



WJ MULLEN, BG USA, RETIRED

HONORARY COLONEL, SECOND INFANTRY REGIMENT



Greetings to all Ramrods,

May, 2013

My initial thought on becoming Honorary Colonel of our regiment is to express my thanks and admiration to MG Anson and CSM Dahle for their continued service and contributions to the Second Infantry Regiment. They are a terrific team and strengthened the link between the serving battalions of our Regiment and its veterans. Don Olmstead and I will do our best to continue their examples. I wish General Rick and CSM Larry continued happiness and good health.

My second thought is one of appreciation for appointment as Honorary Colonel (HCOR) of the Second Infantry Regiment.

Don "Top" Olmstead and I were introduced as the HCOR and HSGMOR (Honorary Sergeant Major) of the Second Infantry Regiment on 17 January, 2013, in the presence of the 2d Battalion at Fort Knox, Kentucky. Our investiture was conducted by LTC Lopez and CSM Morales during 2 – 2 INF ceremonies honoring the return of the Ramrod – yes, that Ramrod. Also present were CPT Paul Janker and CSM Woodall, both of 1 – 2 INF, who carried the First Battalion's colors from Germany. Their participation with the First Battalion's colors made this truly a regimental ceremony. Continuity with our Regiment's rich heritage was completed by a group of Second Infantry RVN veterans led by Bob Douglass.

My responsibilities as HCOR are to provide a link with history for today's soldiers so as to perpetuate the history and traditions of the Regiment. I also am to act as a liaison between the Regiment and the Second Infantry Regiment Association.

- To accomplish the first I intend to be available as requested by the active battalions' commanders, and to offer any assistance I can to contribute to the active battalions' data bases about the Regiment's past – the deeds of its soldiers and the important events and places that mark the Second Infantry's path in our Nation's history.
- Contrary to rumor, it's not true that I was in the formation when LTC Riley presented the original baton – now transformed into the Ramrod – to the Regiment. Therefore, to identify and document links to the past I will count on Larry Grzywinski, as well as, the resources of the First Division Museum at Cantigny.
- I will work with Bob Douglass, our Association President, to accomplish liaison between today's Ramrods and us veterans.

For more than 160 years the Ramrod has been the symbol of continuity for Second Infantry soldiers who marched and fought under our colors. It resided in the First Battalion's headquarters at Fort Riley at least as early as the mid – 70s. At some point in time, probably during an inactivation or deployment, the Ramrod was turned over for safekeeping to the First Infantry Museum at Fort Riley, KS. Until now the Army Museum System wouldn't let go of it.

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The Ramrod returns at a time of major milestones for the Regiment.

- The First Battalion will inactivate 15 June, 2013, in Germany. By now, almost all the soldiers have reported to their new assignments after accounting for all equipment and facilities. Although the colors are furled and cased, the Battalion's accomplishments in Germany and while deployed will live on in the Regiment's reputation of excellence.
- The Second Battalion is about to deploy to Afghanistan. It is ready. Its last major training exercise was at the Joint Readiness Training Center, Fort Polk, LA. The JRTC is one of the Army's two premier maneuver training centers. It is world class. Demanding scenarios, dedicated and expert opposing force, constant monitoring and evaluation by expert observer -controllers assisted by an extensive instrumentation system, and weapons simulators using lasers provide a demanding test of discipline and tactical skill at all echelons. The Battalion excelled at all aspects of its rotation.

Those results were not a surprise. The soldiers of 2 – 2 INF who I met or observed during my two days with them in January were impressive. These modern soldiers appear trained and disciplined. They carry themselves well. They are confident. The Battalion looks like a solid fighting unit. There is a major difference between today's Second Battalion and the First and Second Battalions most of us joined in Viet Nam. Except for the men who deployed from Fort Devens, we were replacements. We arrived as individuals. It's different for today's 2 – 2 INF. Its leaders and soldiers have trained together. They are a team – in fact, a team of teams ... of squads, of platoons, of companies, a battalion. It's a good difference.

As I write this letter, it's obvious that the on-going Pigeon Forge (TN) reunion was a roaring success. I envy all who were able to attend. I commend Juan Santiago and Israel Tames for their hard work and dedication in providing this opportunity to be with Regimental veterans. I hope to attend next year. I am looking forward to this year's BRO reunion (July 31 – Aug 4) in Jacksonville, FL, and the reunion of the Second Infantry Association that will be part of it. I always look forward to this annual gathering of the Regiment's veterans and their families. Bob Douglass and his team operate a most hospitable command post.

Memorial Day, 2013, is a good time to remind ourselves of the heroes with whom we have served. It's also a good time – as is every day – to wish today's Second Infantry Regiment soldiers and their families all the best, as well as, to thank them for their service.



Left to Right:

CPT Paul Janker (1/2), HCOR WJ Mullen BG (ret), CSM Brian Woodall (1/2)
 HSGMOR Don "Top" Olmstead, LTC Eric Lopez (2/2), CSM John Morales (2/2)

BOB "FO" DOUGLASS

PRESIDENT, SECOND INFANTRY REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

My Fellow Ramrods and Associate Members:

First of all I hope that this newsletter finds everyone in good health and spirits!

Since our last newsletter many things have taken place. Some positive and some not so positive.

It is with due sadness that our Honorary Colonel, Major General Richard Anson USAR retired, and Honorary Command Sergeant CSM Major Larry Dahle USAR retired has had to step down from their positions due to health reasons. These two men along with their wives Mary and Helen have been a great asset and made many contributions to the active Units as well as the Association. Fortunately for us they have both agreed to stay on as Advisors to the Association. Personally I want to thank them for the positive leadership that they have given to me and for the outstanding job that they did.

On the positive side, in January of this year we had the opportunity to attend the presentation of the Ramrod at Fort Knox, KY. This became a two-fold ceremony. The Commander of 2-2, LTC Eric Lopez announced and presented the newly appointed HCOR and HCSMOR. They are Brigadier General William "Bill" Mullen retired and Sergeant Major Don "Top" Olmstead.

These positions are appointments that are made by the Department of the Army. They are officially the HCOR and HCSMOR for the active units. And they are very active members and long time members of the Association.

Bill served as Company Commander of Charlie 1-2 in Vietnam 1966 and later as the Battalion Commander of 1-2 1975-1976. Top served as the 1st SG of Bravo Company 1969 in Vietnam. These two men will definitely be an asset to the active units and the Association.

In other news, the 1-2 is scheduled to be inactivated and the colors cased again. It is presently scheduled for 15 June 2013.

While activated they served one tour in Iraq and one in Afghanistan. On the tour in Afghanistan it was 1-2 that relieved and took over for 2-2. This was the first time since Vietnam that the two units have served together in the same theater.

The next news (not so positive) is that once again 2-2 is going to be deployed down range in Afghanistan. This will be their third deployment since the colors were uncased in 2008.

