



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



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Volume 12

“A Soldier Once And Always”

August 2022

Commanders Corner: Best wishes to all my brothers, sisters and families and friends and brothers and families from our sister units. I hope this letter finds everyone well and enjoying summer since the last two have been challenging. I know that we all are facing tough economic times these days with gas and food prices, but we all have endured tough times in our lives and are probably equipped better than many to deal with the challenges. In these kinds of times it's important to remember that we all need to stick together and be there to help each other if we can. I still hope that we can have a great turnout at our August Reunion in DC. Its good therapy when we can get together and share. If you are planning to attend but have not finalized your arrangements than you need to do it soon. August 2nd is the deadline for making your hotel arrangement and receiving the discounted rate. It would also be helpful to our Chapter planning if we could get a count of attendees to include spouses and friends. Please e-mail me at [dwightsybolt@gmail.com](mailto:dwrightsybolt@gmail.com) or respond to Rich when you receive this newsletter with this information. I can also be reached on my cell at 401.718.4499.



Unfortunately our brother Jesse Mendoza and Eileen will be unable to attend this year's reunion because of health reasons and I know we all extend them our best wishes and to get well soon so they can rejoin us at our next reunion. If you have attended previous reunions, you are aware that Jesse and Eileen have always set up and managed our Hospitality room. So, since they won't be able to do that at our DC reunion, we are looking for volunteers to help with that this year. The requirement is to do the initial stocking of the room with beer and sodas and snacks on Wednesday afternoon/night or early Thursday morning. Jesse and Eileen have always gone to Costco, Sam's Club, or Wal-Mart to get supplies. These facilities exist in the Arlington area so if we can get a volunteer or Volunteers that are driving to the reunion that would be willing to pick up supplies than that would be greatly appreciated. Three or four Styrofoam coolers would be needed for the beverages and ice should be available at the hotel. Hopefully everyone attending can help with keeping things iced down as needed. We also need some volunteers to unlock the Room in the morning and lock it at the end of the day/night. Once we get volunteers, we can set up a schedule of who will do what when so no one will be tied down all the time. By the way all expenses for supplies will be funded from our Chapter Fund so there are not out of pocket expenses for anyone and just keep receipts. If you are willing to volunteer than please get back to me at the information I provided above or send an e-mail to Rich Heroux. I wish everyone good health and Happiness and may God Bless you all!

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

Dwight Sybolt
Commander

From H Duckworth O'Brien's "A Grunt's Life": Secure the Landing Zone (LZ): You're in the first insertion into a new landing zone (LZ). This is Charlie's sandbox and if you are lucky, you won't be welcomed with small arms, RPG's or mortars. You hustle to your assigned area to provide security for the next sortie coming in. It will only take them a few minutes but, on the ground it feels like an eternity.

The Soldier for Life sticker: The Soldier for Life sticker promotes the Soldier for Life mindset among Soldiers, Retired Soldiers, and veterans, uniting them in their desire to be Army advocates and demonstrate the value of a lifetime of service to the nation. The stickers are officially known as Department of the Army Label 180 (Exterior) and 180-1 (Interior). DA Label 180 uses normal adhesive and is affixed to the outside of windows, on books, and other appropriate surfaces. DA Label 180-1 uses electrostatic cling and is affixed to the inside of windows. Both stickers may be provided by your Post Exchange and other retail businesses. The sticker does not include the word "Retired" because it represents every Soldier for Life including veterans who are not retired.



Millions of vets suffering from burn pit, toxic injuries set for more benefits after Congress passes PACT Act: Comprehensive toxic exposure legislation that could provide new health care and disability benefits to millions of veterans is headed to the White House to become law after Senate lawmakers ended a week of turmoil surrounding the bill with a strong bipartisan vote. The Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act — better known as the PACT Act — was adopted Tuesday by a 86-11 vote after a lengthy series of procedural moves by senators. Advocates called the move a historic change in how the Department of Veterans Affairs approaches toxic exposure injuries, in particular ones caused by burn pits used in combat zones. It was also the culmination of years of lobbying for sick veterans and nearly a week of constant protest on Capitol Hill.

