



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



WEBSITE: [www.2-1-196th.com](http://www.2-1-196th.com)  
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Volume 11

“A Soldier Once And Always”

September 2021

**Commanders Corner:** Hello to all my Brothers and Families and Friends and fellow Brothers from our sister units! I hope everyone is well and safe from the COVID virus. I want to begin by asking everyone to say prayers for all our troops that are trying to implement the evacuation from Afghanistan. As I write this it has been announced by our government that we will be out of country by August 31 which unfortunately means that we will be leaving many Americans and Afghanistan partners behind. This brings about many sad memories of how we departed Vietnam and left many Vietnamese partners behind only to have them end up for years in Reeducation Camps. Unfortunately what lies ahead with the Taliban in control of Afghanistan it will most likely be far worst then what took place in Vietnam. Again our politicians and inadequate Military leaders have failed our troops who fought and died in these conflicts. We don't seem to learn from history and that is unforgivable in my opinion.



At time like this it behooves each of us to reach out to all active duty troops and Veterans to let them know they did their jobs and served our country when called upon. Unfortunately many Veterans suffer the throes of significant mental health battles that they have suffered with for many years.

The good news for us is that we will soon be gathering in Indianapolis after two years and be able to spend time together which will be excellent therapy for all of us. We look forward to having a great turnout and a great time in Indianapolis for a few days. If you know of anyone that is not planning to attend or still thinking about it try to convince them to come as I think these are the kind of times when it's very beneficial to have Brothers that have served in battle that we can spend time together and provide support that only we can.

I'm am looking forward to seeing everyone and having a great time together in Indianapolis and hope everyone has a safe trip wherever you are travelling from. Chuck Holdaway has included a schedule of events for the reunion on page 5 of this newsletter. He4 might need some help to sell some raffle tickets to the guests. The items to be raffled will be available in the Americal Division hospitality and the other separate meeting rooms during the reunion. He has asked that our members assist in this project. In addition to the rifle, the items in the next column will also be in the raffle. There are always some added items as we get closer to the reunion day. Chuck had devoted a great amount of time and effort to make this a successful reunion. Lets give him help. Our chapter is the sponsors of the reunion.

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

Dwight Sypolt  
Commander



**From H Duckworth O'Brien's "A Grunt's Life":** : TU DAI; In the boonies, you never knew when or where you might find a booby trap. You hoped you saw it before you triggered it. It was a favorite tool of the Viet Cong, both men and women. They often booby trapped likely paths American grunts would walk down. To warn the locals, they placed a small wooden sign nearby. They inscribed "TU DIE" (pronounced To Die) on it indicating a mined area. It made no difference to the V.C. that mines are equal opportunity weapons.

## **2021 ADVA annual reunion Report, Indianapolis, September 8-12:**

Fellow Members, the time for the annual Americal Division Veterans Association reunion in Indianapolis is upon us and I just want to urge any of you who haven't signed up yet to do it right away. RV spots and tour spaces are 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 2/1 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](mailto:indy2021reunion@gmail.com). Sincerely, Chuck Holdaway



