



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



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

Facebook: www.facebook.com/2-1-196th

Volume 12

“A Soldier Once And Always”

June 2022

Commanders Corner: Hello to all my brothers, sisters, families and friends and brothers and families from our sister units. I hope this letter finds everyone well and enjoying spring weather which is my second favorite season since my favorite is the fall season. This is our June edition of the newsletter. It seems to me that this year is moving along faster than ever before and I want to remind everyone that we are only three months away from the DC Americal Reunion. If you are planning to attend which I hope you are than if you have not made your travel arrangements than its time. We are hoping for a great turnout this year!



By the time you receive this letter Memorial Day will have happened but I hope everyone took some time to participate in ceremonies or if not at least took some time to remember our brothers and sisters that gave all and those that have passed since the last Memorial Day in 2021.

I hope everyone is enjoying good health and I hope that those mentioned in our last letter that were dealing with health issues have fully mended or at least on the mend. Let's keep all our Brothers and Sisters and their families in our prayers that they may enjoy good health. I know we are all dealing with the high inflation that our country is enduring these days and living on Social Security is a challenge even if you are fortunate enough to have a pension or savings to fall back on. Taking advantage of your Veterans Benefits that you have earned can help especially Healthcare Benefits.

Recently our brothers Rich Heroux and John Woyansky attended the 196th LIB Memorial Commemoration at the US Army National Infantry Museum WALK OF HONOR at Fort Benning GA. They discovered that 2nd and 3rd Regiments of the 196th had separate memorials but unfortunately the 1st Regiment does not have one. Rich and John are putting together a proposal that we form a committee to come up with recommendations on a memorial that we can develop along with other suggestions. John is preparing a list of items/issues that the committee would need to address to submit to our membership. The 2nd of the 1st has a rich history and the main group left to undertake this mission are the Vietnam Veterans. If you are willing and interested in being on the committee than please let Rich, John or I know. The goal would be to finalize some plans and actions when we gather at the reunion in August.

I wish everyone a happy 4th of July and hopefully a better summer than we have had for the last two summers. Families are important and we need to celebrate them and also the brotherhood that we all enjoy. 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 Sypolt.

Commander



From H Duckworth O'Brien's "A Grunt's Life": :
HOOTCH: You pair up with a buddy and snap two ponchos together, hang them on two sets of tent poles and stretch the sides out for a roof. You take your entrenching tool and scrape a trough around this to divert rainwater from getting inside, throw in your inflated air mattress and voila...a combat tested, grunt sleeping shelter!

Memorial Day Prayer: Heavenly Father On this Memorial Day, we pray for those who courageously laid down their lives for the cause of freedom. May the example of their sacrifice inspire in us the selfless love of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Bless the families of our fallen troops, and fill their homes and their lives with your strength and peace. We pray through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Poppy Story: I observed many an opportunity for local veterans handing out the “Buddy Poppy” during the month of May. Many of the members and other volunteers assisted in this once a year fundraising effort. The weather for the most part was conducive to our effort. The communities of Wake Forest and Louisburg were for the most part delighted to see us and resulted in a very rewarding experience. Although the final amount has not been officially reported the Chairman has informed the Executive Committee that the effort exceeded the amount raised in 2021. This single most aggressive endeavor has always brought together the most volunteers for any one event. The Command staff wants to thank each and every one who assisted in this outstanding venture as we put forth a full court press with all of the activities scheduled during the most active month of our 2022 calendar. Remember, the more we collect the better we can perform our duty as we live out our motto; “No One Does More for Veterans.”

More than 100 women veterans from Florida take part in all-female Honor Flight: It took almost three years to make happen, but 109 women veterans from Florida were finally able to visit the nation's capital and see memorials that honor those who served. “I think they've been overlooked for a long time, and we found on past Honor Flights, we've had very, very few females apply,” said Liza Diana Walters, Honor Flight Villages' flight director. “We take at the most, a couple per flight, so I hope that this will raise awareness for the female vets and encourage them to come on Honor Flights.” The Honor Flight network is an organization that flies veterans to visit memorials in Washington, D.C., free of charge. For Honor Flight Villages in Florida, it was the first time the organization flew an all-female Honor Flight. Walters said the Tri-County Women Veterans approached Honor Flight Villages in 2019 to ask whether the group would organize an all-female flight.

