

#### Volume 11

## "A Soldier Once And Always"

### August 2021

ommanders Corner: Greetings to all ✓ my Brothers and Families and Friends and fellow Brothers from our sister units! I hope everyone is well and hopefully most if not all of you and your families have had an opportunity to be vaccinated for the COVID virus. For those of you that have chosen not to be vaccinated I appreciate your right to do so. We don't



want anyone to miss our reunion because of this crazy virus.

Speaking of the reunion, we are just weeks away from gathering in Indianapolis for this year's reunion that unfortunately was cancelled last year and I'm sure all attendees are looking forward to getting together and spending valuable time together. I think we will have some attendees this year that have never attended a previous reunion or that have not been able to attend for a while. Chuck Holdaway has worked hard for two years to coordinate this reunion and for that we all owe him a big Thank You!

As July comes to an end it seems like it has gone quickly and I hope you and your family and friends have been able to get back together after being isolated for more than a year. It's been great being able to get out to a restaurant or other activity and interacting with people. If we could just get people back to work it would be even greater.

Apparently some attendees for the reunion were told by someone at the hotel we are staying out that all rooms were booked. This was incorrect information and if you were one of the people receiving this information I suggest you try again and reach out to Chuck if you have difficulty and he can probably assist. It will be better if we can all be together at the same place. Also if you have not done so please sign up for the activities Chuck has planned and select your food items for the Saturday evening Banquet.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the reunion and catching up on what everyone has been up to since we last got together in RI two years ago. It's not too late to entice non attendees to join us or if you know of anyone that has never attended one of our reunions to come and reconnect again.

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

#### Dwight Sypolt. Commander

Fort Excellence: Fort Campbell, home of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), is one of five recipients of the 2021 Commander in Chief's Annual Award for Installation Excellence. The award recognizes the outstanding and innovative efforts of the people who operate and maintain U.S. military installations, the Pentagon said in its announcement.

We defended one another then, let's continue our mission to protect/and seek aid for our effected brothers still today ....

<u>rom H Duckworth O'Brien's "A Grunt's Life":</u> : SKY PILOT; How would you like to be dropped off in

"Victor Charlie's" back yard without a weapon? That's what happened to these men of the cloth. In, the midst of the hell of war these patriots sought to bring the peace of God to combatants throughout the war in South Vietnam. For a brief moment, the Grunts could feel safe and human. Unfortunately, such a moment was fleeting.

021 ADVA annual reunion Report, Indianapolis,  $\angle \frac{1}{\text{September 8-12:}}$ Fellow Members, the time for the annual Americal Division Veterans Association reunion in Indianapolis is fast approaching and I just want to urge any of you who haven't signed up yet to do so as soon as possible. We already have a lot of veterans, spouses and friends signed up but, there are still plenty of rooms, RV spots and tour spaces available. The sooner you sign up for the reunion, the easier it is for us to plan for everything involved with having an event of this size. This year's raffle should be especially nice as we have, not only, the usual weapon raffle, but, 4 hard to find Army issued poncho liners, an original NVA flag, and a few other items. My wife and I have a couple of these poncho liners each and they are great to use when the weather becomes colder while sitting around outside or inside. These generally cost anywhere between \$25 and \$60 on the internet depending on whether they are used (they call them pre-owned) or new. Heck of a deal for a raffle ticket. Also, since we didn't have a reunion last year, this is a chance to, once again, see your old friends and acquaintances. This year, aside from the general ADVA hospitality room, the 2/! Chapter, the 23<sup>rd</sup> MPs, the 11<sup>th</sup> LIB and the 1/6<sup>th</sup> Infantry will have their own special hospitality rooms. If you have never been to a reunion, you don't know what you have missed. Information and forms are available on the ADVA web site https://www.americal.org, the 2/1 chapter web site http://www.2-1-196th.com and in the "Americal Journal" magazine. As always, if you have any questions, I can be contacted at 317-847-2756 or indy2021reunion@gmail.com.