Army Killing of al-Qaida Leader is Long-Sought Justice: President Joe Biden announced that al-Qaida leader Ayman al-Zawahri was killed in a U.S. drone strike in Kabul, an operation he hailed as delivering “justice” while expressing hope that it brings “one more measure of closure” to families of the victims of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. The president said in an evening address from the White House that U.S. intelligence officials tracked al-Zawahri to a home in downtown Kabul where he was hiding out with his family. Al-Zawahri and the better known Osama bin Laden plotted the 9/11 attacks that brought many ordinary Americans their first knowledge of al-Qaida.

New Easier-to-Remember Veterans Crisis Line Number: The new 988 National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, which launched July 22, 2022, isn't aimed specifically at veterans, but advocates are hopeful that the resource will provide an easier venue for veterans and military members facing mental health emergencies. “The new shorter number directly addresses the need for ease of access and clarity in times of crisis, both for veterans and non veterans alike,” Dr. Tamara Campbell, acting Executive Director for the Department of Veterans’ Affairs Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, said recently. Dial 988 then 1.

Request for Help: Comrades: We are just short of three weeks from the start of our annual Americal Division Veterans Reunion. I anticipate this year’s reunion will be jam packed with exciting activities for all of us. I know that as I have heard from several of our chapter friends about visiting Washington, DC again and the many opportunities to visit the monuments constructed there to identify with service and sacrifice in defense of Freedom and our way of life. We certainly have much to give thanks as we look back at our military service. I for one am looking forward to visiting the newly opened U.S. Army museum. In the past our accommodations during these reunion were enhanced by the volunteers who devoted their time and expense to make our hospitality room one if not the best. This year we will be without the folks that in the past have devoted much of their reunion time making sure all of us were able to enjoy ourselves by having a variety of drinks, snacks and a clean room where we could congregate and enjoy ourselves. So in order to ease the burden for purchasing the refreshments and snacks, we need volunteers from the membership to pitch-in and help with this important chore. The commander and Secretary/Treasurer have asked for help without receiving any answer to their request. I am asking once again for someone or group of members to step forward and volunteer to be the person responsible for setting up the Hospitality room and controlling the hours of operation. It isn't a gigantic undertaking, but your Executive Committee members have other chores while attending the reunion that make it impossible for them to coordinate all that must be accomplished to make the room truly hospitable. Will someone please step forward and take on this chore so that we all can enjoy the reunion. Call Dwight Sypolt or me if you desire to help.



Memorial Day May 30, 2022; It seemed as though our departed comrades were very near to us.

Equipment procurement will always be compromised by not only being made by the lowest bidder, but by attempting to make it multi-functional.

McDonough Sidesteps calls for VA to Provide Abortion Services at Medical Centers: Veterans Affairs Secretary Denis McDonough on Sunday would not back calls to provide abortions at department medical centers even as he pledged to find ways to ensure women veterans have access to the services regardless of where they live. The comments came just two days after 25 Senate lawmakers (all Democrats and independents) urged the department to begin offering abortions at VA medical centers to all veterans and eligible family members, in response to a growing number of states outlawing the procedure. “Last month’s disastrous Supreme Court decision ... makes it even more critical that veterans receive access to the reproductive care to which they are entitled,” the group wrote in a letter to the VA secretary. “VA must urgently begin rulemaking to allow veterans and eligible dependents to receive abortions and all abortion-related services.” Since the Supreme Court in June overturned the 1973 Roe v. Wade ruling, which legalized abortion nationwide, at least 23 states have started to place limits or already imposed restrictions on health care workers from providing abortions.

Advocates Survey Raises Serious Questions About the Future of the All-Volunteer Force: The results of a new survey of military and veterans and spouses — including details on financial difficulties — raise concerns about the future of the military, said the executive director of the organization that conducted the survey. Fewer military, veterans and spouses are likely to recommend military service, according to the findings, and the reasons are related to their own well-being, said Shannon Razzadin, president and executive director of the Military Family Advisory Network. “At the end of the day, families are having a hard time making ends meet, and that’s affecting their overall well-being,” she said. “We see the connection between well-being and loneliness, well-being and housing, well-being and food security. When you layer that on top of the fact that fewer people are likely to recommend military service, it paints a very clear picture of concern related to the future of the all-volunteer force.” This is the fourth survey fielded by the organization, generally every two years. This time, the biggest surprise, said Razzadin, was the drop in the percentage of survey respondents who said they would recommend military life – from 74.5% in 2019 to 62.9% in 2021. The online Military Family Support Programming Survey was fielded from Oct. 4 to Dec. 15, 2021, with 8,638 participating. The largest group of respondents was spouses of active duty members, at 44%, followed by active duty members, at 14%. Nearly 60% of the respondents overall were between the ages of 25 and 39.

