



2nd Battalion 1st Infantry Chapter,

Americal Division Veterans Association (ADVA)

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

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Volume 11

“A Soldier Once And Always”

March 2021

Commanders Corner: Greetings to all my 2/1 infantry brothers families and friends and fellow brothers from our sister units. I hope this newsletter finds everyone healthy happy and staying safe. We live in an ever changing world and I find it difficult to keep up with the many challenges that we all face these days but we just have to say focused and not let things get us down.



I was able to get my first COVID vaccination this past week at my VA facility in Nashville and they have me scheduled for my second shot on March 25th. The process was well organized and went without any issues. I can report that other than some soreness in my shoulder I had no other side issues. I found it similar to getting my annual Flu shot. I encourage everyone to seek the vaccine since we are all in the more danger category for getting COVID. If you live near a VA facility I encourage you call them to get on the schedule and everything I read is that VA is doing a great job and taking care of the Veterans. The ones that they are having difficulty with are Veterans living in rural areas where there is no near VA facilities. If you fall in this category I encourage that you reach out to your local government agencies which make it harder to get the vaccine but the sooner you act the better chance you will have in obtaining the vaccine. I have read that 30 or 40 percent of active military are opting out of the vaccine. I find this interesting since when I was in the service we had to get Flu shots every year without exception. In the last newsletter I commented about all the National Guard troops stationed around the Capitol and I assumed that by now they would be back home but unfortunately 10,000 still remain and from what I read they could be there for months. What a waste of our troop assets and defense funds. We don't seem to learn from our past history as went on with the Vietnam Protests and the use of National Guard. I am fine with protest but they need to be peaceful without property damaging and those who don't follow these laws than they should be dealt with severely or they just get worse. It's still unclear as to what lies ahead with COVID restrictions since it seems that every day there are different guidelines and projections from the so called experts and politicians. We all still have high hopes that our Reunion will still go on as scheduled this year. I have heard over the last week that Indianapolis is starting to loosen some of the restrictions. Don't forget to make your hotel reservations. There should be much interest in this reunion. It would be a shame if some of us were to reserve a room later in the year and be told there were none available. Don't let that happen to you. Call soon to make sure you will be housed with the rest of us.

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

Dwight Sypolt.
Commander

From H Duckworth O'Brien's "A Grunt's Life": CHINOOK; This is one of the big boys of helicopters. A massive dual horizontal rotor aircraft transporting troops and equipment in larger quantity than it's more nimble brother, the Huey. Of course, there is the added issue of target size. This beast was a favorite of every VC with a rifle or rock for that matter. Inside, you're sitting in elongated jump seats on either side of the fuselage with 30 or more guys from your platoon. As you bounce around, you scan the fuselage for any new rats of light coming in...just in case.

ADVA 2021 ADVA Reunion Information Update. This year, our annual reunion will be held from 8-11 September 2021 in Indianapolis, Indiana. Most of the attendees will be housed at the Wyndham Indianapolis West. This will be about a week before the Annual Kokomo Vietnam Veterans Reunion which will be held September 16 – 18. The Kokomo Reunion, it is a great time and my old VN buddies and I have been going for about 35 years. Throughout the event, about 30,000 people flow through the site. People come from all parts of the country and you may run into someone you served with or was in your unit. There are good bands every evening, various food and vendor booths and a large circus-sized vendor tent. Camping and RV spaces are available and there are plenty of hotels about 15 minutes away. Some of the hotels provide shuttle service to the reunion. Kokomo, Indiana is located about an hour north of Indianapolis and the location is easy to find. Information is available on their web site at <https://hcvvo.net/contact> or email vveterans@aol.com or indy2021reunion@gmail.com While you're in the area you might as well give it a try.. Also, I previously mentioned posting flyers at your local VFWs and American Legion Posts (or anywhere else you can think of). Printable posters are available on the 2/1 Chapter web site <http://www.2-1-196th.com>. Just click “here” on the main page in the 2021 Americal Reunion area. Already, quite a few people have signed up for the reunion; so you might want to do it early. As always, any questions may be directed to me via the [indy2021reunion](mailto:indy2021reunion@gmail.com) email above. All 2/1 Chapter members, this will be a great chance to meet your fellow chapter members and participate in our annual chapter meeting.
Chuck Holdaway