**Never call fire on your own troops,
unless you stand among them.**

Veterans, Civic Organizations and Citizens, Decorate Veteran Graves: I don't know what you fellows get involved with during the Memorial Day weekend, but here is something we do in my community. The Veterans of Foreign Wars Post, along with other veteran organizations and civic groups, devoted much of the morning hours on Saturday May 28, 2022 to show evidence of patriotic zeal as they placed American Flags in front of approximately 1400 veteran graves in 18 cemeteries within the town and surrounding areas. Traditionally, a number of civic organizations and scout troops assist in this enormous venture. It is a wonderful teaching opportunity for the youth of the town. Prior to the decorating of veteran graves the attached photo was taken to capture the enthusiasm and desire of the youngsters as they posed for a picture while waiting instructions to begin this annual venture. The flag decoration undertaking usually take between 2-3 hours depending on the number of volunteers. As can be readily apparent the number of local volunteers contributed greatly to the success of this endeavor. Veteran organizations charged with this civic opportunity are appreciative for everyone who assisted in this undertaking.



Merrill's Marauders awarded the Congressional Gold Medal for daring WWII mission in Burma:

Lawmakers on recently awarded the Congressional Gold Medal to Merrill's Marauders, bestowing the nation's highest civilian honor to the famed Army unit from World War II. In a virtual ceremony, Congress honored the soldiers of the 5307th Composite Unit, as the Marauders were formally known, who fought deep behind enemy lines in the jungles of Japanese-controlled Burma. Only two veterans from the unit, named after its leader Brig. Gen. Frank Merrill, are alive today. "Merrill's Marauders stand among the great heroes of our history," said House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif. "Their extraordinary hard-won success helped turn the tide in the Pacific theater and propelled the Allies to victory in the Second World War." The Marauders were tasked with disrupting enemy communications and supply lines and capturing the Myitkyina airfield in northern Burma to open a critical supply route between India and China.

Merrill's Marauder and three-time recipient of Combat Infantry Badge dies at age 99:

Gilbert Howland, who commanded a machine gun unit with the famed Merrill's Marauders in Burma during World War II and went on to earn Combat Infantry Badges in Korea and Vietnam, died recently in Hamilton, N.J. He was 99. His death leaves only two living veterans out of the roughly 3,000 original Marauders, whose behind-the-lines exploits against Japanese occupiers in Burma earned the unit a Congressional Gold Medal that was awarded during a ceremony May 25, 2022.

The Maximum effective range of any weapon is that range at which the individual soldier can hit the target and not an inch further.

Search for Supreme Court leaker falls to former Army Colonel: When Gail Curley began her job as marshal of the U.S. Supreme Court less than a year ago, she would have expected to work mostly behind the scenes: overseeing the court's police force and the operations of the marble-columned building where the justices work. Her most public role was supposed to be in the courtroom, where the marshal bangs a gavel and announces the entrance of the court's nine justices. Her brief script includes "Oyez! Oyez! Oyez!" — meaning "hear ye" — and concludes, "God save the United States and this Honorable Court." Earlier this month, however, Curley was handed a bombshell of an assignment, overseeing an unprecedented breach of Supreme Court secrecy, the leak of a draft opinion and apparent votes in a major abortion case. Leaks to Politico suggest that the court seems ready to overturn Roe v. Wade, the 1973 decision that women have a constitutional right to abortion. That has sparked protests and round-the-clock security at justices' homes, demonstrations at the court and concerns about violence following the court's ultimate decision. Experts say leaking the draft opinion likely wasn't a crime, and Curley's investigative tools are limited. She could theoretically hire an outside law firm to assist, and in other judicial records cases the FBI has been called in. But it isn't clear if she or others have the power to issue subpoenas to get material from journalists or the fewer than 100 people in the court — including justices — with access to a draft opinion.