So now it is time for all of us to keep them in our daily thoughts and prayers.

Once they are deployed they will need our support not only in thoughts and prayers, but also physical support in things such as "care packages". Once we have all of the mailing information it will be posted on the Ramrods website. Also see the back of the newsletter for items to send.

The 3rd Brigade 1st Infantry BCT is putting the "Adopt a Platoon" program in place once again. The way that it works is when anyone (individual or organization) adopts a platoon they are committing to send care packages every so often to the platoon that is down range. During 2-2's last tour down range the local Disabled American Veterans Chapter and the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post adopted a platoon and sent packages monthly to the platoons. And they are going to adopt two platoons again.

Many of you belong to local American Legions, VFW's, DAV's and other veteran organizations. This would be a great project for the organizations. And it would be absolutely a great service to our brothers. Just think of what it would have been like if they had this for us back in the Vietnam days.

If needed the forms to sign up are in the back of this newsletter. Please be sure to request a platoon from 2-2. I want to thank everyone that can participate in this program.

So wishing everyone good health and happiness. Remember keep your head down and your powder dry.



CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

BY RICH MALING, CHAPLAIN, SECOND INFANTRY REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

As we rode home from Pigeon Forge, Tenn. to Ft. Myers, Fla. I found myself reflecting on yet another wonderful reunion organized by the soldiers and their families. The biggest question I asked myself again was, "Why?". Thoughts bounced around, and I kept coming back to a single word- COMPASSION.

Most attendees were veterans of prior reunions, yet we had first-timers too. From WW-II, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan, they came . . . sharing. Sharing what? Sharing the maelstrom of combat and survived. To a man, they displayed undaunted courage at war and . . . In peace. They mourn for lost brothers, and feel the pain suffered by the families grieving a loss.

They each have adjusted to peace in their own way. Some seem totally "ok". Some are still lost in sadness, pain and rejection. They move on in life. Each day is a reflection. What was my purpose? Do I have a purpose yet? My answer is a resounding yes!

A soldier is our nation's true treasure and not to be squandered. He/she needs the recognition and love by all.

I leave you with a wonderful and profound statement from Margaret Gunther, "Holy Listening":

"We are hungry, and we do not know for what. We want something, but we can't name it. What we really hunger for is wholeness and God. The art of spiritual direction lies in our uncovering the obvious in our lives and realizing that everyday events are the means by which God tries to reach us...All along we've had a spiritual life and we didn't know it."



Psalm 96:11-13

*Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad;
let the sea resound, and all that is in it.*

*Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them;
let all the trees of the forest sing for joy.*

*Let all creation rejoice before the Lord, for he
comes, he comes to judge the earth,*

*He will judge the world in righteousness
and the peoples in his faithfulness.*

FINANCE REPORT

BY DOUG TABB, TREASURER, SECOND INFANTRY REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

Member contributions for dues during the period were slower than normal as we continue to request members keep their dues current if at all possible. Remember the current annual dues level (\$10.00) is still very reasonable. You may also contribute \$100.00 for a lifetime membership in the association that entitles you to a Ramrod Certificate suitable for framing. Contributions in the future will be kept separate for donations made to the Wounded Warrior Fund verses the General Fund. This will allow members to see actual contributions made for that purpose. Thanks to all who have given so generously for the support of activities throughout the year.

SECOND INFANTRY REGIMENT ASSOCIATION FINANCE REPORT MAY, 2013

Balance	10/30/2012	\$ 11,703.11
Members Contributions	(Dues & Donations)	\$290.00
Expenses For Period	(10/31/2012 thru 4/30/2013)	(\$1,184.21)
Bank Balance	10/30/2012	\$ 10,808.90
	Wounded Warrior Fund	\$ 2,496.00
	Second Infantry Fund	\$ 8,312.90

RESILIENCY PANEL, WJ MULLEN, 1–2 INFANTRY

RESILIENCE: (noun) 1. The ability to recover quickly from setbacks. 2. The ability of matter to spring back quickly into shape after being bent, stretched, or deformed. (Encarta Dictionary, 2013)

In March, LTC Lopez, Commander of 2 – 2 INF, asked me to participate in a program to assist his soldiers in getting ready for their imminent deployment and combat duty in Afghanistan. His goal was to prepare his soldiers for the stress of combat. His concept was to assemble a panel of combat infantrymen - selected from NCOs currently assigned to the battalion and from Second Infantry Regiment Viet Nam veterans – to talk about stress and combat.

In addition to myself, I recruited five comrades from C/1 – 2 INF (1966): Jim Holland, Ken Kerl, Rich McCusker, John Carlisle, and Chuck Mundahl. Regrettably, only Jim, John, and I were able to participate on the dates the commander scheduled.

LTC Lopez selected SFC Holt, SSG Bartlett, and SFC Roszco from his NCOs. Between them, these three men have 12 combat tours.

LTC Lopez, who moderated the panel, developed eight topics concerned with combat and stress for the panel to address:

- Define in personal terms what it would take to “Return with Honor.” As an individual soldier, how would you know if you did? As a unit leader, how would you know if the unit did?
- What does it take to go to war? What sorts of stress did you experience? What were the sources of stress? How did you prepare to handle the stress? If you had to go again, what would you do differently?
- What was important to you to maintain your confidence/mental stability while you were deployed? What sorts of stress did you encounter or witness in others? If you had a “do over,” what would you change or add about what you did or didn’t do?

- How did you make the transition from war to “the world” at the end of your tour? Looking back, what could you have done to improve that transition?
- Do you know anyone with PTSD to extent that it interfered with performance of duty in combat or their personal lives while deployed, and later at home? How did they deal with it?
- What role does the unit play in individual or mental fitness?
- What role do leaders play in individual resiliency or mental fitness?
- If you could go back in time to before your first deployment, what would you tell yourself?

The program took place at Fort Knox, KY, on 24 April. Jim, John, and I participated by telephone from our homes. The discussions were interesting and stimulating. The strong convergence of views from the panel members on the array of topics demonstrated to me that there is a similarity to infantry combat and stress that transcends differences in the enemy, weapons, climate, and terrain.

Later, Jim, John, and I discussed the panel. We were impressed by the experience, thoughtfulness, and candor of the Active Duty participants – clearly, they are professionals, infantry leaders in the best sense. Today’s Ramrodders are better prepared for combat than we were. They are a unit that has trained together to a state of combat readiness. These soldiers also know more than we did about the stress that comes with combat. Furthermore, should they need them, they have access to programs to help them deal with stress. These warriors are better able to be resilient than we were.

The Army has come a long way – that is good.

RAMROD UNVEILING CEREMONY

BY LARRY GRZYWINSKI, HISTORIAN, SECOND INFANTRY REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

The ramrod/baton unveiling ceremony and new Honorary Colonel (COL) and Command Sergeant Major (CSM) appointments were held on 17 January, 2013 at the General George Patton Museum in Fort Knox, Ky. The unveiling ceremony was inspiring and seeing the ramrod on display brought a sense of pride to all in attendance. The ramrod will now be kept permanently on public display in the museum.