**Remembering September 11, 2001:** After 20 years this month it is easy to forget the catastrophe that occurred in New York, Washington, D.C. and Shanksville, PA. You will undoubtedly recall that just after 9 a.m. eastern daylight time as the major news broadcasters brought the devastation of that disastrous day. Four California-bound commercial airliners, which took off from three different airports across the northeastern United States, were hijacked mid-flight by 19 al-Qaeda terrorists. American Airlines Flight 11 was flown into the North tower of the World Trade Center complex in Lower Manhattan. World Trade Center's South tower was hit by United Airlines Flight 175. Both 110-story towers collapsed leading to the collapse of the other World Trade Center structures including 7 World Trade Center, and significantly damaging surrounding buildings. American Airlines Flight 77, flown from Dulles International Airport, was hijacked over Ohio and was crashed into the west side of the Pentagon. United Airlines Flight 93, was flown in the direction of Washington, D.C.; the plane crashed in a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania after passengers forced their way into the cockpit and fought the hijackers over the controls. That flight's target was either the White House or the Capitol Building. The United States formally responded by launching the War on Terror and invading Afghanistan to depose the Taliban, which had not complied with U.S. demands to expel al-Qaeda from Afghanistan and extradite their leader Osama bin Laden. After evading capture for almost a decade, bin Laden was located in Pakistan in 2011 and killed during a U.S. military raid. The attacks on American soil resulted in 2,977 fatalities, over 25,000 injuries, and substantial long-term health consequences, in addition to at least \$10 billion in infrastructure and property damage. It remains the deadliest terrorist attack in human history and the single deadliest incident for firefighters and law enforcement officers in the history of the United States, with 340 and 72 killed respectively. The skyscrapers to all who visited New York city, demonstrated the engineering, architectural and construction prowess of our country. Exhibiting the genius of the "Twin Towers" in the midst of the financial sector of the largest city in the modern world brought to light this country's capability for great structures. No one could have foretold of the hi-jacking of modern commercial aircraft for the purpose of bringing down the United States of America. This my fellow veterans is the significance of the day. **Freedom is not Free.** We have paid for the right with the sacrifice of our most precious assets. Our existence depends on our military readiness and the will of our leaders to use them to preserve our nation's way of life. The recent events brings clear evidence we should insist those in public office and our military leaders execute their duties sworn to by their Oath of Office. Our very existence depends on the fulfillment of the words uttered with that oath.



**Army Lieutenant General Gets Fourth Star and Becomes Second Female Combatant Commander in History:** Lt. Gen. Laura Richardson was confirmed by the Senate in a unanimous voice vote to become the next commander of U.S. Southern Command, which will make her just the second woman in history to lead a combatant command. Richardson, who now leads U.S. Army North, will receive a fourth star before taking command of SOUTHCOM, which oversees U.S. military operations across South and Central America and the Caribbean. She will become just the second female four-star general in the Army's history. Richardson will replace SOUTHCOM's outgoing chief, Navy Adm. Craig Faller, who has led the combatant command headquartered just outside Miami since November 2018.

**Concerns over US Terror Threats Rising, more Troops Deployed as Taliban Takes Over:** Another 1,000 U.S. troops were being sent to Afghanistan to help evacuate U.S. personnel after the Taliban appeared poised to take control of the country. The rapid collapse of the Afghan government left American officials increasingly concerned about the potential for a rise in terrorist threats against the United States. Gen. Mark Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told senators on a briefing recently that U.S. officials are expected to alter their earlier assessments about the pace of terrorist groups reconstituting in Afghanistan, a person familiar with the matter told The Associated Press. In June, the Pentagon's top leaders said an extremist group like al-Qaida may be able to regenerate in Afghanistan and pose a threat to the U.S. homeland within two years of the American military's withdrawal from the country. But based on the evolving situation, officials now believe terror groups like al-Qaida may be able to grow much faster than expected, according to the person, who had direct knowledge of the briefing was not authorized to discuss the details of the call publicly and spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity.

**US Special Operations Forces Race to Save Former Afghan Comrades in Jeopardy:** U.S. military special operations and intelligence community operatives are using their own networks of contacts to get elite Afghan soldiers, intelligence assets and interpreters to safety as they've become increasingly disillusioned and fed up with the evacuation effort in Kabul. One informal group, dubbed "Task Force Pineapple," began as a frantic effort last weekend to get one former Afghan commando into Hamid Karzai International Airport. They knew he had worked with U.S. Special Forces and the elite SEAL Team Six for a dozen years, targeting Taliban leadership, and was a high risk of reprisal. The former elite commando was finally pulled into the U.S. security perimeter, where he shouted the password "pineapple" to American troops at the checkpoint. Two days later, the group of his American friends and comrades also helped get his family inside the airport to join him with the aid of the same U.S. embassy officer. "I'm very excited. I feel like on one side of the wire is Afghanistan and on this side is America, and I told my family we are now on U.S. soil," the former Afghan commando told ABC News after his young children went to sleep in safe hands. "I spent the primacy of my career in special operations, and that gave me access to a lot of people who are like-minded, and a lot of people who have lived with the Afghan people and love the Afghan people and have been with them for 15, 20 years," retired Marine Lt. Col. Russell Worth Parker, a spokesman for the group, said in an exclusive interview. "We couldn't stand by and just watch people we know fall to a very, very certain fate," he added.