Lawmakers Move to Guarantee Cost-Of-Living Boost for Veterans Benefits:

Lawmakers in recent days took the first steps in ensuring that veterans receive a cost-of-living boost in their federal benefits later this year, introducing legislation that would guarantee the veterans' checks see the same increase as Social Security payouts. The measure was filed by Reps. Elaine Luria, D-Va., and Troy Knells, R-Texas, late in May 2022 and by Sens. Jon Tester, D-Mont., and Jerry Moran, R-Kansas, shortly thereafter. In joint statements, the four called the proposal critical to bolstering veteran's finances. "We have a responsibility to take care of our veterans, many of whom rely on VA for financial support," said Moran, ranking member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee. "As rampant inflation is driving up the cost of living, this legislation helps make certain that veterans are able to keep up with our changing economy and receive the benefits they have been promised."

Benefits, Resources available to Veterans of OIF, Southwest Asia theater of Operations:

March 20, 2022, marks the 19th anniversary of the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). This anniversary provides us with an opportunity to reflect on the sacrifices of those who served in a conflict that lasted nearly nine years and claimed the lives of nearly 4,500 service members and left over 31,000 wounded. If you served in OIF, and have a disability or illness as a result, you may be eligible for VA benefits and services.

Lawmakers worry VA Home Loans aren't keeping up with hot Housing Market:

A bipartisan group of House lawmakers is urging Veterans Affairs officials to consider quick fixes to the department's home loan program in order to ensure users can compete in the still surging housing market. "Historically, VA mortgage loans were appealing and competitive to sellers," the group wrote in a letter to VA Secretary Denis McDonough on Thursday. "Unfortunately, the current housing market and the rise in cash and conventional loans with waived contingencies can leave veterans unable to compete with other buyers. ... It is imperative that veterans receive a competitive loan that provides them the opportunity to purchase a home." According to statistics from the National Association of Realtors, the median sales price of a home in America as of February 2022 was up 15% from the year before. In a VA home loan, the federal government does not provide any money to the homebuyer but does agree to back the loan against the possibility of default. That allows veterans to put no money down on their home purchase and avoid some other associated home-buying fees. But it does require special qualifying and appraisal rules, which can slow down completion of a home purchase.

You can't get rich in politics unless you are a crook.

Harry Truman

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:



-- **Navy Fire Controlman 3rd Class Jack A. Breedlove, 19**, of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, was assigned to the battleship USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft on Dec. 7, 1941. The USS Oklahoma sustained multiple torpedo hits, which caused it to quickly capsize. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Breedlove. He will be buried at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific (Punchbowl) in Honolulu, on May 31, 2022.

-- **Army Air Forces 1st Lt. Louis V. Girard, 20**, of West, Texas, was assigned to 68th Bombardment Squadron, 44th Bombardment Group, 8th Air Force. On Aug. 1, 1943, the B-24 Liberator aircraft on which Girard was piloting crashed as a result of anti-aircraft fire during Operation Tidal Wave. Following the war, his remains could not be identified. He will be buried in his hometown on June 4, 2022.

-- **Army Air Forces Staff Sgt. Michael Uhrin, 21**, was assigned to 369th Bombardment Squadron, 306th Bombardment Group, 40th Combat Wing, 8th Air Force. On Oct. 14, 1943, the B-17F Flying Fortress bomber on which Uhrin was serving as a radio operator was shot down by enemy fighters. The surviving crew reported he was killed before the plane crashed. Following the war, his remains could not be identified. Interment services are pending.

-- **Navy Seaman 1st Class William Brooks, 19**, was assigned to the battleship USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft on Dec. 7, 1941. The USS Oklahoma sustained multiple torpedo hits, which caused it to quickly capsize. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Brooks. Interment services are pending.