We thank LTC Eric Lopez and CSM John Morales for working with the 1st Infantry Division (1st ID) Museum at Fort Riley, Kans. where the baton was, until January, being kept, and the Patton Museum to bring the Ramrod/Baton back to Fort Knox where the 2nd Infantry Regiment is stationed.

We congratulate William Mullen III BG (ret) and Don "Top" Olmstead CSM (ret) as they accepted the honorary positions of HCOR and HSMOR of the regiment. Both men were presented with an inscribed Louisville Slugger baseball bat in representation of the ramrod.

CPT Paul Janker and CSM Brian Woodall from the 1/2 "Black Scarves", Grafenwoehr, Germany, brought the 1st Battalion colors to the ceremony. This may be the last time in the foreseeable future that the colors will be together as the 1st Battalion is to be inactivated in June 2013.

BATON

In 1843, LTC Bennett Riley, commander of the 2nd Infantry Regiment through the Seminole and Mexican Wars, presented the regiment with a drum major's baton with a silver knob inscribed with the date of presentation, the name of the officer presenting it and the regimental motto, "Noli Me Tangere." At the time, headquarters (HHC) and companies C, D, F and K were stationed at Buffalo Barracks, New York. During the heroic assault to capture the fortress at Chapultepec, Mexico in September 1847, Sergeant Major Samuel C. Green reportedly broke the baton when he struck an enemy soldier on the head. The flagstaff from that fortress was used to replace the broken wood on the baton, with the silver mountings transferred to it. Additional silver bands, made from a tea set captured at the fortress, were placed on the baton; one of them inscribed indicating the baton was made from the flagstaff captured at Chapultepec.

It has been rumored that the baton was originally made from either a cannon rammer or cypress wood from Florida, however neither has been confirmed. The baton is considered the symbol of the regiment and a physical representation of its nickname, "Ramrods" and is the most cherished regimental relic. The baton had been in the continuous possession of the regiment from 1843 until sometime in the 1990's when it was placed in the 1st Infantry Division Museum at Wurzburg, Germany. In 2007, it was transferred to the 1st Infantry Division Museum at Fort Riley, Ks, and in late 2012, it was transferred to the Patton Museum at Fort Knox, Ky.



RAMROD UNVEILING CEREMONY

Pictures courtesy of SPC Carmen Torres-Reyes



2ND INFANTRY REGIMENT VETERANS REUNION 2013 PIGEON FORGE, TENN.



Pictures courtesy of CARMEN SANTIAGO

PIGEON FORGE, TENN. REUNION

BY PAM LESLIE AND JIM LESLIE, VICE PRESIDENT, SECOND INFANTRY REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

We returned home safely from the Second Infantry Regiment Reunion in Pigeon Forge, TN held May 16th-18th. If you've never attended, it needs to be on your bucket list! What a great way to honor and communicate with WWII, Vietnam, and current day veterans, active duty soldiers, as well as some of the spouses and families of these groups. We get to share food and drink, and share past and present experiences.

For many vets, it is so important to meet with old friends they've served with, meet new friends, and remember those who could not be with us. It is always a thrill for these vets to reunite with new attendees, so make sure y'all come down to Tennessee next year.

Of course, this reunion would not happen without our organizer Israel Tames, his wife Ramona and their family members. Israel had volunteered for two years which was up this year and lucky for all of us, he is stepping up to the plate for one additional year. Juan and Carmen Santiago have worked on the reunion since the beginning, however,

they have made the decision to step down and may not be in attendance next year due to other commitments. They have all done a great job in helping to provide a wonderful reunion to attend and join together.

PLEASE - we do not want this to end.

If someone reading this will step up and take this over, you will get the necessary help, but we need someone in charge and the leader can simply follow what has been laid out at prior reunions. A few made this possible for many and now it's time to care enough to perpetuate this important and valuable legacy.

This has been our third year in attendance and each year has been enjoyable as well as our honor to be associated with this respected group of warriors. May God bless all of you.
Jim and Pam Leslie

"A SPECIAL THANKS goes out to our generous Ramrods that hosted 2 soldiers and their families from the active unit 2-2".



AT PENN, HONORING EFFORTS OF A SCHOLAR AND SOLDIER

BY BRIAN WRIGHT O'CONNOR,

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THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER MAY 13 2013

SENT TO US BY MEMBER: RICH McCUSKER

Nearly 50 years after leaving the University of Pennsylvania for Vietnam, Lt. Col. Mortimer Lenane O'Connor will receive a posthumous Ph.D. today in a ceremony honoring academic achievement and sacrifice on the field of battle.

My father, who set aside his dissertation to lead soldiers in war, will be included in the Class of 1968, the year he would most likely have completed his doctorate had fate not intervened.

Born in 1930, my dad grew up in the company of soldier-storytellers on Army garrisons from Manila to the Old West, and watched his own father and three uncles set off for war in Europe.

The whiff of cordite and tales of valor turned him into an infantry officer with a taste for ballads and bravado. He walked off demerits at West Point while reciting Rudyard Kipling and told the story of Beowulf around the family campfire as a bare-knuckled brawl between an Airborne Ranger and a Nazi monster.

In 1958, my dad was sent to Penn to study English in preparation for teaching at West Point. In his year at Penn, the young officer set aside the Cold War for Chaucer and refined his taste for poetry and prose.

After that teaching assignment and a year in Korea, my dad returned to Penn — living in Willingboro with Betsy and the six kids, teaching at Temple, and plodding through Ph.D. course work and research.

He studied German vocabulary flash cards late into the night, long after reading Dickens to us on the living room couch. My mother typed up his papers on a battered Smith-Corona. He took some of the boys on summer bivouac with ROTC troops to Indiantown Gap. Quoting T. S. Eliot's "The Hollow Men," he would intone, "This is the way the world ends, this is the way the world ends," as we hand-loaded rounds into mortar tubes and watched them arc into the summer sky.

Vietnam was never far away. Out on bivouac, soldiers studied counterinsurgency. We watched interrogations of pajama-clad prisoners, saw fake punji sticks on backwoods

trails, and searched for camouflaged GIs in the underbrush. West Point classmates of my father returned with grim stories or didn't come back at all.

By the time ground troops were committed to Vietnam, my father's dissertation on "The Siege of Constantinople," a Henry Neville Payne allegory of intrigue in the quasi-Catholic court of Charles II, was near completion. At its heart, the heroic tragedy was about doomed royal brothers fending off political and religious enemies. The parallel between 15th-century Byzantium and 17th-century England also eerily mirrored developments in Vietnam, where, as my father began his thesis, a Catholic regime run by brothers faced a Buddhist insurgency and treachery in the ranks.