Sincerely, Chuck Holdaway



# August 2021

C ummer Army Guard Troops in This State Will Be First to Be Ordered to Get Vaccinated or Face Regular Testing: California National Guardsmen will be ordered to get vaccinated against COVID-19 by early August or face regular testing, Military.com has learned. The mandate comes despite the fact that the Defense Department does not have a vaccination requirement for the rest of the force. Gov. Gavin Newsom on Monday announced California will require all state employees to be vaccinated or face a weekly testing. That will include the state's National Guard, for which Newsom serves as its commander-in-chief, a spokesman for the Guard confirmed recently. "The California Military Department, which includes the California Army and Air National Guard and the California State Guard, will fully comply with and implement the Governor's directive on regular COVID-19 testing for those not vaccinated and vaccination verification of those who are," Lt. Col. Jonathan Shiroma, a spokesman for the California Guard, told Military.com in a statement.

#### ow The VA Is Offering Two New Mortgage Re-

**I**<u>lief</u>**Programs for Those Impacted by COVID:** The Department of Veterans Affairs is offering two new programs for veterans experiencing financial hardship related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The programs are designed to help VA-guaranteed home loan holders bring their mortgages current and resume making regular payments to avoid foreclosure. While these new programs will be offered only as a last resort and under limited circumstances, the VA has several other options to help keep veterans from losing their homes to foreclosure if you don't qualify for these new, limited time, programs. Check with the VA or your lender for more details. Both of the new programs come with requirements and limitations:

You must currently live in the property,

You must have been up to date, or less than 30 days overdue, on any mortgage payments as of March 1, 2020.

You must have missed at least one payment after that date. You must have entered into a forbearance agreement with the lender. Basically, a forbearance is a modification of the original loan terms, or a suspension of payments, because of hardship. You must have recovered from any COVID-related financial hardship.

You cannot be delinquent on more than 30% of the property's appraised value

There is limited time to apply for the programs, so if you are close to having problems making mortgage payments, you should contact your lender or the VA as soon as possible.

The two new programs include:

The VA Partial Claim Payment Program The COVID-19 Refund Modification Program

Deck Sprints Aboard USS Iwo Jima prepped Navy Officer for Olympics: A Navy officer who trained for the Olympics by sprinting across the deck of a warship on patrol in the Atlantic Ocean is set to race the world's fastest women over 100 meters in Japan. Ensign Regine Tugade-Watson, 23, who graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in May 2020, will run for the U.S. territory of Guam, which is sending its own contingent to this month's games. The 115-pound, 5-foot-11 speedster, who competed for the U.S. territory at the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, deployed as a surface warfare officer on the amphibious-assault ship USS Iwo Jima in March, but she didn't use that as an excuse to slacken her training. The Iwo Jima and its amphibious ready group took part in exercises this month in the Gulf of Aden.

rmy Shooter Is First US Service Member to Win Gold Medal at Tokyo Olympics: An Army lieutenant became the first U.S. service member to clinch a gold medal at the Tokyo Olympics with a first-place finish in women's shotgun skeet. First Lt. Amber English, a logistics officer and member of the Army Marksmanship Unit, bested Diana Bacosi of Italy, the 2016 women's skeet gold medalist. Amber English wins gold with an Olympic Record of 56 in the women's skeet final after a nail-biting ending," said a tweet on the games' official Twitter account. English, 31, a native of Colorado Springs, Colo., hit 56 of 60 targets at the event, just three off the world record held by Wei Meng of China, who took bronze. "All I could control was just my own shooting and my own emotions," she told reporters after the win. Skeet shooting always comes down to the wire, English said, before adding that she had trained hard and was "fortunate to be able to put it together at the right time." Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin tweeted his congratulations to English on her medal and Olympic record. "Your country is extremely proud of you today, and I'm so glad you're representing us," he wrote. Members of the Army's World Class Athlete Program and Army Marksmanship Unit were in competition at the Asaka Shooting Range in Saitama near Tokyo during Olympic competition.

