



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



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Volume 10

“A Soldier Once And Always”

December 2020

Commanders Corner: Greetings to all my 2/1 Infantry brothers and to all members that served with our sister units. Also welcome to all family members that are most important part of our total family. Unfortunately November was a sad month in that we received news that our brother Roger Grazioplene passed away. Our prayers go out to Mickey and all his family and friends. Roger was a great leader and brother and a great friend to everyone. It is sad we were unable to gather in August this year where we would have had time to spend with Roger and Mickey. Roger was the last recipient of the Bravo Knife. He was awarded temporary custodian at our 2018 National Reunion.



I hope everyone was able to have some sort of a decent Thanksgiving this year and able to connect with family in person or by social media. My brother is in the VA Nursery home in Clarksburg and he is totally blind but I was able to connect by telephone since they don't allow visitors into the center. Unfortunately he is also confined to his room since they had some employees test positive for COVID. It's been a busy month for the Sybolt family as we moved to Nashville TN from Virginia Beach. Our new address is 615 Estes Road, Nashville TN 37215 and Kimberly and I would welcome anyone that might want to travel to or through Nashville. We do expect this to be our final home. As we enter December I am sure I am not alone to see 2020 behind us. It's been a tough year and we can all hope that 2021 will be a big improvement. I for one am hoping that we will all be able to gather in Indianapolis next August as none of us are getting younger and who knows how much time we have left to enjoy each other's camaraderie and friendship.

I want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! Everyone keep safe over the Holidays but try to enjoy your families and friends and may the bond of battle never be broken!

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

Dwight Sybolt.

Commander

From H Duckworth O'Brien's "A Grunt's Life": Tunnel Rat: You are one of the smallest men in the company and think you have a great advantage over your taller buddies. You're a smaller target and less likely to get hit. It gives you a sense of gratitude about your size for once... until your unit finds an enemy tunnel. The LT looks around for a "volunteer" to hop in the dark hole and see if the enemy is inside. He calls out your name and you look to see who the poor SOB is. When one of your buddies taps you on the shoulder and tells you it's you, you realize your size isn't such a plus after all.

Here's When Your 2020 Military Tax Statements will be Ready: Military tax statements should be available online on myPay by no later than Jan. 25, according to the Defense Finance and Accounting Service. Some will be available online weeks earlier; the schedule depends on your status and your branch of service. For those who receive their tax statements by mail, those forms will be mailed no later than Jan. 31. Military retirees will have access to their retiree 1099R statements on myPay starting Dec. 15.

As for tax statements on myPay for active duty and members of the Reserve components:

- **Reserve Army, Navy, Air Force W-2: Jan. 8**
- Active duty and Reserve Marine Corps W-2: Jan. 13
- Active duty Army, Navy, Air Force W-2: Jan. 25

Tax statements for annuitants will be ready on myPay by Dec. 19; federal civilian employees serviced by DFAS will have access to their W-2 statements by Jan. 20.

First Colors Event to Raise Flag over new WW I Memorial: On Dec 11, 2020 the U.S. flag will be raised over the new World War I Memorial in Washington, D.C., for the first time during a live broadcast event. The "First Colors" ceremony will trace the path of an American flag that first flew over the nation's capital April 6, 2017, commemorating the centennial of the day the United States went to war in 1917. The flag then flew over the American World War I battlefield cemeteries of Europe, honoring the 116,516 American who gave their all during the war. It's final. Destination is Washington, where the flag will fly in perpetuity above the National World War I Memorial. Featuring Oscar nominee Gary Sinise, "First Colors" will include elected officials, military leaders and performances from the U.S. Army's Band "Pershing's Own," the 369th Regiment Harlem Hellfighters Tribute Band and the original cast of the musical "Hello Girls." The commemorative flag's path recalls the epic journey to Europe by the legendary doughboys, honors those who made the ultimate sacrifice on the fields of battle, and rejoice at their triumphant return home.