In 1966, my dad was posted to Fort Leavenworth, Kan., for command staff grooming and deployment overseas. Before leaving the Ivy League for the jungles of Vietnam, he said to a friend, "It's a lousy war but it's the only one I've got."

He landed in Saigon in August 1967 and took over the Dracula Battalion on Halloween. The "Black Scarves" of the First Battalion, Second Infantry, of the Big Red One faced heavy action during his command, starting with fights against enemy troops infiltrating South Vietnam in preparation for the Tet Offensive.

In a battle close to the Special Forces camp of Bu Dop near the Cambodian border, "Drac 6" led his men in a firefight that repulsed nearly two regiments of Viet Cong. With his position nearly overrun, he ordered the

battalion's four howitzers lowered parallel to the ground and fired like shotguns into the concertina wire, stopping the charge in its tracks.

He won battle stars for valor and air medals for dozens of chopper missions in which he not only buzzed the enemy to ascertain their position but also lobbed grenades on their heads.

On April 1, 1968, while leading a patrol in the Iron Triangle, north of Saigon, my father's squad was pinned down by machine-gun fire. "Mort, who was near the center of his battalion column, spontaneously moved up to the fight," wrote Bob Rogers, a West Point classmate.

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"Along with him moved his radio man with the distinctive tall antenna of the command radio set. As if waiting for that one unique target, a Viet Cong rose out of a spider trap and fired at Mort. The burst of gunfire put an end to the special cadence of Mort O'Connor's heart. He died instantly, imparting to his life in that moment a unity of purpose few men enjoy, doing what he had been born to do — leading men forward into battle."

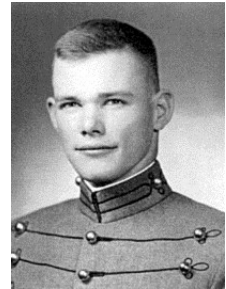
Commendations would come, along with the emotional detritus of a father, husband, and son buried at age 37. After his death, our family moved to Moorestown, a Quaker community where antiwar protests added texture to our mourning.

The dissertation sat unread in a battered briefcase for more than 40 years, set aside like so much of the past. Disinterred at last, it was sent to Penn, where the graduate English faculty recommended that the warrior be crowned a scholar.

No degree can change the lost years of a father's absence. But in literature, as in life, it can bring an unfinished story to a graceful conclusion. Ask Dr. O'Connor as he passes by in the Penn procession — the ghost with a sheepskin scroll and an M-16.



LTC Mort O'Connor on 8 Dec 1967, after the Battle of Bu Dop.



Cadet Mortimer L. O'Connor
by Davis Olsen

APPOINTMENT AT BU DOP

BY BRIAN WRIGHT O'CONNOR
EPIPHANY WINTER/SPRING 2013

SENT TO US BY MEMBER: DOUG TABB

The tall priest in combat boots and camouflage chasuble leans forward and places both hands in blessing on the bowed head of a G.I. in a trench. Other soldiers, their weapons set aside, await his benediction. They stand in the curved trench-line, framed by the blasted trees and scarred earth of the battlefield.

The photographer, holding a battered black Leica, peers through the viewfinder, ready to shoot. The rim of his helmet is pushed up on his forehead.

The soldier grins through the dirt of combat into the face of a fellow infantryman. A black scarf hangs loosely around his neck, streaked and grimed. The morning light shines off the side of his face. His eyes, alive and intent, welcome survival.

Three men, three images of war from

the Central Highlands of Vietnam, 80 miles north of Saigon near the Cambodian border. Their lives converged briefly in December, 1967, at a defensive base about three kilometers southeast of the remote village of Bu Dop, where, unbeknownst to them, North Vietnamese troops were staging incursions into the Republic of South Vietnam in preparation for the Tet Offensive the following month.

What happened there did not change the course of the war but it unalterably changed their lives. The ripples of that conflict, forty-four years later, move slower now than when automatic gunfire cracked through the trees and mortar rounds fell in chilling arcs. But move they do.

The soldier, 37-year old Lieutenant Colonel Mortimer Lenane O'Connor,



Father Arthur Calter (Faas photo)



A.P. photographer Horst Faas

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air-assaulted into the landing zone on December 6, jumping off the Huey helicopter on a cleared-out patch near the Bu Dop airstrip used by a Special Forces outpost.

O'Connor had taken command of "the Black Scarves" of the 1st Battalion, 1st Infantry Regiment of the storied U.S. Army First Division just six weeks before. He arrived with about five hundred men under his charge—three rifle companies, artillery, reconnaissance, and heavy-weapons platoons, and support staff. Back in the U.S., his wife Betsy and six children awaited his return. My mother knew Mort didn't fly halfway across the world just to keep his head down, do his duty, and get his ticket punched for promotion up the ranks. He was a gun-ho infantry officer, a West Pointer with a sense of gallows humor who believed that large-force engagements were the quickest way to conclude the war. In other words, kill as many of them in direct action as possible. "It's a lousy war," he said to a friend over the telephone before he left, "but it's the only one I've got." Among them men of the Black Scarves, also known as Dracula Battalion, his call sign was "Drac 6."

Horst Faas, 34, had already won a Pulitzer Prize for his work in Vietnam when, alerted at the A.P. bureau office in Saigon about action near the border, he landed at Bu Dop. Faas grew up in grim postwar Germany and had covered war in the Congo and Algeria before arriving in Vietnam, his third assignment in the crumbling French empire of overseas colonies. He was compact and tough and unafraid—an inspiration to the stable of photographers he mentored during his ten years as the A.P.'s photo bureau chief in Vietnam.

Father Arthur Calter, the son of a church sexton and laborer, was 36 when he

followed his two priest brothers into service as a military chaplain. Less than a year after leaving behind his family in Boston and the comfortable parish of St Francis Assisi in Braintree, he was wearing a Black Scarf along with his vestments, saying Mass and hearing confessions in hostile territory. Over the PRC-25 radio, the battalion knew the priest was on the move when they heard the call-sign "Drac 19."

Mort O'Connor's version of events at Hill 172 in Bu Dop exists in dry after-action reports, filled with numbers denoting enemy dead and wounded, weapons captured, and his own battalion's casualties during the search-and-destroy mission known as Operation Quicksilver. It also survives in media accounts and letters, written nearly every day to Betsy, living in Tucson, Arizona, close to Mort's father, a retired West Point general, and his mother Muriel. On December 9, after an unusual three-day break in communications home, Mort wrote, "On the afternoon of 7th, we made contact with a small NVA unit; that night we received a heavy attack from two battalions, the 1st and 3rd, 173rd Regiment, NVA."

Those two clauses, separated by a semicolon in Mort's urgent but grammatical scrawl, tersely summarize three days of action, including an all-night assault on the battalion's perimeter which nearly resulted in the enemy breaking through to overrun the outmanned US. Position. Later intelligence reports showed that the attacking regiment was the 273rd—a seasoned Viet Cong force that fought the Americans from the outskirts of Saigon to the Cambodian border throughout the war.