P.S. 2021 REUNION HOTEL PHONE NUMBER CHANGE:
The Wyndham Hotel direct number for reservations has been changed to 317-381-6168. Still use our code of **90621ADVA**. The easiest way to make a reservation is to use our special reservation link to the hotel. It is available on our web site <http://2-1-196th.com> near the bottom of the main page in the reunion information area. This information has been updated on the web sites. Sorry for any inconvenience this may have caused anyone. Questions may be directed to indy2021reunion@gmail.com.

Denis McDonough Confirmed as New VA Secretary: The Senate confirmed the appointment of Denis McDonough, making him the new Veterans Affairs Secretary. A native of Stillwater, Minnesota, Mr. McDonough graduated from Saint John's University in 1992 and Georgetown University's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service with an MSFS degree in 1996. McDonough has extensive experience on Capitol Hill having served as White House chief of staff under President Barack Obama, deputy national security advisor and chief of staff of the National Security Council. As White House chief of staff, McDonough exhibited his commitment to veterans by working closely with the VA and Congress to address the many challenges and obstacles veterans face in receiving veteran's health care services from the VA. "The VFW believes today's confirmation of Mr. McDonough will allow the Department of Veterans Affairs to leverage his years of government leadership experience to rebuild trust and confidence in quality VA care throughout the veteran community, especially during these uncertain times," said Hal Roesch, VFW national commander. "The VFW looks forward to working closely with Mr. McDonough to ensure the VA can continue its aggressive fight against COVID-19, and to improve the delivery of care and benefits to our nation's heroes."

VA's Budget Has Quintupled in 20 Years. Veterans Groups Want Billions More: Ahead of the Biden administration's rollout of its fiscal 2022 federal budget, veterans advocates are calling for an \$11 billion increase in the Department of Veterans Affairs budget to address what they view as shortfalls in health care and benefits services. Three organizations -- Disabled American Veterans, Paralyzed Veterans of America and Veterans of Foreign Wars -- released their annual VA "independent budget", an assessment of veterans' needs heading into the fiscal 2022 congressional budget deliberations process. The report is an "attempt to produce an honest assessment of need" not subject to the "politics of federal budget development and negotiations that inevitably have led to continuous funding deficits," the authors wrote. "We understand that VA has fared better than most federal agencies in budget proposals and appropriations, but the real measure should be how well the funding matches the demand for veterans' benefits and services," they said. The report, usually released around the same time as the presidential budget proposal, is used as a tool by members of Congress and staff to assess veterans' needs and perceived issues with VA benefits, including health care. This year, with the president's budget delayed as President Joe Biden builds his cabinet and administration, authors hope the document will steer the conversation on policy issues important to veterans.

Taliban Soldiers Die in Kabul, Afghanistan Bomb Making Accident, Afghan government says:

About 30 Taliban militants were killed when they detonated a bomb they were learning how to assemble, the Afghan Defense Ministry said. The blast occurred last week at a bomb making course in Afghanistan's northern Balkh province, the statement said. Six foreign fighters were among the militants who died in the incident, the Afghan military said. While the foreigners were not identified, militants from abroad — some affiliated with al-Qaida — have trained Taliban fighters to make bombs during the last two decades of war in Afghanistan.

If you're going to believe everything you read; start with your Bible.

VA has seen a Sharp Decrease in active Corona Virus Cases among Patients over the Last Month: Last month's debate over whether to grant retired Army Gen. Lloyd Austin a waiver to serve as defense secretary may result in Congress considering whether the seven-year waiting period ought to be shortened, according to the top GOP member of the House Armed Services Committee. "Seven years is kind of arbitrary to me. I don't see the difference between seven and six or five or whatever," said Alabama Rep. Mike Rogers, the committee's ranking Republican, in an interview with the *Washington Examiner*. "There is some possibility we might take that up and this year in [the National Defense Authorization Act] and see if there's a more appropriate time frame." In order to ensure civilian control of the military, under the National Security Act of 1947, Congress prohibited anyone from serving as defense secretary within 10 years of active duty service as a commissioned officer in the armed forces. That was shortened to seven years with an amendment in 2008. The provision had been waived only once in 67 years, when Congress granted Gen. George Marshall an exemption in 1950.