Citing Recruiting Woes, Army will Shed up to 28,000 Troops in Next Year: Army Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Joseph Martin also confirmed that the Army notified Congress that it expects to have between 445,000 and 452,000 soldiers at the end of fiscal 2023, a 28,000-soldier drop from the original end strength the Army projected for 2022. Martin’s spokesperson, provided an emailed statement that Martin “stated the estimated end strength for FY22 is 466.4K. Our estimated end strength for FY23 is between 445-452K.” Martin’s admission indicates a significant shortfall of soldiers from the Army’s target end strength of 473,000, plus an even steeper drop-off for the following year, which was originally programmed for 476,000 troops. But even those numbers belie the enormity of the recruiting crisis the Army faces — the service began the fiscal year with an end strength target of 485,000, but slashed it by 12,000 (and recruiting goals by 15,000) in April when it realized it wouldn’t make those numbers. In response to Martin’s statement, Rep. Jackie Speier, D-Calif., said she wants the committee to hold a hearing that would delve into the Army’s “alarming” end strength scramble and work on potential solutions to the issue.

POW/MIA Update: The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced three burial updates and two new identifications for service members who have been missing and unaccounted-for from World War II and Korea. Returning home for burial with full military honors are:



--**Marine Corps Reserve Cpl. William R. Ragsdale, 23**, of Nashville, Tennessee, was assigned to Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 24th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division on June 28, 1944. His unit was part of the invasion force when American forces participated in the battle for Saipan, which was part of a larger operation to secure the Mariana islands. Ragsdale was initially reported as wounded in action, but his status was later changed to deceased. He will be buried on Aug. 6, 2022, in his hometown.

-- **Army Pvt. Alevin A. Hathaway, 20**, of Hinesburg, Vermont, was assigned to Company E, 2nd Battalion, 109th Infantry Regiment, 28th Infantry Division. He was reported missing in action on Nov. 6, 1944, when his unit was engaged in battle with German forces near Hürtgen, Germany. His body was not recovered, and he was declared killed in action Nov. 7, 1945. Following further investigation, Hathaway was declared non-recoverable in December 1950. He will be buried in his hometown on a date yet to be determined.

-- **Army Air Forces Staff Sgt. Moses F. Tate, 23**, was assigned to 415th Bombardment Squadron, 98th Bombardment Group, 9th Air Force. On Aug. 1, 1943, the B-24 Liberator aircraft on which Tate was a gunner crashed as a result of anti-aircraft fire during Operation Tidal Wave. Following the war, his remains could not be identified. Interment services are pending.

-- **Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. Pharis E. Weekley, 21**, was assigned to 329th Bombardment Squadron, 93rd Bombardment Group, 9th Air Force. On Aug. 1, 1943, the B-24 Liberator aircraft on which Weekley was a navigator crashed as a result of anti-aircraft fire during Operation Tidal Wave. Following the war, his remains could not be identified. Interment services are pending.

-- **Army Pvt. Felix M. Yanez, 19**, was assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 19th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division. He was killed in action on July 16, 1950, while fighting the North Korean People's Army along the Kum River, north of Taejon, South Korea. Following the war, his remains could not be identified. Interment services are pending.

-- **Army Pfc. Melvin J. Little Bear, 21**, was assigned to Able Battery, 15th Field Artillery Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division. On Feb. 13, 1951, he was reported missing in action after his unit was attacked by the Chinese People's Volunteer Forces near Changbong-ni, South Korea. He had been captured and was a prisoner of war at POW Camp No. 1. Subsequent reports and information from the Chinese and North Korean forces indicated he died in captivity on or about July 21, 1951. Interment services are pending.

-- **Army Pfc. John L. Ferguson, 20**, was assigned to 28th Material Squadron, U.S. Army Air Forces, when Japanese forces invaded the Philippine Islands in December 1941. Intense fighting continued until the surrender of the Bataan peninsula in 1942. Ferguson was among those captured and held at the Cabanatuan POW Camp, where he reportedly died on Dec. 10, 1942, and was buried. Interment services are pending.