The action for Faas began as soon as he stepped off the helicopter from Saigon. He had been to Bu Dop before to dodge the snapping of bullets through the thick

bamboo stands—one of the many positions that went back and forth between enemy and U.S. hands during the long conflict. Faas spent the day of December 5 with the Black Lions of the 28th Regiment, another battalion of the Big Red One deployed to Bu Dop to conduct search-and-destroy patrols around the Special Forces camp and airstrip. He hunkered down at night within the crowded command post, putting a bit of cover over a hastily dug bunker. "In the middle of the night, the command post came under rocket attack—there were four or five fatalities and much damage from two or three well-executed attacks from several sides. It was obvious that the enemy were determined and numerous," he told me in an interview several years ago from his home in London.

The next morning, Faas caught a ride two kilometers south to the position being dug by the Black Scarves on the only high ground in the area. He walked inside the perimeter, snapping photos within the fifty-meter zone where soldiers spent as much as six hours digging foxholes from the red basalt clay. "I met the colonel that morning. He wasn't happy to see me," said Faas. There was no touch of the romantic around Mort that day, no hint of the Ph.D. candidate from the University of Pennsylvania or a passion for *Beowulf* and Old English tales of berserkers and monsters lurking in the dark. "I asked if I could stay in the command post, but he said it would be too crowded and that I had to dig my own hole. I'd already been in Vietnam five years and usually got a better reception."

Faas left the Night Defensive Perimeter under construction and walked out toward the wire, where he spotted Father Calter saying Mass to the boys in the trench. He took photos of the tender exchange between the Boston priest and the wary soldiers and later wrote about it in an A.P. story that ran on the wire: "The chaplain stood in the open and recited Mass. Huddled in trenches, men of the U.S. First Infantry

(Continued from page 12)

Division looked toward him and listed. They wore their combat gear. They were filthy, covered with the red dirt that covers everything here. "This will be a different Christmas than you have had before," Chaplain Arthur M. Calter of Boston said. "There will be no jingle bells, no Christmas trees. But don't forget, Christ is with you in these trenches."

Calter, a gregarious cleric and a gifted Irish baritone, now lives in a high-rise for retired priest in the old West End of Boston. His days of hitting overhead smashes on the tennis court and snatching melodies out of the air on battered parish pianos are long gone. His eyes narrowed as he looked back over nearly half a century to that battlefield where cordite hung in the air like fear and incoming rounds sent men ducking in their trenches. "I told them to stay there while I said Mass in case anything happened," Calter said. "The place was so uncertain and hot. I was exposed but tried to be as careful as possible because, let's face it, I was a perfect target."

Calter looked around the small sitting room, bordered by a sliding glass door with a view of the ether dome of the nearby Massachusetts General Hospital. "I used to have a picture around here," he said, his voice trailing off. "During one Mass, a mortar round came in and exploded nearby. I went flying through the air and someone got a picture of me looking like superman with my chasuble stretched out behind me like a cape"

Back at the command post, O'Connor received radio reports of enemy contact. His reconnaissance platoon spotted several scouts within a kilometer of the Night Defensive Perimeter. It was impossible to tell whether they were Vietcong, local Communist militia, or soldiers of the North Vietnamese Army. All he knew was that they were coming in for a look. He urged his men to

dig in faster, to set up the battery of four 105-mm Howitzer cannons, and to string barbed wire at the perimeter, just inside the listening posts set up to monitor enemy movements.

Intelligence reports came in identifying the presence of troops from the N.V.A.'s 271st Regiment, which were launching mortar and rocket attacks against the Special Forces camp. Returning from their security sweep, the Delta Company commander informed O'Connor that the lead element of the Recon Platoon had made contact with an enemy patrol that was observing the battalion setting up the N.D.P. The firefight resulted in a recon soldier being wounded in the leg, but the V.C. patrol was chased off.

Hours after taking the picture of Calter saying Mass, Faas was following a patrol among the rubber trees of the old Michelin plantation when a rocket-propelled grenade exploded nearby, spraying his legs with shrapnel. A medic was called immediately. When he reached the photographer, both of Faas' legs were spurting blood. The right leg was badly injured above the knee. The medic applied a tourniquet and struggled to find a vein for an injection of albumin, an emergency measure that helps stanch blood loss. "Will you hurry up with that?" asked Faas, whose face had turned an ashen grey. Within twenty minutes, an evacuation helicopter landed in a nearby clearing.

Father Calter, alerted to the evacuation, rushed to the landing site. "They couldn't wait to pick up the wounded and the dead after the fighting. They had to evacuate immediately to save the wounded," Calter said. "I was never far from the medics." Arriving at the helicopter, Calter grabbed one of the stretcher poles and helped load Faas onto the aircraft. "He was hurt pretty bad but conscious. I remembered him saying he'd send the pictures to me when he landed." Faas was dusted off to the

hospital at Long Binh, the headquarters of the U.S. Army's Vietnam command, located thirty kilometers outside Saigon. "Sure he was hurt, but he didn't ask for last rites. I didn't do that a lot anyway. I would pray with the soldiers but even if they were badly wounded I wanted to give them some hope of surviving."

Calter continued to follow the medics, moving around the battlefield, but the enemy had withdrawn. By late afternoon, the priest was back at the N.D.P., finishing his foxhole. The battalion settled in for the long night.

The battalion commander called in the patrols. Shortly after nightfall, troops out on the L.P. heard enemy movement but it was difficult to establish their positions without compromising their location. They reported the V.C. digging in approximately a hundred meters from the perimeter. The prospect of a large-force engagement was unusual in other parts of the war zone, but not at Bu Dop, where three major ground attacks at defensive positions had already taken place. Throughout the fall of 1967, the N.V.A. persistently pressed attacks in the face of significant defensive advantages and overwhelming US. Firepower, including artillery at Fire Support Bases, helicopter gunships, and strafing F-4 fighters armed with rockets and bombs. As the clock ticked toward midnight, the battle at Hill 172 would provide another example of the enemy's deadly intent.

The clash began in the first hours of December 8 with a barrage of 122-mm rockets launched into the N.D.P. from all sides, quickly followed up with mortar and R.P.G. rounds. Anticipating a ground assault, O'Connor ordered the listening post and ambush patrols to come into the N.D.P. The first U.S. casualty was taken when one of the L.P. soldiers was killed trying to return to the perimeter.

The first attack occurred at Charlie

(Continued from page 13)

Company's position on the northeast, with a smaller force leveled at Delta Company to the south. Bunkers armed with .50-caliber machine guns opened with full automatic fire on the onrushing enemy, which came in wave after wave of hundreds of troops. For three hours, the North Vietnamese charged the N.D.P., keeping up a withering barrage of 60-mm and 80-mm mortars, 75-mm recoilless rifles, and R.P.G.s, along with AK-47 assault rifles. O'Connor called in support from helicopter gunships and artillery from the Fire Support Base, directed by an artillery forward observer.

