliban officials said. The shake-up, one of the most significant in years, comes ahead of expected talks with Kabul aimed at ending decades of war in Afghanistan. As head of a newly united military wing, 30-year-old Mullah Mohammad Yaqoob brings his father's fiercely uncompromising reputation to the battlefield. Equally significant is the addition of four members of the insurgent group's leadership council to the 20-member negotiating team, Taliban officials told The Associated Press. The shuffle, overseen by Taliban leader Mullah Hibatullah Akhunzada, is meant to tighten his control over the movement's military and political arms, the officials said on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the inner workings of the Taliban. Analysts say the shake-up could be good news for negotiations with the Afghan political leadership, and a sign of how seriously the Taliban are taking this second — and perhaps most critical — step in a deal Washington signed with the insurgents in February.

**With confirmation of National Guard Bureau Honcho, Trump has chosen all Joint Chiefs:**

The Senate confirmed Army Lt. Gen. Daniel Hokanson as the next chief of the National Guard Bureau. Hokanson is expected to be promoted to the rank of four-star general and replace Air Force Gen. Joseph L. Lengyel on the Joint Chiefs of Staff in early August. Lengyel has served as chief of the NGB since August 2016. "This is an important and pivotal time in the history of our National Guard. We face complex, dynamic missions overseas and here at home," Hokanson told the Senate Armed Services Committee in a hearing on June 18. "The next chief of the National Guard Bureau must continue to effectively navigate this unprecedented landscape and work closely with stakeholders at the international, federal, state, and local levels." Currently serving as director of the Army National Guard, Hokanson has also served as vice chief of the NGB and deputy commander of U.S. Northern Command. In his new position, he will be responsible for the domestic response and combat preparedness of more than 450,000 national guardsmen in the Army and Air National Guard. The chief of the NGB is also a senior military adviser to the president, secretary of defense, and National Security Council. In his June 18 testimony, Hokanson mentioned priorities for the National Guard including enhancing cyber capabilities, ensuring adequate manpower and training, and maintaining interoperability with active duty components and allied nations.

I know I shouldn't have done this but I am 83 years old and I was in McDonald's drive through line this morning and a young lady behind me leaned on her horn and started mouthing something because I was taking too long placing my order. So when I got up to the first window I paid for her order as well as my own. The cashier must have told her what I had done, because as we moved up she leaned out of her window and mouthed "Thank You." Obviously embarrassed because I had repaid her rudeness with kindness. When I got up to the second window I showed the clerk the two receipts and took her food along with my own. Now she has to go back to the queue and start all over again. Don't blow your horn at old people, they have been around a long time.

## The Deed

A poem written by Fred Wollenberg somewhere in South Vietnam 1968-1969: sent in by Ronnie Pettit

We rode on powerful steeds  
Across the burning sand  
We fought and sold terror  
In this war torn land.

I saw man, women, child  
Cry, scream, and yell.  
I witnessed ungodly cruelty  
Far worse than any had

I did this deed and tell me,  
Was I right or wrong?  
Should I feel pitifully weak  
Or heroic, bold and strong

Should I ask forgiveness  
For this deed I've done  
Or should I feel proud  
I helped the war be won?

Every night should I cry  
Myself to sleep and call myself a sinner  
Or should I feel exalted  
And call myself a winner?

You be the judge, tell me right or wrong  
I'll let you have your say,  
For you see Mom and Dad  
I killed a men today.

*"Foul Fred"*

**Severely Disabled Veterans Will Soon Be Eligible for Bigger Adaptive Housing Grants:** Congress on July 20, approved legislation that raises the amount of money awarded to severely injured veterans to make their homes disability-friendly and increases the number of times they can apply for the benefit. The Ryan Kules and Paul Benne Specially Adaptive Housing Improvement Act will increase the cap on grants awarded to some veterans to purchase or adapt their homes and will let them apply for the funding up to six times. The bill also quadruples the number of grants available each year from the Department of Veterans Affairs, from 30 to 120, and adds legally blind veterans to the list of former service members eligible to apply. Under the legislation, the total amount an eligible veteran could access would be \$98,492, an increase of nearly \$13,000, to go to the purchase of a house with special features.

**Congress awards its highest honor to WWII crew of USS Indianapolis:** Congress has awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, to surviving crew members of the USS Indianapolis, the ship that delivered key components of the first nuclear bomb and was later sunk by Japan during World War II. The ship, with 1,195 personnel delivered enriched uranium and other parts of the atomic bomb that was later dropped on Hiroshima, Japan, in August 1945. The ship was sunk by Japanese torpedoes on July 30, 1945. Of nearly 900 men who went into the Philippine Sea, just 316 survived before being rescued nearly five days later. The death toll of 879 was the largest single disaster in U.S. Navy history. Survivors were stranded in the open ocean with few lifeboats and almost no food or water.

**87-year-old Korean War veteran graduates high school:** A Korean War veteran who dropped out of high school during his junior year in 1952 to join the U.S. Air Force and became a pilot during the war has finally received his high school diploma at age 87. Ed Sanders was able to get his Jackson High School diploma through a state of Michigan act that allows school boards to award diplomas to veterans who left high school to serve in World War II, the Korean War or Vietnam. "I never dreamed I would be able to graduate," Sanders [told MLive.com](#). "I'm so thankful for that." When Sanders turned 18 and dropped out of school to join the Air Force, he wanted to be a fighter pilot. He took his first plane ride at the age of 15 when a flight school moved into the Jackson County Airport. The owner allowed him to take free lessons if he worked at the school. Sanders ended up training to become a B-47 bomber pilot.



**Wilkie: 'Trump is the first president since 1890s' to recognize veteran suicide crisis:** Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert Wilkie told a conservative media outlet that President Donald Trump is the first president in more than 100 years to take veteran suicide seriously. "President Trump is the first president since the 1890s who recognized the scourge of veteran suicide," Wilkie said during an interview on the One America News Network, known as OANN, a pro-Trump media outlet. Wilkie denied making the comment later during a call with reporters and pointed to the Trump administration's work on veterans issues. "The Trump administration has allowed me to present the two largest budgets in this department's history," he said. "No one has ever tackled suicide in a comprehensive way." Wilkie's appearance on OANN is not the first time that the VA secretary has spoken to a conservative news outlet. He was interviewed on Breitbart, where he warned "socialism" will destroy the VA. At the time of the interview, self-identified democratic socialist, Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., was the frontrunner in the Democratic presidential primary. Paul Rieckhoff, who founded Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, a nonprofit veterans advocacy group, challenged Wilkie's comment on Trump's efforts with veteran suicide. "Nobody has done enough, but it's a lie to say nobody has done anything but Trump," Rieckhoff said. "Anyone who's spiking the ball on suicide is way out of touch."

**Poland Wraps Deal For Permanent US Troops, Drones, Special Ops:** The United States will station a permanent garrison of troops in Poland, according to an agreement reached between Washington and Warsaw. The announcement of the pact came just days after the Pentagon announced it was pulling 12,000 troops out of Germany. It's not clear how long it will take to implement the growth of the US footprint in Poland from the current 4,000 troops to 5,500. But the move will require some heavy logistical lifting, including new facilities for US drones, helicopters, an armored brigade combat team, and special operations forces. Details remain scarce, but the Polish government has long pushed for a larger American footprint, and the Trump administration's frustration over Germany's failure to reach NATO-suggested funding goals has forced the Pentagon to look elsewhere for basing options. logistics, and housing requirements of the US military.

### Map of Vietnam

For those of you that might have forgotten where you were during this Conflict. Gerry Hughes has come up with a very good representation of the Area of Operations where we served from 1967-1974.