-- **Army Pfc. John W. Gordon, 32**, was assigned to Company G, 157th Infantry Regiment, 45th Infantry Division. On Jan. 17, 1945, Gordon was killed while his unit was engaged with German forces during the Battle of Reipertswiller in France. His body could not be recovered due to the ongoing battle. Interment services are pending.

Veterans call Rejection of Toxic-Exposure bill 'a slap in the face': James Powers still recoils when he thinks about the smell that hung over his base while serving in Iraq — a putrid mix of burning plastic and human waste. The former soldier recalls days when the smoke from the burn pits made it too hazardous for helicopters to fly overhead. While some of his infantrymen never made it out of the war zone, others who did later fell ill from the toxic fumes they inhaled daily, he said. Powers now fears a similar fate: "It's just a matter of time until it happens to me," he told The Washington Post. He was among the veterans, military family members and advocates staged on the Capitol steps for the fourth night on Sunday, pledging to remain until Congress passes a bill that covers health care for those exposed to toxins while serving in uniform. Earlier that day, the head of the Department of Veterans Affairs warned that a new Republican proposal could leave the agency "rationing" veterans' health care. GOP lawmakers blocked the aid from passing last week in what comedian Jon Stewart, a longtime veterans advocate, blasted as "a disgrace." "We fought for this country freely, and we expect now that people will fight for us and fight for our basic health care," said Samantha Turner, an Army veteran who served near burn pits in Kuwait. Turner, who has sleep apnea, now uses a machine to breathe at night. "We're not political pawns," she added. Though exposure to burn pits is known to cause cancers, sleep apnea and other respiratory, cardiovascular and neurological conditions, the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee's top Republican said about 70 percent of all disability claims related to the toxins are denied because of service members' inability to prove a link between their conditions and the hazardous substances. For years, activists had been fighting for an expansion in veterans' health care coverage that would remove that burden-of-proof requirement — resulting in a bill known as the Pact Act. The legislation was welcomed by veterans and their loved ones. And it was poised to pass after sailing through [the Senate](#) by an 84-to-14 vote in June. But when the bill was sent back to the Senate for a second vote on Thursday after the House made adjustments, 25 Republicans reversed course. The bill fell short of the required 60 votes to overcome a filibuster, with a final 55-42 tally — a situation Turner called "a slap in the face."

Legendary Blue Angels Squadron Announces First Female Jet Pilot:

The Navy's aerial demonstration squadron -- the Blue Angels -- announced that it has selected its first female jet pilot in the unit's 76-year history. In a social media post Monday, the Blue Angels announced that [F/A-18 Super Hornet](#) pilot Lt. Amanda Lee has been selected to join the famed unit. Lee is currently assigned to the "Gladiators" of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 106 out of [Naval Air Station Oceana](#), Virginia. Lee's name was among six officers who will join the squadron in September and start performances next year. Lee, who goes by the call sign "Stalin," enlisted in the Navy in 2007 and began her career as an aviation electronics technician. She was later selected by the service's enlisted commissioning program, Seaman-to-Admiral (STA-21), and became an officer in 2013 after receiving a Bachelor of Science in biochemistry at Old Dominion University. She was designated a naval aviator in April 2016. Now, nearly 50 years after women first flew jets for the Navy, the service's most public and visible squadron has welcomed a woman into its jet pilot ranks, though it noted in its announcement that "hundreds of women representing the Navy and Marine Corps have served with the Blue Angels during the last 55 years."



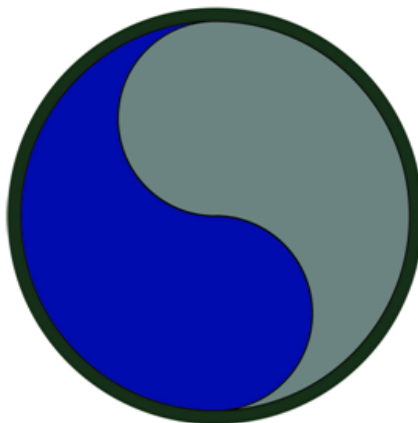
New Addition to the Korean War Veterans Memorial Will Be Unveiled on Korean War Armistice Day