oD Would see a big Budget Boost, Military Justice Overhaul under Senate Proposal: Senate Armed Services officials unveiled plans for a \$740 billion defense authorization bill which includes billions more in equipment purchases than the White House requested and a massive change in how serious crimes are handled by military officials. The measure also for the first time would require women to register for the possibility of future military drafts and boosts parental leave to 12 weeks for all service members after the birth, adoption or foster care placement of a child. "[This bill] provides for military families while strengthening America's industrial base and the workers who contribute to our national security," committee Chairman Sen. Jack Reed, D-R.I., said in a statement. "This year's markup provides our troops and Defense Department civilians with a welldeserved pay raise, as well as new tools and reforms to protect the health and well-being of our servicemen and women and their families." The defense policy bill is one of the most significant pieces of legislation passed by Congress each year, setting spending priorities and defense policies for the coming fiscal year. The version adopted by the committee will still have to pass the Senate and survive negotiations with the House before it can be signed into law. Still, the 23-3 committee vote to advance the legislation signals bipartisan support for the plan, a rarity in the politically divided Congress and a change from just a few weeks ago, when numerous Republicans on the panel indicated they may not offer support for the measure.

ongress Passes Bill to Reimburse Guard for Capiviol Security Mission, Increase Afghan Visas: Congress passed emergency legislation that would repay outstanding debts from the violent Jan. 6 insurrection and increase the number of visas for allies who worked alongside Americans in the Afghanistan war. The \$2.1 billion bill now goes to President Joe Biden for his signature. The Senate approved the legislation earlier, 98-0, and the House passed it immediately afterward, 416-11. Senators struck a bipartisan agreement on the legislation recently, two months after the House had passed a bill that would have provided around twice as much for Capitol security. But House leaders said they would back the Senate version anyway, arguing the money is urgently needed for the Capitol Police and for the translators and others who worked closely with U.S. government troops and civilians in Afghanistan. The bill loosens some requirements for visas, which lawmakers say are especially pressing as the U.S. military withdrawal enters its final weeks and Afghan allies face possible retaliation from the Taliban.

AV Holds First 'Day of Inspiration' to Highlight Future after Service: After leaving the Marine Corps, Aubrey McDade struggled with post traumatic stress disorder. The Navy Cross recipient, who sought counseling, said he knows firsthand the mental health struggles that veterans can face after leaving the armed forces. Now, he wants them to know there are options, including the ones offered by Disabled American Veterans. That's one reason McDade said he is honored to host the DAV's first "Day of Inspiration" event, scheduled for Thursday, July 29, in Tampa, Florida. "It means everything to get to work with DAV on this," McDade said. "Sometimes veterans lose purpose after they retire, and it's important to know they still have purpose." McDade got connected with DAV after he started working with Hall of Fame running back LaDainian Tomlinson's Tomlinson Center as the program director. In that position, he travels to Title I schools to teach leadership skills to young men. He said his goal is to inspire them to be responsible for the culture they create. Another speaker scheduled to speak at the event is Medal of Honor recipient Sal Giunta. He was first connected to DAV when he received his Medal of Honor, and although he didn't personally need the support at the time, he had friends that utilized the services. Guinta, a retired Army Staff Sergeant who received the medal for his actions in Korengal Valley, Afghanistan during Operation Rock Avalanche, said he appreciates that DAV tries to treat the issue with compassion and doesn't promise a quick and easy fix for veterans issues. Although he is a recipient of the highest honor that can be earned in the armed forces, Giunta didn't keep his Medal of Honor. Instead, he bestowed it on his unit. "It weighed heavy on my neck," Giunta said in a Zoom interview with Military Times. "Too heavy for one person." Although he is a recipient of the highest honor that can be earned in the armed forces, Giunta didn't keep his Medal of Honor. Instead, he bestowed it on his unit. "It weighed heavy on my neck," Giunta said in a Zoom interview with Military Times. "Too heavy for one person."

C <u>oldier Reported MIA during Korean War Re-</u> **U**<u>turns Home</u>: An Army officer from Massachusetts who was reported missing in action during the Korean War has been accounted for and is coming home for burial, military officials said recently. The remains of 1st Lt. Thomas J. Redgate, are scheduled to buried at the veterans' cemetery in Bourne on Sept. 17, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency said in a statement. Redgate, a member of Battery A, 48th Field Artillery Battalion, 7th Infantry Division, was reported missing Dec. 11, 1950, when his unit was attacked during the Battle of Chosin Reservoir, according to the Army. The exact details surrounding his loss were not known, and his remains could not be recovered at the time. He was 24. In July 2018, following the summit between President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, North Korea turned over 55 boxes that purportedly contained the remains of American service members killed during the war. The remains were examined at the DPAA's laboratory in Hawaii, and based on anthropological analysis, as well as DNA and circumstantial evidence, one set was determined to be Redgate's. Redgate, whose hometown was listed as Boston's Brighton neighborhood, was accounted for in April 2020, but the announcement was made Wednesday because his family only recently received a full briefing of his identification, the Army said

If you get to thinking' you're a person of some influence, try ordering' somebody else's dog around.