The 'Bone' Heads to the Boneyard: The U.S. Air Force began the process of retiring the B-1 Lancer, as the "Bone" bomber flew to the Air Force's bone yard where divested aircraft are kept in storage. The Air Force plans to retire 17 of its 62 B-1s, as authorized by Congress in the fiscal 2021 defense policy bill. The service said divesting its most battered and difficult-to-maintain B-1s would free up maintainers to restore the health of the remaining Lancer fleet. Gen. Tim Ray, who leads Air Force Global Strike Command, described the retirement of the B-1 as "something we have been working toward for some time" to transition to the B-21 Raider in the mid-2020s. "Due to the wear and tear placed on the B-1 fleet over the past two decades, maintaining these bombers would cost 10s of millions of dollars per aircraft to get back to status quo," he said in a statement. "And that's just to fix the problems we know about. We're just accelerating planned retirements."



VA Must Balance Growing Use of Private Care and Maintaining Own Facilities, Secretary Says:

The Department of Veterans Affairs saw an increase in patients receiving health care through its network of private providers at the start of fiscal 2020, a "significant uptake" the department is now reviewing, according to VA Secretary McDonough. Speaking at a White House press briefing on the American Rescue Plan bill containing more than \$17 billion of additional funding for the VA, McDonough said that in the first quarter of fiscal 2020 -- before the pandemic canceled many in-person medical visits at the VA and in the community -- more veterans received care from department's private network physicians than previously observed. The uptick followed an expansion in community care in 2019 resulting from the passage of the Mission Act in 2018 to improve health services for veterans. Under the Mission Act, the eligibility rules for veterans to receive care from a non-VA doctor were changed to include those who have to wait more than 20 days or drive more than 30 minutes for a primary or mental health appointment at a VA facility.

President Biden will try to close Guantanamo after ‘robust’ review: President Joe Biden will seek to close the prison on the U.S. base at Guantanamo Bay following a review process, resuming a project begun under the Obama administration, the White House said recently. White House press secretary Jen Psaki said it was the “intention” of the Biden administration to close the detention facility, something President Barack Obama pledged to do within a year shortly after he took office in January 2009. Psaki gave no timeline, telling reporters that the formal review would be “robust” and would require the participation of officials from the Defense Department, the Justice Department and other agencies who have not yet been appointed under the new administration. “There are many players from different agencies who need to be part of this policy discussion about the steps forward,” she said. Obama ran into intense domestic political opposition when he sought to close the detention center, a notorious symbol of the U.S. fight against terrorism. Biden may have more leeway now that there are only 40 prisoners left and Guantanamo draws much less public attention, though his announcement did draw some immediate criticism. The U.S. opened the detention center in January 2002 to hold people suspected of ties to al-Qaida and the Taliban. It became a source of international criticism over the mistreatment of prisoners and the prolonged imprisonment of people without charge. The announcement of a closure plan was not unexpected. Biden had said as a candidate he supported closing the detention center. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said so as well in written testimony for his Senate confirmation. “Guantanamo has provided us the capability to conduct law of war detention in order to keep our enemies off the battlefield, but I believe it is time for the detention facility at Guantanamo to close,” Austin said.