**The Swine Flu Vaccine in 1976 caused more death and illness than the disease it was intended to prevent.**

**From 300,000 to a Few Hundred:** What Happened to Afghanistan's Army? President Joe Biden told the American people on July 8 that the U.S. and its partners in Afghanistan had "trained and equipped nearly 300,000 current serving members of the military" – a critical element to his justification for why the U.S. could withdraw. When asked to account for any of those forces recently, following the stunning fall of Kabul to the Taliban, the Pentagon referenced only 500 local troops at the airport in Kabul that were helping provide security. Multiple explanations exist for the chasm between those two appraisals of the soldiers and federal police that American troops and their NATO allies spent 20 years and billions of dollars attempting to stand up. But perhaps most troubling among them is the fact that the 300,000 number Biden offered never existed, at least not in recent years, and the fraction of those that did indeed bear the uniform of their country were not prepared to fight on their own. Army Gen. Mark Milley, the military's top officer, expressed disbelief in the implosion of the Afghan army in a press conference recently. "They had the training, the size, the capability to defend their country. This comes down to an issue of will and leadership. And, no, I did not – nor did anyone else – see a collapse of an army that size in 11 days," said Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The Taliban as of August 18, 2021 had almost completed a full rout of the country's forces. At the moment, there's still a lot that senior U.S. officials don't know about American weapons falling into the hands of the Taliban. But based on past reporting from U.S. government watchdogs, the militant group may have inherited a broad arsenal of American weapons from the hands of fleeing Afghan security forces. According to a 2017 Government Accountability Office report, the U.S. military transferred roughly 75,898 vehicles, 599,690 weapons systems, and 208 aircraft between fiscal years 2003 and 2016. And according to a recent Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction analysis, the last few years have seen the Defense Department send the ANDSF more than 7,000 machine guns, more than 4,700 Humvees, and more than 20,000 grenades. This is to say nothing of the communications, explosive ordnance disposal, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) equipment transferred to the ANDSF over the course of two decades as detailed in the GAO report.

**George W. Bush says the Events in Afghanistan Fill Him 'With Deep Sadness.':** President George W. Bush, who ordered the 2001 U.S.-led invasion that drove the Taliban from power, said this week that he felt "deep sadness" at the group's takeover of Afghanistan and defended his decision to launch what would become America's longest war. "Our hearts are heavy for both the Afghan people who have suffered so much and for the Americans and NATO allies who have sacrificed so much," the former president and his wife, Laura Bush Mr. Bush was in his first year in office, with little experience in foreign affairs, when the Sept. 11 attacks prompted him to deploy troops to Afghanistan to drive out the Taliban government that had sheltered the terrorist leader Osama bin Laden. But then Mr. Bush turned his focus to invading Iraq, the costly military campaign that would come to define his presidency, leaving the Afghanistan mission to drag on with ill-defined goals and little oversight.

**Six Keepers:** In a change of plans, the Army will be keeping five installations in Germany and one in Belgium, a decision made after reviewing facility demands. The Amelia Earhart Center in Wiesbaden, Barton Barracks in Ansbach, Coleman Barracks in Mannheim, Pulaski Barracks in Kaiserslautern and Weillimdorf Warehouse in Stuttgart will be retained, as will Daumerie Barracks in Belgium.