A Unemployment Benefit would be Protected under this Plan: Rep. Maxine Waters, D-Calif. and chairwoman of the House Committee on Financial Services, recently introduced the Protecting Benefits for Disabled Veterans Act, arguing the change is needed to provide assured financial support for veterans who depend on the program. Codifying the program is needed "so that we can ensure all veterans who are unable to secure a job due to a service-related disability receive benefits," Waters said in a statement. "It also ensures that veterans are not kicked out of the program simply because they've earned other benefits, like retiree benefits." That was a major friction point between veterans advocates and President Donald Trump's administration, which proposed cutting back on the benefit for veterans after they reach retirement age Under current rules, the Individual Unemployability program awards payouts at the 100 percent disabled rate to veterans who cannot find work due to service-connected injuries, even if actual rating is less than that. That financial support can top \$20,000 a year for some individuals. The program is aimed largely at working-age veterans, but VA officials said in 2018 that about 225,000 veterans over the age of 60 were also enrolled in the program. At the time, the Trump administration argued that unemployment benefits for those individuals didn't make sense, since many were collecting retirement or Social Security benefits not available to working-age vets. Cutting off the benefits for veterans eligible for Social Security payouts would save about \$3 billion a year. But lawmakers rejected the plan after veterans groups argued that the money provides a critical safety net for those elderly veterans, and removing it would create significant hardship. Waters' plan would go further, ensuring that future administrations can't revisit the idea. The IU program has been in operation since 1934 but is not authorized in statute, meaning it can be altered or ended without first getting congressional approval. The legislation would change that, and insert language guaranteeing that "veterans applying for the IU program will not be denied based on their age or eligibility for retirement benefits."

<u>*I*hite House Seeking \$1 billion to help Resettle</u> Afghan allies: The White House is seeking \$1 billion to help resettle Afghan personnel who worked with the U.S. military, according to multiple reports. People familiar with the matter told Bloomberg News that the request was made last Friday. The money would be divided between the Defense Department and State Department, and \$25 million would go to Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement. The money would cover temporary shelter, resettlement and other necessities. CNN reported that the request has bipartisan support, and could be included in a security supplemental funding package that is being negotiated on Capitol Hill. This package will reportedly be primarily intended to secure the Capitol after the Jan. 6 riot. Asked about the request, a senior administration official told The Hill "we are working closely with both sides of the aisle on how we can further support those brave Afghans who have supported our work in Afghanistan." The reported funding comes amid heightened urgency from both sides to relocate Afghan personnel whose lives are at risk for their work as translators or other duties supporting the U.S. military during the 20-year war. Civilian casualties in the first half of 2021 reached record levels amid an increase in killings and injuries since the U.S. and international military forces began withdrawing, according to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. The Biden administration said last week that it plans to send the first group of 2,500 Afghans that are in the "very final stages" of applying for Special Immigrant Visas (SIV) to to Fort Lee, Va., which includes 700 SIV applicants and their family members. They're only expected to stay at Fort Lee for approximately one week. The House passed the Allies Act, legislation aimed at expediting visas for Afghans who helped the U.S. military.