Guard Response to Capitol Riots Wasn’t Hurt by Politics, Officials Insist: Former Capitol Hill security officials insisted their decision not to involve more National Guard forces ahead of the attack was the result of intelligence analysis that underrated the threat on Congress and not concerns about the “optics” of having military personnel on Capitol Hill. “We all agreed that the intelligence did not support the troops and collectively decided to let it go,” said Paul Irving, former House Sergeant at Arms who resigned in the wake of the assault. “From what I remember everyone was very satisfied that we had a robust plan, security plan that was consistent with the intelligence that we had at the time.” That decision, which resulted in Capitol Police officers being overwhelmed in a massive security breach designed to disrupt lawmakers’ was part of the focus of a Senate hearing examining the failures of that day and possible fixes for the future. Five individuals died in the violent event, including Capitol Police officer Brian Sicknick, an Air National Guard veteran who died after being beaten by rioters inside the Capitol. In response, nearly 26,000 guardsmen were mobilized to provide security on Capitol Hill in the hours after the attack and for the weeks around the Jan. 20 inauguration of President Joe Biden. More than 5,200 remain deployed there, Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said at a Monday press conference. Some troops will remain until next month.



VA Is Asking DOJ for Help Getting Back GIBill.com After Losing Domain Rights:

The Department of Veterans Affairs is asking the Department of Justice to step in after it lost control of the domain "GIBill.com," a site that has previously been used by scammers. "As the owner of the registered trademark 'GI Bill,' VA has referred the matter to the Department of Justice to reclaim the GIBill.com domain in accordance with the Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy," Joe Williams, a spokesman for the agency, said. The VA seemingly lost the domain rights to GIBill.com last year, drawing frustration from some lawmakers and veteran advocates. Now, some advocates are urging President Joe Biden's administration to reacquire the domain to protect beneficiaries from scammers and deceptive marketers. Read Next: 'I Am Not a One in a Million Story': Marine Speaks Out After Viral TikTok Video About Sexual Misconduct. Veterans Education Success, a nonpartisan veteran advocacy group, sent a letter to Biden last week urging him to take steps to expand GI Bill protections, including reclaiming the lost domain GIBill.com, which has in the past been used by the for-profit education industry to deceive veterans.

Pioneering Female Ranger School Grad: Lowering Fitness Standards for Women Is a Bad Idea: The

Army's first female infantry officer is urging the service not to revert to separate fitness standards for men and women. In an essay posted online recently by West Point's Modern War Institute, Capt. Kristen Grist said that evaluating women based on lower fitness standards would not only hurt the effectiveness of combat arms units, it also would hurt women in the Army. "Under a gender-based system, women in combat arms have to fight every day to dispel the notion that their presence inherently weakens these previously all-male units," Grist wrote. "Lower female standards also reinforce the belief that women cannot perform the same job as men, therefore making it difficult for women to earn the trust and confidence of their teammates." Grist's thoughts on the hotly debated issue of physical fitness standards for women in combat jobs are particularly notable due to her trailblazing status. A West Point graduate, she became one of the first three women to earn the coveted Ranger tab in 2015.

Measure would allow VA to give Corona Virus Vaccine to any Veteran and most Caregivers:

Any veteran or their caregiver would be eligible to receive a corona virus vaccine at Veterans Affairs medical centers under a new bipartisan proposal unveiled recently. But the plan doesn't guarantee enough vaccines will be available at VA facilities for every veteran in America, which may limit its effectiveness. The legislation, introduced by House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Mark Takano, D-Calif., and ranking member Mike Bost, R-Ill., would close a loophole in current rules which prohibit VA officials from administering the vaccine to anyone except individuals already registered in department medical care programs. The department has already distributed about 2 million vaccines doses in the last two months. "If we want to defeat this pandemic, we must vaccinate as many Americans as possible, and do it quickly," Takano said in a statement. "VA is already well on its way to fully vaccinate more than one million veterans, but under its current authorities, millions more are still unable to receive life saving vaccines from VA. VA should not have to turn away any veteran who walks through its doors to get a vaccine, regardless of whether they're enrolled in or eligible for other VA healthcare services."