Arlington National Cemetery Announces Revised Plans for Wreaths Across America: Arlington National Cemetery will close to the public from Dec. 13 to 19 to allow Christmas wreaths to be placed at 267,000 graves, officials announced. The wreaths will be placed as part of the Wreaths Across America event, an annual tradition during which volunteers gather at cemeteries around the world to adorn the graves of American veterans and service members. Arlington National Cemetery announced last week it would take part in the event this year, despite an earlier decision to abstain from the tradition because of the corona virus pandemic. The decision to cancel the event drew widespread criticism, and Secretary of the Army Ryan McCarthy ordered Arlington National Cemetery leaders to reverse the decision. President Donald Trump said over Twitter that he was the one to credit for the reversal.



Kiowa Pilot Becomes First Active-Duty Soldier to Earn Extremely Rare Astronaut Device: This month, Lt. Col. Anne McClain became the first active-duty soldier in Army history to earn the rare astronaut uniform device. Gen. James H. Dickinson, commander of U.S. Space Command, presented the Army OH-58D Kiowa Warrior pilot and combat veteran with the device during a Nov. 10 ceremony at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas, according to a U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command news release. The device is considered the rarest qualification device any soldier can receive. Approved in 1983, it features a gold-colored shooting star with three contrails in elliptical orbit. It's designed to be placed on existing aviation badges. McClain became eligible for the device after completing her 204-day mission to the International Space Station (ISS) as a flight engineer for NASA Expeditions 58/59 from Dec. 3, 2018, to June 24, 2019, according to the release. A 2002 graduate of U.S. Military Academy at West Point, McClain was selected as an astronaut candidate in June 2013 and completed her training two years later. Prior to being selected as an astronaut candidate, she served 15 months flying combat missions in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

VA may distribute corona virus vaccines within a couple of weeks, Wilkie tells veterans groups:

The Department of Veterans Affairs expects to distribute corona virus vaccines within a week or two, with a focus on inoculating high-risk veterans and staff members, VA officials told veteran group leaders. Physicians and doctors treating veterans in covid-19 wards will be a priority for the vaccine, VA Secretary Wilkie, who oversees the nation's largest integrated health network, said on the call. VA's effort will be an early test of the federal government's enormous task of vaccine distribution as infections and daily deaths soar to new heights. More than 5,000 veterans have died under VA care, along with 74 staff members, according to VA data. Veterans and staff members in other high-risk categories, such as spinal cord injury wards, are also in the high-priority groups.

Army-Navy Game to be held at West Point for first time since World War II: The 121st Army-Navy Game will be hosted by the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York, this December, marking the first time it has been played at a home site since World War II, the two service academies' athletic directors announced in October. The game was supposed to be held in Philadelphia, but it was moved after Pennsylvania placed attendance restrictions on outdoor events due to the corona virus pandemic. Those limits would not have allowed the entire Corps of Cadets and Brigade of Midshipmen to attend, according to a West Point statement. Instead, the game will be held at West Point's Michie Stadium on Dec. 12. There will likely not be fan attendance allowed at the stadium beyond the Corps of Cadets and Brigade of Midshipmen, the statement added. Midshipmen and cadets, however, will be present and some COVID-19 mitigation measures are expected for those individuals, said West Point spokesman Lt. Col. Christopher Ophardt. Army's uniform for the game inspired by Wolfhounds of Korean War: The U.S. Army's Hawaii-based "Tropic Lightning" 25th Infantry Division is serving as the inspiration for the uniforms to be worn. The Wolfhounds have more Medal of Honor recipients than any other regiment going back to the Spanish-American War. This year's Navy uniforms, created by Under Armour, highlight the leadership, service and tradition the Naval Academy has showcased over the past 175 years. Under Armour designer Adam Dougherty worked with Navy associate athletic director and equipment operations Greg Morgenthaler to develop the 2020 uniforms. This marks the 13th consecutive season the Midshipmen will wear special uniforms for what has been billed as "America's Game."