-- **Army Sgt. 1st Class James a Coleman, 22**, was assigned to Company I, 3rd Battalion, 19th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division. On April 25, 1951, he was reported as missing in action while fighting against Chinese Communist Forces near the Hwachon Reservoir in modern-day Republic of Korea. His status was changed to killed in action on Oct. 3, 1952. Following the war, his remains could not be identified. Interment services are pending.

Why is there a Fight over Disability Pay related to Burn Pits? Because the Defense Department did not keep clear records of what was burned in the waste pits, the exact toxins in the smoke are unknown. And while the pits were widely used, individual service members were not monitored for their exposure to the smoke, making it unclear if later illnesses were connected to that or to other life events. As a result, the Department of Veterans Affairs has for years resisted calls to link many rare illnesses to suspected burn pit exposure, saying that the scientific backing for the argument is too weak. Advocates say that has deprived tens of thousands of veterans of disability pay and medical reimbursements. VA officials have relented in that stance in the last year, awarding presumptive benefits status (where veterans don't have to prove their medical conditions are linked to their time in the military) to any post-9/11 veteran who contracts asthma, rhinitis and sinusitis within 10 years of their overseas service. But advocates say that should go much further, to include many more illnesses and extending for longer after their overseas tours ended.

Soldiers tell the truth about good and bad commanders. Their opinion is the ultimate evaluation of an officer.

VA Resumes Homeless Count with Focus on Vets in Los Angeles: Teams of Department of Veterans Affairs employees assembled at each corner of the VA campus in West Los Angeles with the mission to find and count every homeless veteran within the 388-acre site. About 50 people trekked through wooded areas, parking lots and along stretches of grass abutting Interstate 405. The teams searched crevices between buildings and behind heating and air-conditioning units. It was their responsibility to lay eyes on every square foot of their zone, looking for tents or other makeshift dwellings where veterans could be. One group of seven logged nine veterans. They were assigned to the south side of campus surrounding the main hospital, and all the veterans in their zone were staying inside their vehicles in a "safe parking" lot, where they're allowed to sleep overnight and are provided restrooms and security. Los Angeles County estimates roughly 15,700 people — about 25% of the area's homeless population sleep in their vehicles nightly. About 220 people stay in secure parking lots every night. "By you going out in this area where there's a lot of concentration of veteran homelessness, it helps us to paint this picture of what we're trying to do," Steven Braver man, director of the VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System, told the teams before they scattered across the campus. "It helps us to set goals, it helps us to get funding, it helps us to know where we need to go in order to ultimately eliminate veteran homelessness."

Veterans with PTSD given chance to train service dogs in program at 5 US locations: Some 150 veterans diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder will participate annually in a pilot program to train service dogs, The Journal of the American Medical Association. The five-year program is designed to determine whether the training increases the veterans' feelings of self-worth and sense of a purposeful life, the article in the May 24 edition of the journal said. The free, once-weekly training program, expected to begin in mid-June, will last eight weeks and be conducted at veterans centers in Anchorage, Alaska; Palo Alto, Calif.; San Antonio; Asheville, N.C.; and West Palm Beach, Fla. Selected veterans will train in groups of six to eight, the VA said. The program is required by the Puppies Assisting Wounded Servicemembers for Veterans Therapy Act, or PAWS Act, which was signed into law in August 2021. The VA has partnered with three Assistance Dog International accredited service dog organizations that were providing a canine training model consistent with the model described in the PAWS legislation. These organizations are Paws for Purple Heart, Warrior Canine Connection and Dogs for Life, the VA said in a statement. The PAWS Act also requires the VA to provide veterinary insurance for each dog placed with a veteran who has PTSD. In all, the program will cost \$30 million, according to a Congressional Budget Office estimate cited in the article.