# Fort Campbell Green Beret who saved injured woman from drowning earns Soldier's Medal:

A Special Forces medical sergeant was awarded the Soldier's Medal for saving an injured woman's life on what was supposed to be a relaxing kayak trip on Tennessee's Red River. The medal was pinned to Staff Sgt. Ian Tyrrel's chest July 14 by Maj. Gen. John W. Brennan Jr., commanding general of 1st Special Forces Command (Airborne), the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) said in a statement. It's the service's highest award for bravery at the risk of one's own life outside of combat. "One of the great things we get to do is recognize bravery," Brennan said during a ceremony at the Deeks Language Lab on Fort Campbell, Ky. "It's common to recognize our Soldiers in a combat zone, but what Staff Sgt. Tyrrel did is not common." Tyrrel had recently arrived at Fort Campbell in August 2019, his first duty station after completing the Special Forces Selection and Assessment course, when he and a friend decided to take a trip to Port Royal State Historic Park, the statement said. The park is several miles east of Clarksville, Tenn. At one point during the day, they noticed a commotion in the water and saw a woman drowning. Tyrrel and his friend dove into the river and pulled her ashore. Tyrrel determined she'd broken her leg when the current pulled her underwater. But a first responder who came to the scene didn't have any of the equipment he needed to treat the injury, he said.

Pres. Biden announces end to combat mission in Iraq. What that really means is unclear: President Joe Biden announced recently that U.S. troops will no longer serve in a combat role in Iraq, a largely symbolic move given that it has been years since Americans led combat operations there. About 2,500 troops are deployed to Iraq currently, focused on training and support missions. Neither Biden nor White House officials would specify if that number will drop considerably in coming months. After the announcement, Pentagon officials said there were no "operational updates" about troops deployed to the region. During an afternoon meeting with Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi, the U.S. president said that American forces will be available "to continue to train, to assist, to help, and to deal with ISIS as it arises" in the country. "But we're not going to be, by the end of the year, in a combat mission," Biden added.

**se your GI Bill benefits to start a business:** A Bi-

partisan group of House lawmakers are again pushing to allow some recently separated service members to use their GI Bill benefits to start a new business instead of attending college classes. The proposal, which has failed to gain legislative traction in recent years, would establish a three-year pilot program for up to 250 veterans to pursue "educational entrepreneurial training" and receive their education payouts in the form of start-up capital instead of the traditional tuition payments. "Higher education is essential for many [veterans], but some have a different calling," said Rep Ben Cline, R-Va. "Veterans are seeking more options and want the choice to use their GI Bill benefit to start their own business. "It's common sense to offer veterans a choice in accessing resources, training, and support to pursue the American dream to start a small business, create jobs, and generate growth in our economy." Under the current Post-9/11 GI Bill education benefits program, eligible veterans receive 36 months of tuition payouts, housing stipends and other financial assistance. According to 2019 U.S. Census Bureau data, more than 2.5 million businesses in America are veteran-owned, making up just under 10 percent of all American small businesses. Supporters of the Veterans Entrepreneurship Act say that individuals interested in pursuing that path after military service should not be shut out from using their earned benefits.

A <u>rmy's Top Museum Reopens on the Service's</u> <u>246th Birthday:</u> The National Museum of the United States Army reopened its doors to the public Monday June 14, 2021 to help the service celebrate its 246th birthday. The museum, located just outside Fort Belvoir, originally opened on Veterans Day 2020 after many years of anticipation. Only 32 days later, however, an uptick in the corona virus pandemic resulted in its closing. Timed-entry tickets for the museum are available at <u>https://www.thenmusa.org/visit/#gettickets</u>.

s COVID cases surge again, VA officials implore All vets to get vaccinated: Veterans Affairs officials urging all veterans and family members to get vaccinated against corona virus as cases begin to surge again across the country. "[There is] a growing crisis with the increase in hospitalizations from COVID-19, specifically from the Delta variant. More than 97 percent of hospitalized patients with COVID are not vaccinated," Assistant Under Secretary for Health Carolyn Clancy warned lawmakers during a House Veterans' Affairs Committee recently. "Local indoor mask mandates are occurring again primarily because the disease is spreading among those who are not yet vaccinated ... Signs that we're seeing mirror prior surges, in a warning of what's ahead." Active cases of corona virus across the VA health care system topped 3,300, their highest level since early May. That mark is up 121 percent in the last month alone. That includes a sharp rise in cases among VA employees. In June, VA officials reported 192 new cases of the virus among staffers. So far in July, there have been 390 new employee infections. About 300,000 VA staffers have been fully vaccinated against corona virus, roughly 70 percent of the department's employee total. Earlier this month, VA Secretary Denis McDonough said the department is looking into mandating vaccines for front-line health care workers, but last week he said no decision has been made on the move yet.