Remains of 36 more Korean War Service Members Identified Over Year Period: Dozens of U.S. soldiers

who went missing during the Korean War have been found and identified in the past year, but the search has been slowed by the corona virus pandemic. The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency said the remains of 36 soldiers have been accounted for during a yearlong remains recovery process from Oct. 1, 2019, to Sept. 30, Voice of America's Korean service reported recently' U.S. soldiers accounted for include Marine Private First Class Henry E. Ellis. Ellis was 22 years old when he was killed in action on Nov. 30, 1950. Ellis, who was accounted for on Sept. 29, was defending a convoy near Koto-ri, North Korea, according to the agency. The number of remains recovered and identified is down from the previous year, when DPAA said it had accounted for 73 soldiers. The agency said the pandemic has reduced excavations, according to VOA. North Korea began to return the remains of unidentified soldiers after leader Kim Jong Un and U.S. President Donald Trump met at their historic summit in Singapore in 2018. Some of the remains delivered to the United States were identified as South Korean soldiers. In June, the United States returned the remains of 147 South Koreans to Seoul. The U.S. Department of Defense estimates about 7,500 U.S. troops remain missing in action. North Korea previously handed over remains to the United States, between 1990 and 1994, and between 1996 and 2006, according to VOA.

During World War II, my father often found himself stuck with KP duty. One day, convinced he could improve things, he told the head cook, "If you give me a paring knife, I could peel these potatoes faster." The cook turned slowly to my father and said, "Son, you're in the Army. You have plenty of time." — Jack Girard

Trees for Troops: Trees for Troops, a program of the Christmas SPIRIT Foundation, provides free, farm-grown Christmas Trees to United States armed forces members in all branches of the military and their families, through donations, sponsorships, grants and the work of many volunteers. Tree growers have been providing free trees for military families for years. In 2005, FedEx contacted the Christmas SPIRIT Foundation, the 501 (c)(3) charitable branch of the National Christmas Tree Association, and wanted to be involved in the foundation's mission. Together the two organizations expanded the idea of providing Christmas Trees to military families, and Trees for Troops was born. Since 2005, 243,955 free, farm-grown Christmas Trees have been provided to troops and military families in the United States and overseas through Trees for Troops. Thousands of trees are donated by American farm families and the public, and FedEx delivers these trees to more than 70 military bases in the U.S. and overseas. FedEx has logged more than 800,000 ground miles for the Trees for Troops program. 2020 Trees for Troops plans are coming together. We will be sending about 14,500 trees to 79 total military bases between November 30 and December 11. Trees are being donated by farms, nurseries, retail lots and individual supporters from all around America.



Vietnam Veteran with Bladder Cancer, other Serious Illnesses Would get Presumptive Benefit Status in Final Defense Budget Bill: After years of fighting with federal officials, Vietnam veterans suffering from bladder cancer, Parkinsonism or hypothyroidism would be granted presumptive benefits status under language included in the final version of the annual defense authorization bill unveiled recently. If passed into law, the mandate would require Veterans Affairs officials to begin granting fast-track disability status for about 34,000 veterans suffering from the three conditions. It would also represent a major victory for veterans advocates who have pushed for the change for years. But the policy bill still faces a veto threat from President Donald Trump on other, unrelated issues. Department officials have blocked the move to grant presumptive benefits status in recent years while they conduct additional scientific research into the connection between the illnesses and exposure to chemical defoliants during the Vietnam War. Their research comes despite past findings from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine linking the medical problems to Agent Orange exposure.

History is not here to like or dislike. It is there for you to learn from it. And if it offends you, even better. Because you are less likely to repeat it. It's not yours to erase. It belongs to all of us.

Former SEAL, not-for-profit sue VA over new rules restricting caregiver benefits: A former Navy SEAL and a veterans not-for-profit are suing the Department of Veterans Affairs for restricting disabled veterans' access to benefits and caregivers. Andrew Sheets, a former petty officer second class who saw 33 combat missions in Afghanistan from 2003-2004, and Veteran Warriors, Inc. alleged in a complaint filed Monday that the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers Improvements and Amendments Under the VA Mission Act of 2018, more commonly known as the Final Rule, "is arbitrary and capricious and exceeds VA authority." The VA caregiver program, established under the Caregiver Act in 2010, currently provides thousands of dollars a month to the caregivers of nearly 20,000 veterans who separated from the military after Sept. 11, 2001. The Final Rule was designed to expand these benefits, first to veterans who served before May 1975 and then to those who served between 1975 and 2001. Officials said the expanded benefits of the Final Rule, which went into effect on Oct. 1, 2020, could reach an estimated 41,000 individuals in the coming years. The Final Rule also changed the caregiver program's eligibility requirements, meaning current recipients would be reevaluated and possibly removed from the program. Rather than mandate a specific disability rating for eligibility, the initial Caregiver Act was open to veterans who could not perform at least one activity of daily living as defined by the act or needed supervision, protection or instruction. Among its many revisions, the Final Rule reduced the number of benefit tiers from three to two and required a disability rating greater than 70 percent and in-person care services to be eligible.