Maybe late telling you this but, I had 2nd eye cataract surgery and, this last week, hand surgery so I haven't been able to use my email for a bit. I wanted to let you know I have updated the our web site with the current ADVA and 196th Assn reunion information. It is also available on both their web sites and latest issues of their magazines. Thought maybe an email could be sent to our members to let them know. A lot of them don't belong to these organizations and don't get the information. The dates for the 196th LIB reunion July 20-24, 2022 at the Wyndham Hotel, Gettysburg. Americal Division Veterans Association Reunion will be held from August 24- 28, 2022 & housed at the Sheraton Pentagon City, Arlington, VA. Breakfast is included in the room rate. For additional information be sure to look at the unit's WEB pages. There is a lot to see and enough side trips to keep anyone from being bored.

Sincerely; Chuck Holdaway

The Biggest Military Pay Raise in 20 years may be Boosted even more because of Inflation Worries:

Servicemembers are in line for their biggest pay raise since 2003 next January, but lawmakers and advocates are questioning whether that will be adequate to keep military families in good financial health. That’s because the formula used to calculate annual pay hikes doesn’t take into account issues like short-term inflation spikes. The Congressional Budget Office has predicted a 6.1% jump in the consumer price index this year, but none of that extra expense is built into the military pay raise formula. So, by the time troops see that extra 4.6% in their paychecks in seven months, their basic household expenses may have already ballooned to well above that rate. “I believe that we should be able to get more flexibility and agility with military pay,” said Dan Merry, vice president for government relations at the Military Officers Association of America. “This pay raise [proposal] is going to be woefully short of the inflation rate. And if we just address it in the annual authorization bill, it may not be enough.” The White House earlier this year proposed a 4.6% raise for troops, but House members have already hinted they may be looking at a significantly higher mark out of concern that pay levels may not be sufficiently robust to meet recruiting and retention targets. While the total military compensation package includes things like housing allowances and medical benefits, advocates have long argued that military pay plays a critical role in force health because it affects nearly every aspect of troops’ financial lives. Since 2006, military pay raises have been tied to the Employment Cost Index, a quarterly economic survey conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics that tracks growth in civilian sector employee compensation.

Advocates for homeless vets face next big challenge; inflation: With corona virus pandemic restrictions lifting across most of America, federal officials and housing advocates are hoping their efforts can lead to a significant decline in the number of veterans experiencing homelessness. But they’re also already wary of the next looming challenge facing vulnerable veterans: inflation. “A lot of people right now are thinking about how higher prices are going to impact their clients and what services or resources they’ll have to bring to the table to close that gap,” said Kathryn Monet, chief executive officer of the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans. “There are people out there already making hard choices. Do I pay for medicine or gas? Do I buy school supplies or pay the utilities? We’re in a difficult moment.” Now, advocates are taking those lessons learned and working them into ongoing operations. In some cases, it means continuing to deliver services over the phone or internet to clients instead of in-person because it provides faster results. In others, it means providing more single-occupancy options to veterans looking for housing.

Texas troops sent home from Mexico border mission as others build fences and patrol Rio Grande in Boats: About 500 Texas National Guard troops were sent home during the last two months from a security mission along the border with Mexico as military officials shift their strategy to stop unlawful migrant crossings by building more fencing and using boats to patrol the Rio Grande. About 6,000 troops were still stationed along the river as of May 27 according to the Texas Military Department. Another 3,700 are assigned to the mission in other parts of the state, which has not changed. “Following the adjutant general’s detailed assessment and review of Operation Lone Star the decision to demobilize some support personnel has been finalized.