**More than 47,000 Troops, Vets will see Federal Student Loan Fees Waived:** More than 47,000 service members and veterans will see some of their federal student loan debt erased thanks to new policies announced by the Department of Education. "Brave men and women in uniform serving our country can now focus on doing their jobs and coming home safely, not filling out more paperwork to access their hard-earned benefits," Federal Student Aid Chief Operating Officer Richard Cordray said in a statement announcing the change. "We will seek to reduce red tape for service members wherever possible." Under previous legislation, any service member who deployed to overseas combat zones and hostile fire areas could have interest on many federal student loans waived. The rules include student loans first paid out after Oct. 1, 2008. For some individuals, that extra interest can range from a few hundred to several thousand dollars. But until now, getting those additional fees waived required lengthy paperwork proving past military service and deployments. Department of Education officials said fewer than 5,000 service members and veterans requested the interest fees be waived in recent years. The new policy shifts the burden from student veterans and service personnel to federal officials. Under a new data sharing agreement announced by the Departments of Defense and Education, federal processors can identify federal student loan borrowers who serve on active duty by matching records to DOD's personnel files.

**Cost of Caring for Iraq, Afghanistan Vets could Top \$2.5 Trillion:** The cost of caring for veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan could top \$2.5 trillion by 2050, creating tough financial decisions for both the veterans community and the entire country, according to a new analysis by the Costs of War Project. "The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have created a veterans care crisis, with disability rates soaring past those seen in previous wars," said Harvard University professor Linda Bilmes, lead author of the new estimates. "This will take a long-term toll not only on veterans, but the U.S. taxpayers that will bear these costs for decades to come. Researchers cited "more frequent and longer deployments, higher levels of exposure to combat, higher rates of survival from injuries, higher incidence of serious disability, and more complex medical treatments" as the reasons for the higher price tag. The group also noted that the increased demands are already putting pressure on the federal budget. In fiscal 2001, mandatory veterans spending accounted for about 2.4 percent of annual federal spending. By fiscal 2020, that jumped to 4.9 percent, even as the number of veterans in America dropped from about 25.3 million to 18.5 million. "The majority of the costs associated with caring for post-9/11 veterans has not yet been paid and will continue to accrue long into the future," the report states. "As in earlier U.S. wars, the costs of care and benefits for post-9/11 veterans will not reach their peak until decades after the conflict, as veterans' needs increase with age. This time around, veterans' costs will be much steeper." About \$900 billion of the estimated costs will be for direct medical care by Veterans Affairs physicians and contractors. All post-9/11 veterans are entitled to five years of free medical care through VA, while individuals with significant service-connected injuries can qualify for lifetime care.

**Service Cross Review:** The Defense Department has asked the Army to review Distinguished Service Crosses awarded to Native Americans veterans during World War II, Korea, and the Vietnam War and black Americans from the Korean and Vietnam Wars to see if the acts of valor warranted the Medal of Honor. This is similar to the review done for veterans of WW II.

**Fire Base O'Connor, Republic of Vietnam:** Last month I was invited by a close friend to attend the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (AHPA) annual reunion in Charlotte, NC. I live just three short hours from the reunion site, so I attended the reunion. While walking around the hotel where there were a host of vendors, I was introduced to a retired pilot by the name of Mike O'Connor who had served in Vietnam during the 1968 TET Offensive. He and a small group of 5 helicopters operated with the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division, attached to the Americal Division around the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) assisting friendly forces. On one such operation his helicopter was shot down on the North side of the DMZ. Three of the men who were on his aircraft were killed. He was the sole survivor and was captured and spent the next 5 years as a prisoner of war. He was released when the war ended and the prisoners were brought out of North Vietnam in 1973. The reason I found this interesting is because when I commanded a rifle company in the Americal Division in 1968-1969, there was a Fire Base named O'Connor within our area of operation West of Chu Lai, near the border of South Vietnam. This chance encounter provided me with the opportunity to meet and speak with the person the Fire Base was named. Although we did not have time to dwell on his experiences while serving in Vietnam, the chance encounter was the highlight of my attending this AHPA reunion.