Can States Fire Employees Who Leave for Military Duty? Should a federal law that protects National Guard members and reservists from being fired from their private sector jobs while they are deployed also apply to state government jobs? The U.S. Supreme Court hinted it might weigh in on the issue. The U.S. Supreme Court has requested additional information from the Texas attorney general's office on why the state should not be held accountable to the 1994 Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) which prohibits employers from retaliating against or firing National Guard members and reservists who are pulled from their full-time jobs to go on active duty. The case that sparked the court's interest, *Le Roy Torres v. The Texas Department of Public Safety*, involves a former Texas state trooper who came back from a yearlong deployment to Balad, Iraq, too sick to perform his former patrol duties. Torres spent a year breathing in toxic ash from the massive open air pit at Balad that may have also sickened thousands of other Iraq war veterans. In an email to McClatchy, Torres said the state did not provide an alternative desk job that could accommodate his deteriorating health. Instead, he said, he was forced to resign in 2012. Torres now relies on supplemental oxygen and is largely confined to his home in Robstown, Texas. "The Texas Department of Public Safety came to my house and stripped me of my credentials and my patrol car in front of my family like a criminal," Torres said. The case could have wide-ranging implications for National Guard members and reservists across the country who work in state government positions as their full-time job, and is being watched closely by other states that have not yet set their own policy on the issue, said Brian Lawler, an attorney with the Pilot Law Corp., one of the firms petitioning the U.S. Supreme Court on behalf of Torres. In their filing to the Supreme Court, the law firms representing Torres said as many as 800,000 current or former National Guard members and reservists hold full-time state or local government jobs across the country.

Top Secret: Biden gets Access to President’s Daily Brief: Joe Biden got his first look as president-elect at the President’s Daily Brief, a top secret summary of U.S. intelligence and world events. Biden has already had eyes on different iterations of the so-called PDB, which is tailored to the way each president likes to absorb information. More than a decade ago, Biden read President George W. Bush’s PDB during Biden’s transition into the vice presidency. After that, he read President Barack Obama’s PDB for eight years. Now, after a four-year break, he’s reading President Donald Trump’s PDB. “The briefers almost certainly will be asking Biden what he prefers in terms of format and style,” said David Priess, author of “The President’s Book of Secrets,” a history of the PDB. “At a minimum, they’re seeing what seems to resonate most with him so that when they make the book his book, they can tailor it to him.” Obama’s PDB was a 10- to 15-page document tucked in a leather binder, which he found waiting for him on the breakfast table. Later in his presidency, he liked reading the ultra-secret intelligence brief on a secured iPad. From now until Inauguration Day, Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris will be reading the PDB crafted for Trump, who had delayed giving Biden and Harris access to it as he contests the outcome of the election.

Army’s 82nd Airborne Training Operation and Holiday Toy Drive to Take Place Dec. 2-3: Fort Bragg paratroopers are making their final preparations to jump for the 82nd Airborne Division’s second annual Presents from Paratroopers holiday toy drive. Presents from Paratroopers is a combination training and charity event where Fort Bragg paratroopers — soldiers assigned to an airborne unit and on active jump status, including qualified North Carolina National Guard and Army Reserve personnel — can enter a raffle to earn coveted foreign jump wings on Dec. 2 and Dec. 3. Each paratrooper can obtain one raffle ticket by donating a toy. The division is partnering with the Travis Mills Foundation to distribute the toys to local charitable organizations across the state of North Carolina for distribution to needy families this holiday season, according to Maj. Tim Crawley, the division’s deputy chaplain. This year’s iteration of the charity event will feature 1,000 parachutes, of which 600 will be distributed as part of the lottery, said Crawley. The toy donation and lottery will occur on Dec. 1. Crawley expects “anywhere between 1,500 and 2,000 toys” this year.