Day: The Korean War ended in an armistice on July 27, 1953. The National Korean War Veterans Memorial was finished and dedicated 42 years later, on July 27, 1995. That same day, President Bill Clinton signed an amendment to U.S. Code Title 36 declaring July 27 as Korean War Armistice Day. At the memorial's center are 19 statues of a unit on patrol, collectively known as "The Column," a masterpiece by sculptor Frank Gaylord. It also has a reflective mural wall by industrial designer Louis Nelson, reflecting representative images of those who fought the war. There is also a United Nations wall, remembering allies who fought alongside the U.S. and South Korea, as well as the Pool of Remembrance. In 2022, the memorial will receive a new addition, a 380-foot memorial wall listing the names of the 36,574 Americans and approximately 8,000 Korean Augmentation to the United States Army forces (KATUSAs) who were killed during the war.



The 29th Infantry Division gets to keep its Confederacy-Themed Patch

As part of an effort to strip commemorative nods to the Confederacy from the military, an independent naming commission has determined that the 29th Infantry Division should keep its unit patch, but that the language used to describe it in the Army's heraldic listings should get an update, according to a recent release. The insignia, a blue and gray take on the yin-yang, has been around since World War I, when the division activated with troops from as far north as Maryland and down to South Carolina. The blue and gray are meant to symbolize the joining of formerly Union and Confederate states. "The description language should be modified to reflect the rich history of the 29th, with focus on the unification of American citizens through service in the 29th," Retired Adm. Michelle Howard, the commission's chair, wrote in a July letter to members of the House and Senate armed services committees. Howard added, "the Community of the 29th ID indicates that they view the symbol as a unifying symbol for America and is imbued with the sacrifices and service of past 29th ID members."



Jim Remando writes about Army life: This has been a very cold winter for our city which quickly gave me "Flashbacks" of my very first night arriving on January 13, 1969 at Fort Lewis, WA. I had just been drafted into Uncle Sam's Army and immediately began my obligation right after the Sunday Super Bowl game when Joe Namath of the New York Jets upset the Baltimore Colts 16-7. Flying into Seattle Sea-Tac International and whisk on a charter bus to Fort Lewis, WA on a cold and snowy night. Once at the Army base we were put in formation and Drill Sergeants shouting "Hurry, Hurry" and "Get Your Ass off the bus". When the head Drill Sergeant finally gave his "You're in the Army now" orientation, he finally lighten-up and told us to be "At Ease". Then his staff gave all of us a used Field Jacket. Probably worn by previous basic trainees. Eventually we were going to be issued new ones when we in-processed. While shivering in the cold we all immediately put on these well worn out field jackets. Then the Drill Sergeant yelled out "Light them up if you have one". Well, I didn't smoke and as he was speaking I put my hands into the pockets of the Field Jacket to warm-up them up. While I reached into the pockets, I felt nothing but old cigarette butts that were disposed in the pockets by previous trainees. No one threw their cigarette butts on the ground because the Drill Sergeant instructed each one of those that smoked to put out their cigarettes butt in their pockets of the Field Jackets. So how many remember old cigarette butts in those old Field Jackets? Memories that never goes away. Vietnam veteran Americal Division 70-71. Welcome home my brothers.

Older the better: Note from Ace LeClair: To all of my Male friends from 50 years and up... most of us are going through the next phase of our lives. We're at that age where we see wrinkles, gray hair, and extra pounds. We have run households, paid the bills, dealt with sickness, sadness, and everything else life has assigned us. We are survivors... we are warriors in the quiet... we are men ...like a classic car or a fine wine. Even if our bodies may not be what they once were, they carry our souls, our courage, and our strength. We shall all enter this chapter of our lives with humility, grace, and pride over everything we have been through, and we should never feel bad about getting older. It's a privilege that is denied to so many. Your challenge has been met. Thank God!

Benefits, Nominee for top VA benefits job withdraws, restarting search:

Veterans Affairs officials on restarted their search for a new executive to lead the department's benefits operations after the previous nominee withdrew from the confirmation process. The nomination of Ray Jefferson to be undersecretary for benefits had been stalled since late April, after senators raised concerns about his past work leading the Veterans Employment and Training Service during President Barack Obama's administration. The top benefits job has been without a Senate confirmed leader since early 2021. Veterans groups have raised concerns about the vacancy, noting that issues such as the ongoing disability claims backlog and education programs affected by the pandemic have been handled by a series of temporary administrators. The post oversees all non-medical veterans benefits, delivering about \$135 billion in services and payouts annually. During his confirmation hearing in April, he outlined his goals for the job, to include reducing the backlog of disability claims and improving transition programs for veterans.