**US Special Operations Forces Race Save Former Afghan Comrades in Jeopardy:** U.S. military special operations and intelligence community operatives are using their own networks of contacts to get elite Afghan soldiers, intelligence assets and interpreters to safety as they've become increasingly disillusioned and fed up with the evacuation effort in Kabul. One informal group, dubbed "Task Force Pineapple," began as a frantic effort last weekend to get one former Afghan commando into Hamid Karzai International Airport. They knew he had worked with U.S. Special Forces and the elite SEAL Team Six for a dozen years, targeting Taliban leadership. The former elite commando was finally pulled into the U.S. security perimeter, where he shouted the password "pineapple" to American troops at the checkpoint. Two days later, the group of his American friends and comrades also helped get his family inside the airport to join him with the aid of the same U.S. embassy officer. "I'm very excited. I feel like on one side of the wire is Afghanistan and on this side is America, and I told my family we are now on U.S. soil," the former Afghan commando told ABC News after his young children went to sleep in safe hands. "I spent the primacy of my career in special operations, and that gave me access to a lot of people who are like-minded, and a lot of people who have lived with the Afghan people and love the Afghan people and have been with them for 15, 20 years," retired Marine Lt. Col. Russell Worth Parker, a spokesman for the group, said in an exclusive interview. "We couldn't stand by and just watch people we know fall to a very, very certain fate," he added.

**Pentagon Announces COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate, but no set Deadline:** All members of the active-duty and reserve components of the military will be required to get vaccinated against COVID-19, according to a memo signed by Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin. Just under 60 percent of the force has received at least one vaccine, per the latest data, though the Defense Department has until now offered the shots on a volunteer basis. With the full Food and Drug Administration approval of the Pfizer vaccine on Monday, the Pentagon is moving for full vaccination of more than 2 million service members. "Mandatory vaccinations are familiar to all of our Service members, and mission-critical inoculation is almost as old as the U.S. military itself," Austin wrote. "Our administration of safe, effective COVID-19 vaccines has produced admirable results to date, and I know the Department of Defense will come together to finish the job with urgency, professionalism, and compassion." The memo directs the Army, Air Force and Navy secretaries to "immediately begin full vaccination," though he does not set a timeline. Rather, he leaves it them to "impose ambitious timelines for implementation," and to report their progress through existing channels. For now, according to the memo, only the Pfizer vaccine will be required, as it is the only fully FDA-licensed. Troops who received another brand are still considered fully vaccinated, Austin wrote.

**Soldiers Knock Down Airborne Threats with New Missile Defense System:** The Army, working with the Israeli Missile Defense Organization, recently completed another step toward fielding the first of two Iron Dome defense system batteries, a key platform for protecting forces from cruise missiles, drones, rockets, artillery and mortars. The shoot took place at White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico, the Army announced in a recent release. Army Times reported on Army efforts back in 2019 to reinstitute diluted air defense skills and update ground vehicle systems with ways to protect against air attacks in peer combat. The 3-43rd Air Defense Artillery Battalion, assigned to the 11th ADA Brigade at Fort Bliss, Texas, was the first unit to do new equipment training on the Iron Dome. The air defenders "successfully engaged eight cruise missile surrogate targets as part of a coordinated performance test and live fire event," according to the release. The Army plans call for fielding both of the Iron Dome systems as "interim cruise missile defense solution," while they continue work on the Indirect Fires Protection Capability system.



**"We've been conditioned to think that only a politician can solve our problems. But at some point, maybe we will wake up and recognize it was the politicians who created our problems"**

Ben Carson.

## ADVA Reunion Events Schedule

Thursday 9/9	9am-2pm	Indianapolis Motor Speedway
Thursday 9/9	1pm-7pm	Registration
Thursday 9/9	11am	Shuttle to Whiskey Business Bar and Grill *
Friday 9/10	8am-11am	Registration
Friday 9/10	2pm-6pm	Registration
Friday 9/10	9am-3pm	Military Tour
Friday 9/10	11am	Shuttle to Whiskey Business Bar and Grill *
Saturday 9/11	8am-11am	Registration
Saturday 9/11	2pm-6pm	Registration
Saturday 9/11	8am-9:45am	Executive Council Meeting (Fortune Square B)
Saturday 9/11	10am-11:30am	ADVA General Meeting (Hall of Champions 3)
Saturday 9/11	12pm-3:30pm	Dallara Indycar Factory
Saturday 9/11	11am	Shuttle to Whiskey Business Bar and Grill *
Saturday 9/11	5pm-5:45pm	First Timers Reception – Nicolino’s Lounge
Saturday 9/11	5pm-6pm	Banquet Reception – Golden Ballroom Foyer
Saturday 9/11	6pm-?	Banquet – Golden Ballroom
Thursday – Saturday	7am-9am	Complimentary breakfast (Brickyard)
Thursday – Saturday		PX and hospitality rooms open at manager’s discretion
Thursday – Saturday		<b>Whiskey Business</b>