Snipers need Commanders that know how to use them: At their most basic function, snipers throughout history have been used to create “dilemmas for opposing commanders,” Brig. Gen. Larry Burris, the commandant of the Army Infantry School, said last month. Not only are they expert shots, but they’re talented intelligence gatherers that can outlast and outperform most. They can provide commanders with extremely valuable information that could change the course of battle. That is, if commanders know how to use them. While April’s “International Sniper Competition at Fort Benning, Georgia, was exactly that — a competition — it also served as an opportunity for those writing the Army’s sniper play-book to learn what needs to improve. Among those takeaways is that commanders need to better learn how to use and train their snipers. There’s “no real formal program of instruction to educate officers on how to employ snipers,” Capt. David Wright, the commander of the sniper school, told Task & Purpose last month. That can result in commanders taking a back seat in their sniper teams’ training, and assuming that their snipers are doing what they need to do without really checking in on or understanding their training progress, Wright added. Closing that gap could have huge benefits for training and combat. “There is a ton of talent from a [noncommissioned officer] standpoint in this field, and if we aren’t leveraging them in our training at home station, we’re probably failing our formation,” Wright said. “We need to be working more to integrate snipers into our collective training in order to build that lethality and that understanding of how all of this ties together.”

Jerry Cochran wrote this Memorial Day message to those who served alongside him. I’ve been fortunate to serve with you guys and the many that didn’t make it back. My family has been blessed and so fortunate. I know this is time that we remember those we mess in all wars, I want to let you all know that not very many days go by that a memory of the brotherhood we had in Nam was very special and continues forever. I have left some out because of no e-Mail address. God bless each and everyone of you guys and also your family.

Benefits, Resources available to Veterans of OIF, Southwest Asia theater of Operations: March 20, 2022, marks the 19th anniversary of the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). This anniversary provides us with an opportunity to reflect on the sacrifices of those who served in a conflict that lasted nearly nine years and claimed the lives of nearly 4,500 service members and left over 31,000 wounded. If you served in OIF, and have a disability or illness as a result, you may be eligible for VA benefits and services. Those who served in OIF, or the Southwest Asia Theater of Operations and other locations, may now be entitled to compensation for medical conditions presumed to be related to exposure to fine particulate matter. Veterans and survivors who believe they may be eligible for compensation for asthma, rhinitis or sinusitis that emerged within a 10-year period after separation from military service are encouraged to file a claim for benefits.

ISIS Operative in U.S. Plotted to Assassinate George W. Bush, FBI alleges: An Iraqi citizen who entered the U.S. in September 2020 allegedly plotted to kill [George W. Bush](#), even traveling to Dallas to surveil the former president's home, according to an FBI search warrant affidavit. The FBI alleges that Shihab Ahmed Shihab, of Columbus, Ohio, wanted to provide material support to the Islamic State terrorist group. Shihab has been charged with aiding and abetting the attempted murder

Veterans with PTSD given chance to Train Service Dogs in program at 5 US Locations: Some 150 veterans diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder will participate annually in a pilot program to train service dogs, The Journal of the American Medical Association. The five-year program is designed to determine whether the training increases the veterans’ feelings of self-worth and sense of a purposeful life, the article in the May 24 edition of the journal said. The free, once-weekly training program, expected to begin in mid-June, will last eight weeks and be conducted at veterans centers in Anchorage, Alaska; Palo Alto, Calif.; San Antonio; Asheville, N.C.; and West Palm Beach, Fla. Selected veterans will train in groups of six to eight, the VA said. The program is required by the Puppies Assisting Wounded Servicemembers for Veterans Therapy Act, or PAWS Act, which was signed into law in August 2021. The VA has partnered with three Assistance Dog International accredited service dog organizations that were providing a canine training model consistent with the model described in the PAWS legislation. These organizations are Paws for Purple Heart, Warrior Canine Connection and Dogs for Life, the VA said in a statement. The PAWS Act also requires the VA to provide veterinary insurance for each dog placed with a veteran who has PTSD. In all, the program will cost \$30 million, according to a Congressional Budget Office estimate cited in the article.