The Joint Chiefs Chairman says Permanent Basing Overseas needs Reconsideration: Army Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, shared concerns on that the post-World War II/Cold War-era model of sending troops and their families overseas for years-long tours is no longer the best idea. “I think it’s time we take a hard look at that,” Milley said. “I think we have too much infrastructure overseas, and too much permanent infrastructure.” That large and obvious presence is an insurance policy for some allies, he said, as it makes them feel safe from adversaries. “But I think from a strategic standpoint and an operational standpoint, I’m not so sure that is a strong move,” he added, That presence puts a target on American troops, and more importantly, the families they bring with them to duty stations in Japan, Korea, Germany and more. “I have a problem with that,” he said. “I don’t have a problem with us, those of us in uniform, being in harm’s way — this is what we get paid for. This is what our job is, right?” The answer is probably more rotational deployments, he added, like those that already happen in Korea, Germany and Guam, where U.S.-based units forward deploy for nine months, or so, without making a full permanent change-of-station move.

The Bone Just Got Badder: Air Force flies External Cruise Missile on B-1: The Air Force has, for the first time, flown a B-1B Lancer bomber with an inert cruise missile mounted externally. And the Nov. 20 demonstration could pave the way for the Lancer to eventually carry hypersonic missiles mounted on an external pylon, the Air Force said recently. The external captive carry flight, first reported by Military.com, took place at Edwards Air Force Base in California, and included a B-1 from the 412th Test Wing’s 419th Flight Test Squadron, part of the Global Power Combined Test Force. The B-1 carried an inert Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile, or JASSM, under an external pylon. “Adapting a small number of our healthiest B-1s to carry hypersonic weapons is vital to bridge between the bomber force we have today, to the force of tomorrow,” said Gen. Tim Ray, the head of Air Force Global Strike Command, in the release. “This is a major step forward in our global precision fires capability and it is important we pursue these technologies to remain ahead of our competitors.” Ray said that he hopes to modify a “limited number” of B-1s “to become the roving linebacker of the western Pacific and the North Atlantic.”



Personnel Records Center Temporarily Halts Operations: The National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, Missouri, has been closed to the public since March and is now temporarily shutting down most of its remaining operations because of increased COVID-19 spread in the area. There is no prediction for when full operations might resume. “The NPRC will be operating at various degrees of reduced on-site capacity until the public health emergency has ended,” the center says in a statement. This action slows but does not completely halt activity on veterans’ claims that often require proof found in military records. “We will continue servicing emergency requests associated with medical treatments, burials, and homeless veterans trying to gain admittance to a homeless shelter,” the center said in a statement on its website. “Please refrain from submitting non-emergency requests such as replacement medals, administrative corrections, or records research until we return to pre-COVID staffing levels.”

Trump Pardons Former National Security Adviser Michael Flynn: President Donald Trump issued a full presidential pardon for former national security adviser Michael Flynn, who pleaded guilty to lying to FBI investigators about his interaction with Russian contacts during Trump’s 2016 transition to the White House. Flynn, a retired Army lieutenant general who led the Defense Intelligence Agency from 2012 to 2014. Trump announced the pardon on Twitter, calling the move a “great honor” and adding that “I know you will now have a truly fantastic Thanksgiving!”

A Nation that forgets its past has no future. Winston Churchill

Blood sisters and sisters in arms: 2 sets of sisters graduate Marine boot camp together: For many Marine recruits, the comrades they endure boot camp with are quickly seen as brothers or sisters in arms. But for five new Marines, the sisterhood was more than metaphorical. In early November two sets of sisters — Ashley and Amber Valentine, along with Maria, Vanessa and Melissa Placido Jaramillo — graduated from Marine Corps Boot Camp at Parris Island, South Carolina, alongside each other. The sisters pushed each other through the hard times of boot camp and motivated each other to perform to the best of their ability.