Pickup and return times to be announced by driver. **Free round trip shuttle to Whiskey Business.** This is a really nice big sports bar and grill with a great menu including 20 specialty burgers, 20 beers on tap, over 20 bourbons, plenty of TVs & nightly entertainment. Get your buddies together and have the time of your life at Whiskey Business. **Please tip your driver, Eddie Bray, as him and the owner of Whiskey Business, Mike Doran, are volunteering their time and resources in appreciation of your sacrifices and service to our great country.**

Americal Division General Room	Brickyard Room (Main Floor)
1st Bn., 6 <sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment	Room 162
2 <sup>nd</sup> Bn., 1 <sup>st</sup> Infantry Regiment	Room 262
23 <sup>rd</sup> Military Police Company	Room 362
11 <sup>th</sup> Light Infantry Brigade	Room 462

Raffle Tickets:	
Original NVA Flag	Brickyard Room
Keltek KS7 Shotgun	Brickyard Room
Patriotic Phone	Brickyard Room
Paid Hotel Room	Brickyard Room
Original Army Issue Poncho Liners (4 different drawings)	All unit Hospitality Rooms

**Raffle winners will be announced at the General ADVA Meeting on Saturday**

## *American Heroes Who Served in the U.S. Army*

**Willie (Say Hey) Mays Served in the Army during the Korean War:** Willie Mays is one of the signature players in baseball history. However, not much is known about him beyond the typical stuff like the 1954 World Series catch, the 660 career home runs, the Hall of Fame election, and the “Say Hey Kid” nickname. Beyond these obvious items, he is kind of an enigma. Willie joined the Birmingham Black Barons in 1948 when he was just 17 and still in high school. Mays playing style can be traced back to his time with the Barons where he learned a faster, more exciting brand of baseball that emphasized base stealing, bunting, and the hit and run. Most of his teammates were at least 10 years older than him and were grown men. They were also good. Mays had two hits in his first game on July 4th and afterwards was offered a contract for \$250 a month. He was allowed to play only when school was out. Because of his salary, he was banned from playing for his high school teams. He learned from his older teammates how to deal with racism. When the 1951 season was over, Mays received a letter from the selective service asking him to report for a physical. Uncle Sam needed men to fight the war in Korea and Willie was a prime candidate to be drafted. He tried to claim hardship and deliberately flunked the written exam the first time, but was still declared eligible by the draft board. He was never sent to Korea. His primary job was to entertain the troops by playing baseball for the Fort Eustis team. He spent most of his time playing baseball and reading comic books.



**“M\*A\*S\*H” star Alan Alda’s** personal connection to the hit TV show: Alan Alda actually served in the military during the Korean War. Alda was just one of several veterans that formed the crew of the popular show. Set during the Korean War, “M\*A\*S\*H” starred Alda as surgeon Hawkeye Pierce. The doctors on the show often used humor and hijacks to distract themselves from the war. But the show also wasn’t afraid to explore the darkness and horror of being in a combat zone. There was always intensity and sadness bubbling under the surface that spewed out at certain moments. Alda enlisted after college and spent six months in Korea as part of the Army Reserves. He had a brief tour compared to the thousands that fought and died in the War. “They had designs of making me into an officer but, uh ... it didn’t go so well,” he told an audience in 2013. “I was in charge of a mess tent. Some of that made it into the show.” During his time, he would serve 200 soldiers their meals. He also observed how shell-shocked some of them looked that they barely even touched their meals. It became a day to day ritual. His observations helped him incorporate both a weird sense of normalcy and the ever-present danger into the show. Thanks to his service, Alda worked behind the scenes to make sure the show reflected the War and honored the people that served. He didn’t want to turn it into some wacky comedy.