At one point, the battalion commander left the command post to check the men positioned on the berm of earth built along the rim of the N.D.P. In his absence, a mortar round hit the dirt piled around the bunker. The battalion's operations officer took a piece of shrapnel to the helmet but it didn't penetrate. O'Connor quickly returned, surveyed the damage, and continued to direct operations.

The attacks persisted. Finally O'Connor ordered the muzzles of the 105-mm Howitzers lowered and filled with explosive charges. As the next waves of enemy charged the wire, the cannons, their barrels parallel to the ground, fired like giant shotguns into the wire, stopping the attack in its tracks.

The enemy assault ceased. Battalion soldiers heard movement along the wire and beyond but held their own fire. As dawn broke over the charred and smoking battlefield, the Black Scarves saw enemy dead hung in the wire and strewn over the landscape.

Faas had already been airlifted out, but another photographer, the U.P.I.'s Kyoichi Sawada, remained with the battalion throughout the night. His iconic black-and-white images of the clash at Hill 172 depict broken bamboo stumps, blackened

terrain, and men tensely holding weapons through the roar of gunfire and muzzle flashes. His photo of a maniacally happy Mort O'Connor never made the wire—what did was a photo of the battalion commander, a cigar between his teeth, frisking a young prisoner. Sawada's radio report to the U.P.I. spurred news agencies throughout Saigon to load up for a trip to Bu Dop.

"The morning of the 8th—in fact all day—we patrolled and policed up bodies and prisoners," Mort wrote. "So far we've found 48 dead and captured 6 P.O.W's. The battalion lost 4 killed in action and 14 wounded. We figure, based on intelligence reports and Pw interrogations in the past, that we probably killed another 50 and wounded 100. In other words, we've effectively decimated one-half of two battalions."

Interrogations also revealed that the enemy, blocked by the Delta Company's security sweep, was unaware that six line of concertina wire had been strung around the battalion position—a formidable barrier to a nighttime charge.

Chief on the minds of war correspondents rushing to Bu Dop was not the narrative of the engagement, but rather getting visual confirmation of enemy dead. Reports of inflated body counts in order to mollify the anxious public and Pentagon brass about the positive prosecution of the war were already circulating in the press. Initial reports of a large count of enemy dead needed to be confirmed.

Well before noon, "we had a lot of reporters," Mort wrote. "They came up to interview us, look at the war booty—16 AK-47's, four light machine guns, three rocket launchers, and huge quantities of rockets, small arms and mortar rounds. Most of all, they wanted to see the bodies—there is a great

suspicion about body count, but we had 48 to be seen."

CBS footage of interviews and images remained locked in the network archive until former General William Westmoreland sued "60 Minutes" over its claim of his complicity in exaggerated enemy body counts. A call to CBS in 1988 yielded videotapes of the footage, which had been catalogued in preparation for the trial. More than twenty years had elapsed since the aftermath of the Battle of Bu Dop.

The footage shows a visibly nervous CBS reporter, Bob Schackne, interviewing Mort O'Connor and Regimental Commander Colonel George "Buck" Newman within yards of the carnage. B roll shows captured weapons, prisoners, stacked bodies and an airlift of the enemy dead by a Chinook helicopter, carrying them away on a web sling attached by cables to the aircraft. "These were living, breathing men yesterday," Schackne says in the voice-over. "Today, they are just a sanitation problem."

"Very often after a major battle, it's hard to tell who won and who lost," Schackne continues, standing to the side of O'Connor and Newman.

"But in this battle, the evidence of victory is very clear. Why was this battle so one-sided?" he asks O'Connor.

Mort, standing with his right arm over an M-16, his face shielded from the sun by his angled helmet, clears his throat. "A number of reasons. First of all, Charlie was above ground and we were below ground. That is, we had the advantage of defensive fortifications. The second reason is that we had magnificent fire-support. He can't touch us when it comes to fire-support. Aircraft from the Air Force, gunships from the Army, all sorts of artillery—four-deuce, 105, 155, direct-lay 105—plus the assets of my own battalion: A1 mortars, rifles, machine guns. He just can't match us in firepower."

(Continued from page 14)

Still nervous, Schackne rephrases the question, asking whether it was because of the firepower that the losses were so one-sided.

“Last night, the fact was that Charlie tried to do something stupid. He tried to overrun a tough position, and when he does something stupid, he pays the price for it,” O’Connor says.

The newsmen then drills in on the real target—body counts. “Well, there’s often a lot of skepticism about the casualty figures, particularly about the claims we make about the damage we do to them because it’s so one-sided. In this case, there doesn’t seem to be any doubt about it,” he says.

O’Connor steps to his right in what appears to be a prearranged transition to the regimental commander’s boilerplate response about battlefield protocol to count enemy dead.

Parts of the footage ended up on the CBS Evening News with Walter Cronkite. Newman, who had ordered the bodies airlifted because of the difficulty of digging a burial hole in the hard clay, had to answer for the images of V.C. being carted away like freight.

“The TV pictures are pretty gruesome and we were stacking them in a huge helicopter sling to carry them out,” Mort wrote. “They were carried over to district chief’s headquarters to be buried—I definitely didn’t want my people to fool around with the job; the grounds’ too hard.”

When—and if—you see the pictures on TV, don’t be concerned with the way I sound,” O’Connor wrote. “I was quite hoarse. Also, and I hope it shows up, the kids in the battalion did a magnificent job. They are proud as hell of themselves and

their confidence is way up. The assistant division commander said that this is the way Dracula used to perform all the time; the battalion is on its way up. Hell, it’s here!”

Less than forty-eight hours later, the Black Scarves had pulled out—on their way to the next battle, farther south.

Horst Faas, recuperating in Long Binh, would spend six months in the hospital. On crutches and confined to the bureau for months, he eventually returned to the field and stayed in country another three years—not long enough to see the war’s end, but he knew it would come. “It was demoralizing to see the troops return so many times to the same ground,” he said. “Bu Dop, Hamburger Hill—occupied, taken, and abandoned over and over again.”

Faas went on to win a second Pulitzer Prize, during the conflict in Bangladesh, where he photographed gripping scenes of tortures and executions. In 1976, he relocated to London as A.P.’s senior photo editor for Europe, until his retirement from the news agency in 2004, still hobbled by his ward wounds. In 1997, he co-authored *Requiem*, a book about photographers killed on both sides of the Vietnam War, and was a co-author of *Lost Over Laos*, a 2003 book about four photographers shot down over Laos in 1971 and the search for the crash site twenty-seven years later. He also organized reunions of his brave band of lens men, who met in Ho Chi Minh City, Vienna, and other capitals over the years.