STARCOM: Training Troops To Fight Space Wars, Boldly: Space Force’s new training and readiness unit, called STARCOM, is working from the ground up to figure out what doctrine, skills and tech space professionals will need for orbital warfare. “What we are really bringing to the fight is focus. Focus on space,” Col. Peter Flores, director of the Space Training and Readiness (STAR) Delta Provisional at Space Operations Command, said in an interview today. (STAR Delta is the predecessor to a brand new training and readiness field command, that will be called STARCOM. “We’ve decided that the topic is important enough and unique enough that we need a group of people who understand it down to its most fundamental levels,” Flores added. Currently, Flores is overseeing 900 personnel, shifted over from a mishmash of former Air Force units. Much of the past training for space operators within the Air Force was located in Colorado — so the location has required little by way of personnel or budget reshuffling. Indeed, Flores explained, each of those units came with their own funding and budgets intact.

Army’s Ground Combat Center is Developing New Methods, Formations for the Next War: The

focus of the Army is ground combat and the way the Army fights is through fire and maneuver. So, it makes sense that the job of figuring out where technological advances, doctrine and tactics meet would be at the epicenter of innovations in ground combat — the Maneuver Center of Excellence in Columbus, Ga. To see how the center brings those ideas together in a fast-changing force, Army Times talked with Maj. Gen. Patrick Donahoe, commander of MCOE, ahead of this year’s virtual Association of the U.S. Army Annual Meeting and Exposition. While tech gets the headlines and cool videos, it’s how that technology is implemented by the service that makes the difference, Donahoe argued. Some of that can produce fairly large-scale changes, and so soldiers are likely to see a rethinking of formations, such as the brigade combat team, that have been around for a generation or more. But since then, Army leaders have been looking more at regions like Crimea, the Donbass region of Ukraine and areas around China.

Post Office officials backtrack on service changes that delayed veterans’ prescriptions: The U.S. Postal Service announced it will halt planned service reductions and other cost-cutting initiatives in response to public outcry — including strong opposition from veterans advocates — over the timing and impact of the moves. “There are some long-standing operational initiatives ... that have been raised as areas of concern as the nation prepares to hold an election in the midst of a devastating pandemic,” Postmaster General Louis DeJoy said in a statement released recently. “To avoid even the appearance of any impact on election mail, I am suspending these initiatives until after the election is concluded. Retail hours at Post Offices will not change. Mail processing equipment and blue collection boxes will remain where they are. No mail processing facilities will be closed. And we reassert that overtime has, and will continue to be, approved as needed.” The reversal comes just a few days before DeJoy is scheduled to testify before Congress on the operational changes, some of which drew concerns about election tampering from Democratic leaders. Much of the country is expected to use mail-in voting in this fall’s presidential election because of the ongoing corona virus pandemic, and recent service disruptions and operational cutbacks have drawn accusations that administration officials were hurting the system to gain electoral advantages. But in recent days, the change has also drawn strong criticism from veterans advocates who reported widespread problems with veterans receiving needed medications through the mail. Mail-order prescriptions have become the only option for large groups of veterans around the country since the start of the pandemic because VA medical centers have limited visitors in an effort to slow the spread of the illness. DAV National Commander Stephen Whitehead said in a statement. “Our nation’s veterans, particularly those disabled by their service, deserve nothing less than high-quality and timely health care and benefits no matter their geographic location, and for the foreseeable future that requires a fully functioning United States Postal Service.”

General Dynamics rolls out new TRX ground robot at AUSA: General Dynamics Land Systems debuted its new medium-class robotic combat vehicle — Tracked Robot 10-Ton, or TRX — at the Association of the U.S. Army’s annual conference, which came together using AI-enhanced design and lightweight materials. TRX is an independent research project that GDLS has been working for over year that builds on the technologies from its successful Small Multipurpose Equipment Transport (SMET) robotic vehicle program, a GDLS spokesperson told Defense News in an interview ahead of AUSA. GDLS won the SMET competition this year after a recompute followed by a protest. GDLS also won the original contract. The 10-ton vehicle has a light chassis that can carry a lot by using some advanced design technologies that the company has developed with partners as well as some unique manufacturing technologies and advanced materials, according to GDLS. The platform is designed to meet a variety of critical missions such as direct and indirect fires, autonomous resupply, complex obstacle breaching, counter-unmanned aerial systems, electronic warfare and reconnaissance.