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

The Army Doesn't Know how many Extremists it has Booted: The Army can't say how many soldiers have been kicked out for extremism in recent years, largely because those incidents are filed under the broad category of "misconduct" discharges, according to the service's response to a Freedom of Information Act request. Army officials at the Pentagon did not have data that could shed light on the issue either. "Currently, extremism behavior is not identified by a separate code for discharges," said Army spokesman Lt. Col. Gabriel J. Ramirez. "As we await further DOD guidance on extremism, we are conducting stand downs across the force and exploring options on ways to further combat this corrosive issue." The data omission makes it difficult to understand the extent to which extremism is a problem in the ranks — an issue that came to the forefront after at least 22 current or former service members were charged with federal crimes for participating in the Capitol riot in Washington, D.C., last month. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin announced plans for a 60-day stand-down across the military to address the issue of extremism among troops. He hinted at plans to gather data on extremism, but did not detail what that would entail. "I expect for the numbers to be small. But, quite frankly, they'll probably be a little bit larger than most of us would guess," Austin said. "I would just say that small numbers in this case can have an out-sized impact."

Bergdahl Lawyers say Military Judge's job Application posed Conflict: A new motion filed in the case of former U.S. Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl is asking the highest appeals court for the U.S. military to overturn his conviction, citing an alleged conflict of interest involving the judge who originally presided over his sentencing. In 2017, Bergdahl pleaded guilty to desertion and misbehavior before the enemy. Those charges were based on his actions in 2009 when the 23-year-old private first class left his remote post near the Pakistan border five months into a deployment. Bergdahl was taken hostage and held for five years by the Taliban. His initial disappearance launched a massive search. During his first year of captivity, Bergdahl said he was beaten with copper cables, heavy rubber hoses and the buttstocks of AK-47 rifles. The bottoms of his feet were burned with matches and he was forced to watch execution videos while his captors threatened to decapitate him. Bowe Bergdahl apologizes for desertion and charges related to leaving his post in Afghanistan. Former Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl has filed a lawsuit alleging "unlawful command influence" against former President Donald Trump, the late Sen. John McCain, and asking whether the judge overseeing his case should have disclosed that he had applied for a "lucrative job" at the justice department. Bergdahl claims the "scandalous meddling" in his case likely violated his Constitutional rights to due process.

New Marine Infantry Training Course Aims to Make Deadlier, More Independent Grunts: The Marine Corps' School of Infantry has launched a new course aimed at training young grunts how to be riflemen, machine gunners and anti-tank gunners in an effort to send more capable infantrymen to the fleet. The School of Infantry-West began running the first 14-week Infantry Marine Course, or IMC, a pilot training course that emerged out of Commandant Gen. David Berger's effort to redesign the Marine infantry battalion. The Infantry Course creates young infantry Marines with the tactical skills and self-reliance to operate in the expeditionary and dispersed battlefields of future. "We need privates now that can operate by themselves, and don't have to be told and shown where to go all the time," Lt. Col. Walker Koury, commander of School of Infantry-West, said in the release.

Small Contingent of National Guard Expected to Remain at US Capitol Indefinitely: A small group of National Guard troops is expected to remain in and around the U.S. Capitol indefinitely to serve as a reactionary force, sources told Fox News. Roughly 25,000 National Guardsmen were deployed to Washington, D.C. following the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol building by pro-Trump supporters. Shortly after the inauguration of President Biden, troop sizes were reduced, and just 6,000 National Guard force remain at the Capitol and were scheduled to be sent home by mid-March. A smaller footprint of soldiers is now expected to remain either at the Capitol or dispersed throughout the city with the ability to react at a moment's notice. But security officials and lawmakers are concerned that the Guardsmen are overworked, and there is a feeling of low morale, resulting in increased reports of injuries, both physical and mental. Top Pentagon officials assured House members of the Armed Services Committee Wednesday that additional threats to the Capitol remain few. "We obviously work with our law enforcement partners to determine that threat. That's obviously continuing to evolve," acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense & Global Security Robert Salesses testified. "At this time, I'm not aware of a threat that is out there," he added.