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Long push for Camp Lejeune Toxic Water Lawsuits Clears Congress: Nancy “Catherine” Daniels had assumed it was God's will when three of her babies died at birth while she and her Marine husband lived at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina from the late 1950s to the early 1970s. “I thought it was kind of a natural thing, because I never did anything much when I was pregnant to have lost a baby,” Daniels, 83, said in a phone interview from her home in Galivants Ferry, S.C. Daniels now believes that the deaths of her only children were not just acts of God. Instead, they may have a government cause — the toxic chemicals that for decades contaminated the Camp Lejeune military base's water supply that she drank during her pregnancies. Congress cleared legislation Tuesday that would allow Daniels to file a federal lawsuit to seek compensation from the federal government for the effects of that exposure, along with as many as a million people who the Navy and Marine Corps say may have been exposed to the tainted water there from 1953 to 1987. While she was pregnant, Daniels drank Camp Lejeune water that was contaminated with benzene from fuel, cleaning solvents known as TCE and PCE, lead and acid from batteries, and who-knows-what from munitions and other military waste dumped on the sandy soils of the coastal Marine Corps base over several decades.

Army Helicopter Crew earns rare ‘Broken Wing Award’ after surviving ‘Catastrophic’ Incident in Afghanistan: Army helicopter crews don't often get commended for crashing well, but one crew's handling of a “catastrophic” situation in Afghanistan in 2020 earned them exactly that with a rare presentation of the service's “broken wing” award. “This is an especially rare honor as historically the award is usually given just to the pilots,” according to an Army news release, which noted the honor was given to every member of the crew: Chief Warrant Officer 3 Ryan Schwend, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Eugene Park, Sgt. Andrew Donley-Russell, Sgt. Ty Higgins, and Staff Sgt. Ben Kamalii. As We Are The Mighty described it, the Broken Wing Award is given to aviators “who expertly crash,” and that's precisely what happened on the evening of Nov. 20, 2020. Schwend and his soldiers with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 168th General Support Aviation were flying a “routine mission” in southern Afghanistan that evening. As the U.S. was in the midst of a drawdown in the country, the crew was tasked with helping consolidate bases and living spaces by moving relocatable buildings from Kandahar to a temporary location called Dwyer under cover of darkness, flying the aircraft using night vision goggles and low illumination. The crew had been flying for almost seven hours and were just passing over Helmand Valley at a thousand feet with the second pair of housing units when Schwend heard a “thunderous bang” that was “louder than anything I have ever heard in a Chinook,” he said. The Chinook “immediately jolted into a right bank,” the release explained, throwing everyone into motion to take back control of the aircraft and determine what had happened. Higgins released the load they were carrying as Park “promptly stabilized the aircraft.” He could see that it was under “immense strain,” but he and Schwend were able to maintain control of the aircraft as they approached Dwyer. The soldiers eventually realized that the cargo the Chinook had been carrying wasn't completely released, and was instead “pinned to the bottom of the aircraft in a mangled mess.” A wall of the portable housing unit collapsed, according to a final report of the incident, allowing “air to enter into and push the load horizontally to the left and upward making impact” with the Chinook. The crew didn't know it at the time, but the cargo had also hit the back rotor system causing “unseen damage to the blades.” Schwend struggled to keep the aircraft hovering while the ground response team worked to dislodge the wreckage from the bottom of the helicopter. After “several attempts,” they were finally successful and were able to cut the cargo so the crew could land. It wasn't until over a year later, however, that the crew received the Broken Wing Award on June 18, 2022. Established in 1968, the award is given to individuals who minimize damage to personnel or aircraft during an emergency through “outstanding airmanship,” according to Army regulations. Additionally, four soldiers from the Washington, Oregon, and Utah Army National Guards were awarded the Army Achievement Medal for their help in dislodging the crushed cargo from the bottom of the helicopter.



Never accept an officer as competent based on his source of commission.