New VA Benefit Will Sell Guaranteed Life Insurance to Most Veterans: A new Department of Veterans Affairs life insurance policy for veterans of any level of disability rating is just six months away from launching. The VA reminded veterans it will begin offering Veterans Affairs Life Insurance, or VALife, on Jan. 1, 2023, in line with a law passed last year, with applications opening that day VALife will be open to all veterans 80 years old or younger who have a disability rating of 0 to 100. Older veterans will also be eligible if they applied for VA disability compensation before age 81 but did not receive the disability rating until after turning 81, and if they apply for the life insurance within two years of getting the rating. “The new program meets the needs of service-connected veterans who may not have previously qualified for life insurance with VA,” the blog post said. VALife is what’s known as guaranteed acceptance whole life insurance. That means no medical exams or health questions are required to be approved, with the VA in its blog post saying the plan will have “fully automated online enrollment with instant approvals.” But guaranteed acceptance plans often have lower benefits and higher premiums than other life insurance policies. VALife will offer beneficiaries payouts of up to \$40,000, with lesser coverage available in increments of \$10,000. The cost of the insurance varies based on age and the amount of coverage, but could run as low as \$11 per month for an 18-year-old with \$10,000 of coverage or as high as \$1,768 per month for a 95-year-old with \$40,000 of coverage, according to the VA website, which noted rates may change before the policy launches. The premiums are fixed for the life of policy, meaning veterans will pay the amount for the age they were when they enrolled even as they get older. The new insurance policy was created by a bill signed into law in January 2021 called the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act. The start date, eligibility criteria and coverage amounts were all stipulated in the law.

Attempting to lighten the soldier’s load by diminishing the weight of any given weapon, will always result in shorter range and less firepower.

The 11th Airborne Division is being resurrected in Alaska: The Army’s newest division is taking shape in Alaska, and its commanding general explained to Army Times last week how a major training exercise is influencing the unit’s form and structure, which is still being finalized. Maj. Gen. Brian Eifler, who currently commands Army Alaska and will command the new division, said it will activate on June 6. There’s no D-Day symbolism, though — the 11th Airborne Division only fought in the Pacific during World War II, including combat jumps in the Philippines. Soon, Alaska’s soldiers will become “Arctic Angels,” he said, an update to the division’s original “Angels” nickname. Army leaders have said that they hope the new division will help address what they perceive as an identity crisis that is compounded by — or perhaps contributing to — a mental health crisis. Eifler agrees. “The last couple of years has been very tough, and having an aligned purpose, identity and mission is really important,” the commander said. “Will that fix all [of] our problems? No, but it is a key foundational factor...and this will help unify us together on one purpose, one identity, under a single patch.” The new division will operate from its headquarters at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, in Anchorage, under I Corps, Eifler said. It will also remain under the control of U.S. Army Pacific and U.S. Indo-Pacific Command. Building a division headquarters nests well within the Army’s growing focus on large-scale combat against a potential foe like Russia, China or Iran, the general explained. “You have an operational headquarters that could...[fight] across the Indo-Pacific,” Eifler said, also noting that their capabilities and expertise could enable them to fight across “the Arctic nations.” Tensions have already flared between Russia and two of Europe’s Arctic nations, Finland and Sweden, which are expected to join NATO this year.

Lawmakers move to guarantee cost-of-living boost for veterans benefits: Lawmakers in recent days took the first steps in ensuring that veterans receive a cost-of-living boost in their federal benefits later this year, introducing legislation that would guarantee the veterans’ checks see the same increase as Social Security payouts. The measure was filed by Reps. Elaine Luria, D-Va., and Troy Nehls, R-Texas, late in May 2022 and by Sens. Jon Tester, D-Mont., and Jerry Moran, R-Kansas, shortly thereafter. In joint statements, the four called the proposal critical to bolstering veteran’s finances. “We have a responsibility to take care of our veterans, many of whom rely on VA for financial support,” said Moran, ranking member of the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee. “As rampant inflation is driving up the cost of living, this legislation helps make certain that veterans are able to keep up with our changing economy and receive the benefits they have been promised.”