But he never forgot the men of the Black Scarves. He visited the medic who saved his life at his home in Geneva, N.Y. and wrote about his experience.

He died in May, 2012, age 79, leaving his wife, Ursula, and one daughter.

Calter remembered the blood on the ground and the charred, lacerated bodies of the V.C. the night after the assault. “It’s seared into my memory,” he said. “We were

in a daze, happy to be alive but not really feeling it. Looking over the battlefield, I asked myself, Was it all worth it?” He left the battalion at the end of 1967. Before returning home, he visited Faas in the hospital. “He was in good spirits,” Calter said. “eager to return to the bureau and the field.”

The priest’s return to the U.S. was short-lived: he re-upped for another tour. Assigned to the 101st Airborne, Calter found himself visiting familiar terrain throughout the next two years.

“When I went back the second time and we were fighting for the same spots, I began questioning the wisdom of what we were doing there,” Calter said. “We just had to put the white flag up and give it all up at some point.”

His faith in the war already rattled by his first tour, Calter found little solace in the second. “I remember a battle where the Viet Cong couldn’t claim their bodies. There was such odor it took a two-ton truck to move them all and I wasn’t even touched by it. I remember in the evening thinking, What is happening to me?”

An intelligence officer shared with him letters and photos found in the pockets of one of the V.C. dead. “It was pure poetry—writing about the flashes of gunfire in the night, the touch of this children. He wrote to his wife about the aromas of her cooking, the sounds of his children’s laughter. It made me realize those were men just like ours who were victims of circumstances.”

Calter left Vietnam for good in 1970. He spent two years in Germany, then several more at posts in the U.S. His last stop was close to home—Fort Devens, Massachusetts. He became pastor of several Archdiocesan parishes in the Boston area before retiring in 2000.

“War sometimes comes to us and we

(Continued from page 15)

have to respond," Calter said. "But I'm all for reconciliation. It takes courage to do that."

The Black Scarves continued on search-and-destroy missions in the Iron Triangle north of Saigon in the aftermath of the January Tet Offensive, coming in contact several times with elements of the forces that had attempted to overrun their camp in Bu Dop.

On April 1, 1968, while O'Connor was personally leading a patrol, the squad was pinned down by machine-gun fire. "Mort, who was near the center of his battalion column, spontaneously moved up to the fight," his West Point classmate Bob Rogers wrote. "Along with him moved his radio man with the distinctive tall antenna

of the command radio set. As if waiting for that one unique target, a Viet Cong rose out of a spidertrap and fired at Mort. The burst of gunfire put an end to the special cadence of Mort O'Connor's heart. He died instantly, imparting to his life in that moment a unity of purpose few men enjoy, doing what he had been born to do—leading men forward in battle."

By the time the knock on the door came in Tucson, Betsy already knew. She'd been working in the house the day before. "I suddenly heard a shot and stood up. I went cold," she said years later. "I just knew."

Days later, Mort O'Connor was laid to rest at West Point in a cold April Rain. Nearby was the grave of his uncle, First Infantry LTC Richard E. O'Connor, killed in the World War II invasion of Sicily, who

was one of four brothers to attend the academy.

His wife and children stood beneath a white canopy. Over the grave were bouquets of tropical flowers flown in from Hawaii, where he had been born at reveille at Schofield Barracks.

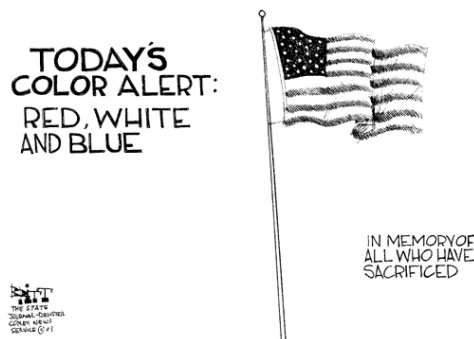
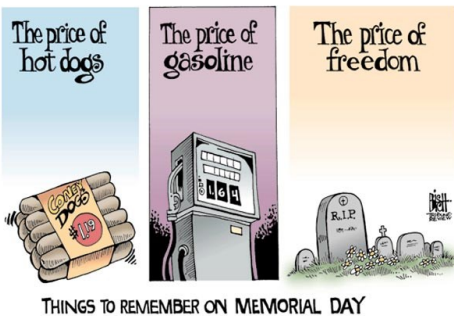
Seven soldiers in dress uniform snapped to attention and delivered three volleys from the M1 rifles. Brass cartridges bounced off gravestones.

Those volleys, reverberating through the rain and the huddled trees of the old burial ground, echo still.



MEMORIAL DAY

SENT TO US BY MEMBER: LARRY AALBERS





**2012 - 2014
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Thank You!

We wish to thank everyone who submitted articles, poems and pictures to this issue of the newsletter and welcome you to share your stories with us. Please feel free to send your articles and pictures to Bob Douglass, bdouglass1@peoplepc.com or Kathy Grzywinski, kjgrzywinski@gmail.com

*The newsletter is published bi-annually
Memorial Day and Veterans Day.*

*Article deadlines: Fall 2013 Newsletter-October 15, 2013 and
Spring 2014 Newsletter-May 15, 2014.*



Adopt-a-Fort Knox Platoon Program Information and Application for Businesses or Organizations

-looking to support the-

3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division

What is Adopt-a-Fort Knox Platoon? Similar to the Adopt-a-Platoon Soldier Support Effort® nonprofit 501C-3 founded in 1998, the Adopt-a-Fort Knox Platoon program strives to leverage the local community to provide a better deployment quality of life for Soldiers by linking units with community groups, businesses, and even individuals from the Fort Knox area who are interested in supporting these Soldiers with periodic cards, letters and care packages during the course of their deployment and beyond. Due to the varying sizes of individual units, adopting entities will be aligned with a unit whose size and make-up most aptly fits their ability to support. Adopting organizations can always request specific units by name.