Navy Tests Autonomous Aerial Supply Drone: The U.S. Navy recently conducted a demonstration in which a relatively small vertical takeoff and landing capable unmanned aircraft with autonomous capabilities delivered equipment to the supercarrier USS *Gerald R. Ford*. The service has been increasingly exploring novel means of resupplying surface warships and submarines that may be better suited to future distributed concepts of operation. On Feb. 21, 2021, a Blue Water Maritime Logistics Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) carried a payload described as "light-weight logistical equipment" from the Mid Atlantic Regional Maintenance Center (MARMC) at Naval Station Norfolk in Virginia to the *Ford*, which is presently in port there. The Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division (NAWCAD), based at Naval Air Station Patuxent River in Maryland, first acquired the Blue Water drone in order to conduct various logistics experiments in October 2020. The unmanned aircraft is presently assigned to Air Test and Evaluation Squadron 24, or UX-24, Naval Air Systems Command's (NAVAIR) dedicated unmanned test and evaluation unit.

VA Expecting Surge of Veterans Needing Care as Pandemic Restrictions Ease: Anticipating a surge in veterans seeking medical care after the pandemic ends, Department of Veterans Affairs officials said Wednesday that \$17 billion marked for the VA in the Biden administration's \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief bill is needed so that it can continue providing all eligible veterans treatment. Acting VA Under Secretary for Health Dr. Richard Stone said the department expects a "bow wave" of veterans seeking care that was delayed or deferred during the pandemic, and anticipates as many as 300,000 additional veterans enrolling in VA care, having lost their health insurance as a result of pandemic unemployment. Stone said the VA is "down by 12,000 surgeries a month" -- such as knee replacements and other types of non-emergency treatment -- that were not done elsewhere, and it expects a surge in appointments in late 2021 and early 2022.



SecDef Austin to Troops: If You've Seen Extremism in the Ranks, Tell Your Commander: Troops who have encountered extremism from their fellow service members should share those experiences with their leaders, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said recently. In the video, Austin said the military needs troops' help to stamp out extremism and extremist ideologies, or "views and conduct that run counter to everything that we believe in, and which can actually tear at the fabric of who we are as an institution." And when troops report examples of extremism in the military, Austin said their leaders need to listen to their stories, as well as any ideas on how to eradicate "the dangerous conduct that this ideology inspires." Pentagon press secretary John Kirby told reporters Monday that the video, which is part of the military's broader effort to crack down on extremist ideologies in the ranks, will be shown to troops, along with other training materials, during stand-downs to address the problem.

Tricare Users Frustrated by Lack of Information on COVID-19 Vaccine Availability: In El Paso, Texas, Fort Bliss officials have set up a second COVID-19 vaccination site for military personnel and eligible Tricare beneficiaries, including those age 65 and older, and those 16 to 64 with underlying health conditions. But at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, Virginia, retirees over age 75 who received their first COVID-19 vaccine in mid-January have not been able to get their second dose within the recommended time frame due to lack of availability. Likewise, at Eisenhower Army Medical Center in Georgia and other locations across the military health system, vaccinations have been suspended sporadically for beneficiaries 75 and older due to supply problems. Military dependents younger than 65 -- including those at risk for severe cases of COVID or caring for an at-risk child -- currently have no priority when it comes to receiving the vaccine through the military health system. The Defense Department is largely telling them to look for vaccinations elsewhere.

The Army's revised grooming standards loosen up hairstyle regulations, allow for earrings: Revisions to the U.S. Army's grooming and appearance standards went into effect February 2021 that will loosen up hairstyle regulations and allow for earrings to be worn. The new rules are proof "that the force is evolving and making a concerted effort to make everyone feel included," Master Sgt. Quintana Mitchell, the uniform policy NCO for G-1, said in unveiling the changes last month. Soldiers will now be allowed to have highlights in their hair as long as it appears natural. Sgt. Maj. Brian Sanders, senior enlisted leader of Army G-1's uniform policy branch, said that the Army "cannot assume that a Soldier's hair should be a specific color" based on their complexion. Neon colors and other bright pigments such as pink and green are still not allowed. Under the Army's new grooming rules, "medium-length ponytails are only authorized for wear on the back of the scalp and cannot exceed the head's width or interfere with the proper wear of a Soldier's headgear." Hair can also be less than 1/4 inches and soldiers are allowed to wear multiple hairstyles at once under the new regulations. Ponytails will also be allowed for female soldiers with medium-length hair "if the individual's hair length or texture prevents them from securing it into a tight bun." Female soldiers can now wear earrings with their Army Combat Uniform, but not in the field or in combat. Certain types of nail polish and lipstick will also be permitted. A panel of 15 female soldiers and two male soldiers proposed the changes after examining them for seven months. "This is one of the many facets of putting our people first and recognizing who they are as human beings," Sgt. Maj. Brian Sanders, senior enlisted leader of Army G-1's uniform policy branch, said last month. "Their identity and diverse backgrounds are what makes the Army an ultimate fighting force."