Military Space-A travel is back after 2-year COVID-19 pause: After more than two years of a COVID-19 pandemic-induced pause on Space Available travel, Defense officials have brought back the benefit. Space-A allows eligible travelers to fly on military or military-contracted aircraft at little or no cost — if space allows. Defense officials issued a memo to the services and to U.S. Transportation Command on Friday, lifting all restrictions. The limitations were placed on Space-A travel on March 21, 2020, to help limit the spread of COVID-19. This reopening allows Space-A travel on military and DoD-contracted aircraft for uniformed service members, retirees, dependents and reservists to travel within the continental U.S. and outside the continental U.S. “VA offers a unique opportunity to study COVID because we have detailed longitudinal medical information on 6 million veterans,” she said. “We can compare health outcomes after COVID infection to those of similar patients who have not been infected, something many studies are unable to do.” Officials said they have not seen any indication yet whether veterans are more likely to develop long-COVID or other COVID-related side effects. However, they did note that individuals who are older or who have pre-existing health conditions, which makes up much of the VA patient population, are more vulnerable to the virus than younger, healthier individuals.

**When you go home, Tell them of us and say,
For your tomorrow, We gave up our today.**

The Kohima Epitaph

Simper Primus Newsletter
“Spokesman of the Legionnaires”

August 1968

Bravo Company brings great credit to 2/1 Infantry.

The following narrative of his company's participation in Operation Burlington Trail was written by Captain John Malpass (Larchmont, New York), commanding officer of Company B: “At 0230 hours on 24 August 1968, we got the word from battalion to return to LZ Ross, and to be ready by 0500 hours for a move to Hawk Hill, home of the 1/1 Cavalry. The first left departed at 0545 hours, and thus began an eventful four days for Bravo.

As soon as Bravo closed Hawk Hill, the 3rd platoon was sent to defend Hill 10 and the 1st platoon, and 2d platoon were lifted in to join A/1/1 Cavalry, about 6 miles west of Tam Ky. During the previous day, the 1/1 had been in contact with the 1st NVA Regiment in that area. At 0930 hours, Bravo moved out to the attack, mounted on tanks and APC's. The first attack ran into a fresh NVA force and received heavy recoilless and RPG fire. Airstrikes were called on the enemy position and under cover of artillery fire, the attack renewed. The combined arms team made a short turning movement against the enemy left flank. Bravo's 2d platoon made the widest portion of the turn, covering the friendly right flank, and soon came under fire from a small hill to their right front. SSG Gibson rallied his men and led them in a rush across an open rice paddy under heavy automatic and recoilless rifle fire. When the NVA realized Bravo wasn't going to stop, the NVA broke from their positions. This gave the Bravo gunners the chance they were waiting for. A machine gun team of PFC Stanley Goff (San Francisco, California) and PFC Tommie Murray (Snider, Oklahoma) was directed on target by SGT Garland Needam (Blyth Mile, Arkansas). This team cut down over 40 NVA, an example of what “Marksmen and good guts” can do. Further air strikes, and combat patrolling by Bravo, resulted in the following results for the day: 67 NVA KIA; a 75mm RR, 4 AK 47's; 2 AK-44's, 2 RPGs and a large quantity of ammunition, misc equipment, and documents.

For the next two days Bravo made several contacts, resulting in an additional 16 NVA KIA, for a total of 79 credited to Bravo for the operation.

Although some good men were lost, Bravo's casualties were extremely light, compared to those of the enemy.

The following letter was received from the Commanding Officer, 196th Infantry Brigade:

It is a pleasure to forward the attached message regarding the exemplary performance of Company B in the Burlington Trail area of operations on 24, 25, and 26, August 1968.

When you pass on to your personnel the commendations of LTG Cushman and MG Getty's please also express my compliments and admiration. The fighting spirit demonstrated by your unit and the results achieved are factual testimony of the professional competence of the 2d Battalion, 1st Infantry. They have added another proud page into the history of the 196th Infantry Brigade.

Signed, Frederick J. Kroeson Jr. Commanding.

Editor's Note: This passage was part of the 2nd Battalion archives recovered from South Vietnam and sent to Texas Tech. University.