For Thousands of Disabled Vets, this Job Training Program may be Better Than the GI Bill: Hundreds of thousands of veterans use their GI Bill benefits annually to earn a college degree, but thousands may be better served bypassing the well-known education program in favor of another Veterans Affairs program aimed at employment help for disabled veterans, according to a new report released this week. Officials from the Government Accountability Office said the Veteran Readiness and Employment program was used by about 123,000 veterans last year but has the potential to benefit even more, if VA leaders step up efforts to promote it. "Most school and [veterans service organization] officials we interviewed said veterans with disabilities often choose the GI Bill for education benefits because they are unaware that the VR&E program exists," the report states. "The officials attributed this lack of awareness to VA's relatively limited promotion of VR&E and because of the prominence of the GI Bill as an education benefit program." The GI Bill education program dates back almost 80 years and is among the most well-known veterans benefits in the country. Under the Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits which went into effect in 2009, veterans or eligible dependents can receive full tuition payments at state universities, plus a monthly housing stipend and other financial assistance. According to VA statistics, about 658,000 veterans used the benefit in 2020, at a cost of about \$10.1 billion. The VR&E program had about one-fifth the enrollment and about one-tenth the price tag of the GI Bill last year. To be eligible, veterans must be at least 10-percent disabled with a service-connected injury.

Growing old is hard work....The mind says "yes" but the body says, "What the hell are you thinking?"

# 2021 Americal Division National Reunion September 8-11, 2021 Indianapolis, Indiana

# **LOCATION:** Wyndham Indianapolis West, 2544 Executive Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46241

**HOTEL RESERVATION PROCEDURE:** The reunion room rate is \$115, plus tax, per night, with free daily breakfast. The Group rate is offered 3 days before and 3 days after reunion dates, based on hotel's availability. Various reservation options are listed below. Rates cannot be adjusted at check-in or check-out for guests who

fail to identify their affiliation with the Americal Division Veterans Association when making reservations. Note: In accordance with proposed hotel reservation changes for 2021, all reservations will be charged a non-refundable deposit of one night's room rate and tax when the reservation is made. Reservation Phone Numbers: When calling in room reservations, ALWAYS indicate you are with the

Americal Division Veterans Association and use the code 90621ADVA to avoid any possible complications. Wyndham West Direct: (317) 381-6123

Email: adva2021@wyndhamindianapoliswest.com

**Wyndham Reservation Web Site Link:** A link has been set up by the Wyndham Hotels to allow online reservations to be made. This can be found on both the Americal and 2/1 chapter web sites.

https://americal.org/cmsaml/index.php/reunions.html and http://www.2-1-196th.com/

**Event/Dinner Registration Forms** will be available in publications of the "Americal Journal" and on the web sites.

**Reunion Questions Contact:** Reunion Chairman, **Chuck Holdaway**, at 1-317-847-2756 or email at indy2021reunion@gmail.com.

**Tours and Amenities:** 

Indianapolis 500 Race Track and Museum Tour (Thursday morning Sept. 9<sup>th</sup>)

Indianapolis War Memorials and Museum Tour (Friday morning Sept. 10<sup>th</sup>)

(Indianapolis is second only to Washington, DC in the number of monuments and museums which are armed services related. Almost all are within walking distance of each other and near the National Headquarters of the American Legion.)

Dallara Indycar Factory and interactive facility (Saturday afternoon Sept. 11<sup>th</sup>)

RV parking with hook-ups will be available at American Legion Post 500.

RV parking without hook ups will be available at the Wyndham Hotel at reunion room rate.

Free airport shuttle to and from the Wyndham Indianapolis West Hotel

Free breakfast, Wi-Fi and parking are available at the Wyndham Indianapolis West Hotel

### HOW YOU CAN HELP:

Individual ADVA chapters contact your membership and urge attendance. Place a notice or poster at your local VFW, American Legion, etc.

Place a notice or poster at your local VFW, American Le

Email your buddies to let them know.

Make your hotel reservations early; we expect a big turnout since 2021 was cancelled.

If you are planning on getting a space at the RV area, please send an email to the 2021 reunion email address above. It will help in our planning at the Legion Post as spaces may be limited. RV reservation information will be posted on both the ADVA and 2/1 chapter web sites as soon as available.