Less Combat Center Focus, More Small-Unit Skills: Army to Release New Training Manual: The Army will release a new training manual as it scales back its strategy of high-intensity training cycles to prepare for combat training center rotations -- and instead focuses on small-unit readiness. Scheduled for release this spring, the updated version of FM 7-0 seeks to simplify leaders' approach to training. It comes on the heels of an action plan Army leaders introduced in October that puts fewer training demands on units preparing for rotations at combat training centers, such as the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California, and the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, Louisiana. Army leaders acknowledged that transitioning from a long string of combat rotations in Iraq and Afghanistan to intense training cycle rotations wore down the force and neglected small-unit training. "The idea was, 'Let's make this more simple,' because we have had a force that has been engaged in rotations for the past 15 or 20 years, so now we are trying to get back to some fundamentals," said Bronson, a retired Army lieutenant colonel. "So, the idea was to create this manual that created a framework that is easy to read, simple to understand and pretty straightforward to implement." Gen. Paul Funk II, head of Training and Doctrine Command, announced the updated manual's rollout Tuesday and said that it will help officers and sergeants use a training management cycle to set priorities. Bronson described the training management cycle as a tool that leaders can use to decide the "most important things that I need to train my soldiers on." But the manual doesn't dictate what units need to train on; that is left up to the commander, based on the unit's strengths and weaknesses, he said. The problem is that many commanders have trouble prioritizing training, Bronson said. "I have run into a lot of commanders who think they need to train everything," he explained. "A commander has got to sit down and think about his past training, he's got to think about his future training, he's got to think about the training mission, he's got to worry about resources and the time available, and that is a tough question for a commander to deal with." Army leaders said in October that the service plans to eliminate the requirement to conduct brigade and battalion live-fire exercises and field training exercises prior to a combat training center rotation. Army Chief of Staff Gen. James McConville said the intent is to give time back to small-unit leaders to strengthen unit cohesiveness. "At the bottom of all units is the individual soldier, crews, small teams, platoons, squads and that is the framework that I think FM 7-0 really talks to," Bronson said. "It's not about just what the brigade needs to do because the brigade is only as successful as those individual soldiers, squads and platoons can be."

The Purple Heart: The Purple Heart is earned through acts of valor, bravery, courage, and fearlessness. The *Purple Heart Medal* is an unforgettable experience intertwined with history, tradition, and a remembrance of the sacrifices for our country. The Purple Heart is awarded to troops that have been wounded, killed, by enemy fire, or were a former Prisoner of War. Purple Heart recipients have unique stories and experiences that are memorable and unforgettable. Recognizing and honoring the dignity of the service is important for civilians, veterans, retired military, and active duty alike. The *Purple Heart Medal* is rich in American tradition, history, and carries the sentiments of troops going back to the 1700s. The Badge of Military Merit, the Purple Heart's origin, was established by George Washington in 1782, and was the first award that could be earned by anyone that was enlisted. "Not only instances of unusual gallantry, but also of extraordinary fidelity, and essential service in any way, shall meet with a due reward...the road to glory in a patriot army and a free country is thus opened to all" is a part of the declaration George Washington put forth as requirements to earn the Badge of Military Merit.

2021 ADVA 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) 381-1168** 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. 9th)

Indianapolis War Memorials and Museum Tour (Friday morning Sept. 10th)

(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. 11th)

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.

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.

[HOTEL AND RV RESERVATIONS MAY BE MADE STARTING JANUARY 1, 2021](#)