ADOPT-A-FORT KNOX PLATOON - SUGGESTIONS FOR CARE PACKAGES

- Other programs suggest sending at least one care package per platoon each month of the deployment.
- Please send the care package to your platoon point of contact. You do not need to send individual packages for each person in the platoon, as they all share whatever items are sent.
- Theme packages are fun for the Soldiers. Perhaps try sending packages for St. Patrick's Day, Fourth of July, Halloween, and winter holidays; or do a Hawaiian luau, Mexican night with fixings for tacos, poker party, or a cookie party. Let your imagination run wild (OK, not too wild.).
- Please always include a card or letter with your care package that has your/your organization's name and address and email address if you have one so a Soldier can send a note of thanks.
- The easiest way to collect items may be to set up a large donation box in a common area of your organization's building. Have the suggested items list on or near the donation box. Then gather items, package and send on a monthly basis. Perhaps have the same day each month to send out the donations, and let employees know of your schedule.
- You may want to include a note asking the platoon if they have any special requests for items.
- Use the postal service's flat rate boxes. You will be able to send heavier items at a flat rate.
- Put all items in plastic bags. The bags will prevent any spillage from items that may open. Plastic bags will be reused by Soldiers.
- Cushion the items in your package with baby wipes. Baby wipes are a popular product with Soldiers.
- The package should be full to prevent items from jostling around and potentially breaking.
- Remember that the things you send will have to be carried and possibly put in pockets. Please send small bottles and packets.
- Postage stamps are not needed. Soldiers that are deployed can send letters back to the United States for free.
- Please do not send anything liquid or in aerosol can as the item may break or explode. Send dry drink mixes (pre-sweetened) instead.
- Please do not send canned goods that require a can opener.
- When sending reading material, be careful of the content. Please do not include religious materials. Chaplains provide Soldiers with the materials they need/want.
- Please do not send any articles of civilian clothing. Soldiers can only wear their uniforms.
- Pork /pork products, pornography, and alcohol cannot be sent to Soldiers.
- Please do not give out your adopted unit's APO address to others.
- Please understand that any correspondence (e.g., thank you letters, images of Soldiers with their care packages) received from Soldiers must be kept private and not be used or displayed in a public way (e.g., running a Soldier thank you letter in the local newspaper, publishing on a website), so as to avoid any appearance of Army endorsement to any person, group, organization, or business. Internal newsletters are acceptable. Further, the Army cannot publicly thank particular persons, groups or corporations for the receipt of care packages due to what can be construed as an appearance of endorsement.

THANK YOU!!! The Soldiers and Families truly appreciate everything you are doing to show your support and appreciation.

Adopt-a-Fort Knox Platoon

Item Ideas for Care Packages

Please remember that, depending on location, Soldiers will have different needs. Soldiers in more remote locations may need hygiene items and food items. You may want to talk to your platoon's point of contact for suggestions.

Air fresheners	Hard candy	Sunscreen
Antacids	Ink pens	Sweetened drink mix
Anti-bacterial gels	Insoles (cushioned)	Tissues, travel size
Aspirin or pain relievers	Instant soup	Toaster pastries
Baby wipes	Lip balm	Toilet paper (SOFT)
Beef jerky	Lollipops	Toothbrushes
Blank post cards	Magazines	Toothpaste
Board games	Mints	Trail mix
Body powder	Mouth sprays/breath strips	Travel games
Books	Music CDs	Vacuum sealed baked goods
Canned cheese	Nasal spray	Velcro (all sizes – but only in black or green)
Chewing gum	News magazines	Video games
Chips	Newspapers	Vitamins
Crackers	Paper	Waterless hand wash
Crossword/Word find puzzles	Paperback books	
Dental floss	Peanuts	
Deodorant	Pillows	
Disposable cameras	Popcorn	
Disposable razors	Pretzels	
DVD Movies	Protein bars	
Ear swabs	Protein powder/shakes	
Envelopes	Ravioli (pop top cans)	
Eye drops	Shampoo	
Flyswatters	Small packs of fruit	
Foot powder	Snacks that can stand the heat	
Fragrance spray	Soap	
Gallon size re-sealable plastic bags	Summer sausage	
Granola bars	Sunflower seeds	

Adopt-a-Fort Knox Platoon

Suggested Operational Security (OPSEC) Guidelines

Keeping the Military Safe

OPSEC, or operations security, is the principle that we should all abide by when talking about our soldiers. This means protecting the information you know about your unit.

Generally, it means that you should not give out the following:

- (1) Your unit's exact location overseas
- (2) Any information on troop movements – this includes any movement while they are deployed and in transit to/from theater (including R&R). Do not ever give dates or times.
- (3) Any information on weapons systems, how they train or numbers – for this reason, many pictures from overseas can easily violate OPSEC.

Always abide by the rules set forth by the unit. Just because it is on the news does not mean that you can talk about the issue. By talking about it, you are only verifying the information.

CORRECT: "My XYZ unit is deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom."

INCORRECT: "My XYZ unit is stationed at ABC Camp in XXXX city in Afghanistan."

Give only general locations *IF* the unit allows it. The above incorrect statement is entirely too much information.

INCORRECT: "My unit is returning from deployment and flying into XYZ Airport at 8 p.m. next Thursday."

Never give dates or times for troop movements. Keep in mind that "next Thursday" is a date. This includes R&R dates as well as deployment and redeployment dates.

INCORRECT: "A member of my unit called today and told me he is going out on a very dangerous mission tonight. They will be gone for three days and I'm very worried about them."

When our Soldiers are in dangerous situations, it is natural to want to reach out to others. But the above statement puts the Soldier and his unit in danger. You could have very well just alerted the enemy about their mission.

It is important to realize that putting together the bits and pieces needed to create the larger picture can be amazingly simple on the internet. Many mistakenly believe that if they don't talk about it all at once, the information is safe. This is incorrect and dangerous to assume.

The old saying "loose lips sink ships" still holds true today. Keep your unit safe by keeping the information you know to yourself. You never know who may be gathering information on internet message boards and profiles.

In the past, family members and others had deployment tickers to count down their Soldier's deployment. Never have a ticker that shows XX days until your unit returns.

The internet is a wonderful tool, but in regard to our military, it is a very dangerous one as well. It takes only minutes of searching online to find enough pieces of information that could potentially endanger our Soldiers.

Adopt-a-Fort Knox Platoon Application

Business/Organization _____
Coordinator _____
Phone _____
Email _____
Address _____
City, State, Zip _____

My business/organization wishes to adopt:

Please select size of unit (platoon or company) and number of units selected.

(Example: 2 platoons; or 1 company, which would be the adoption of 4-5 platoons)

Unit size	Number selected
Platoon (1 platoon = 35-50 Soldiers)	_____
Company (1 company = 150-250 Soldiers; company = 4 to 5 platoons)	_____

*My business/organization agrees to send at least one care package with letter per platoon adopted each month that the unit is deployed. We do not need to send individual packages for each person in the platoon, as they all will share items sent by my business or organization. **I understand that as the coordinator, I am responsible for sending care packages and for coordinating with the unit's point of contact on APO address and any other items.***

My business/organization understands that any correspondence (e.g., thank you letters, images of Soldiers with their care packages) received from Soldiers must be kept private and not be used or displayed in a public way (e.g., running a Soldier thank you letter in the local newspaper, publishing on a website), so as to avoid any appearance of Army endorsement to any person, group, organization, or business. Internal newsletters are acceptable. Further, the Army cannot publicly thank particular persons, groups or corporations for the receipt of care packages due to what can be construed as an appearance of endorsement.

Name _____ Signature _____ Date _____

Thank you! You will receive notification with your adopted unit(s) name and point of contact information shortly.

FOR FORT KNOX USE ONLY

The business or organization has adopted:

Unit _____
Point of Contact _____
Phone _____
Email _____