## An Occurrence Worth Sharing

A strange and wonderful occurrence took place in late May 2021; worth revealing. I have devoted the majority of my life in uniform and continuing to act on behalf of veterans whenever I have the opportunity. I received a phone call from the former person in charge at the Wake Forest High School JROTC program. He inquired if I still had the branch insignia of an Army Infantry Officer from my earlier service days. The answer wasn't easy because after my retirement from service I haven't looked at my service uniform. I remember stating that I wanted to be buried in my service ceremonial uniform, but I nor my wife weren't sure just where the uniform had been set aside for that eventuality. After a quick search of our home, my uniform was located, so I returned the phone call announcing that I had located the U.S. Army Officer Infantry insignia. I was informed that a former JROTC high school student had graduated from Norwich University and their ROTC program. He was being commissioned in the Infantry the following morning at 10 o'clock. Due to the short notice he received of the commissioning ceremony he had not purchased the proper insignia. He needed to



borrow the insignia for his uniform to be properly attired for the commissioning ceremony. I agreed to share them with the candidate. Shortly after I received a pleasant phone call from Jonah Faneuf thanking me for allowing him to wear my Infantry Officer's insignia and wishing to stop by my home to acquire the insignia. About 30 minutes later, Jonah was at my front door seeking to pick-up the loaned officer insignia. While sharing in some small talk, I relayed the reason for keeping my officer insignia after 30 years. He assured me that the insignia would be used during the ceremony and then returned. I, unfortunately, was scheduled to depart first thing in the morning to visit my son living in the lower part of Florida and would not be returning for several weeks. Jonah assured me that the uniform pieces would be well taken care of and upon my return would be brought back as previously agreed. The commissioning ceremony was conducted as planned; Jonah's uniform looked wonderful with polished Infantry insignia and a first salute from his father. Traditionally, the first salute of a newly commissioned officer requires the officer to present a silver dollar to the person rendering the hand salute. In Jonah's case the presentation of the silver dollar was to be presented to his father. However, the exchange was delayed because as he retrieved the coin from his pocket, the coin left his hand and fell to the floor. Jonah's embarrassment was short lived for after returning the coin the



Jonah Faneuf

Jonah takes the Oath of Office presentation to his father was complete. The return of the insignia items was delayed several weeks because I was remiss to let Jonah know I had returned from my Florida vacation and when I remembered to contact Jonah he was vacationing in Hawaii. It took another 2 weeks for us to reunite. We talked about his attendance and graduation from Norwich University located in Vermont. Norwich University is a major feeding institution for officers in the U.S. Army, I became aware that Jonah had not only been an



Jonah Receives Salute from Dad



Rich Heroux, Jonah Faneuf & Tim Mock  
Army soldiers in the modern day. I will say as an old-timer and a career soldier, having the pleasure and distinction of knowing this fine representative of our nation's military is an occasion I will long remember.

outstanding member of the Wake Forest High School JROTC program but was accepted to attend the American Legion "Boys State" program prior to his graduation. The Boys State program is designed to instill knowledge of the North Carolina legislative process. Once again one of the programs I am familiar with as a member of the American Legion Post in Wake Forest. After commissioning Jonah will be attending the Infantry Officer's Basic Course at Fort Benning, Georgia, where I spent a great deal of time learning the competence for leading soldiers in combat. I invited Jonah to provide the historical encounters after leaving high school and during his time leading up to his commissioning as an Infantry Officer to the attending members of our American Legion Post at the July monthly meeting. He graciously accepted my invitation. That memorable membership meeting of an unexpected first-hand delightful rendition of Jonah's experiences with the JROTC, Boys State & ROTC programs leading to his commissioning as a 2d Lieutenant of Infantry, U.S. Army. It isn't often that a group of veterans have the opportunity to hear first hand the exploits of a young man seeking to be leader of