



# National Capital Area Chapter

## The 101st Airborne Division Association

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## NEWSLETTER MAY – AUGUST 2016

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### MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT:

I take this opportunity to tell everyone in the Chapter how pleased I am to return to the Presidency of the National Capital Area Chapter of our 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division Association. I regret very much that my return has been occasioned by the untimely passing of the Chapter's recent **President, C.K. Gailey**. C.K. was a tireless advocate for our Association and devoted much effort to our Chapter's affairs. We will all miss him. I hope I will be able to fill his shoes. My residence in Delaware will make some tasks that C.K. and others could accomplish more difficult such as attending funerals for deceased members of the Division at Arlington National Cemetery. However, I hope that my previous experience as Chapter President will mitigate this distance problem and I certainly intend to work hard for the Chapter and the Association.

The first and I think **most important issue** facing the Chapter is the structure of our **Memorial Day observance** and the problems that have grown with the ever expanding influence of the **"Rolling Thunder"** motorcycle rally that has come to dominate **Memorial Day** in Washington, D.C. This year there were more than **200,000 cyclists at the rally**, down from the 380,000 in 2008, but enough to provoke havoc with our Sunday observance at the **101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division monument** on Memorial Drive in Arlington National Cemetery. Many of the cyclists are well meaning, but the rally has now lost most of its focus on Vietnam POWs and it has become an opportunity for motorcycle enthusiasts to strut their stuff and commune with fellow motorcyclists. This year it was **co-opted by Donald Trump**. As a consequence, authorities in the District and in the Military District of Washington have concentrated their efforts on making the rally a safe and, for the District, a profitable experience. Except for the **Presidential program on Monday**, this has overtaken the solemnity of the occasion and the traditional observances by organizations like our Association. We received only **minimal support from authorities** and no help in making our **Sunday morning ceremony a success**. In fact, despite valiant efforts and the tireless exertions of **Bob Ponzo**, I think most of us would agree that turnout was more disappointing than ever.

**"Rolling Thunder," discourages attendance.** People, especially those from out of town who do not know their way around, are intimidated. The **"Rolling Thunder"** motorcycle rally has become an increasingly difficult obstacle to movement in the Washington, DC area. Washington, DC **authorities**, the **Pentagon and Arlington National Cemetery** staff have been relentlessly pushed to accommodate it through arbitrary road closures and rigid control of entrance to **Arlington Cemetery proper**. The very **worst day** for traffic in the area is **Sunday** when the **massive motorcycle parade paralyzes the downtown** for hours. It seems to me that more than in past years, those who were able to attend the ceremony had to do so through a gauntlet of road closures, bikes massing for the parade and the sheer mass of humanity. **Association Vice President John Sosa**, someone who was scheduled to actively participate in the ceremony, was among those who **could not make it through the chaotic maze** to get into the Cemetery. I was dismayed to hear **several people** remark that they **were not** going to **"try this again."** Many who managed to make it to the ceremony could not negotiate their way to the luncheon and were either late in arriving or gave up trying to get to the Sheraton altogether. The **dismal turnout at the luncheon speaks volumes about the problem.**

We have all watched **as attendance** at our **Memorial Day** observance has **steadily dropped off** over recent few years. It is too easy to say attendance is down because many of our stalwart World War II members have passed from the scene. The facts are that while we have indeed **lost many** of our most faithful participants, our program has also lost meat on its bones, **such the presence of the Division Honor Guard** at the **101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division Memorial**

ceremony, and the Washington D.C. **Memorial Day Parade on Monday**. Our program has acquired the reputation of requiring too much effort and being too much trouble to make attendance worthwhile, especially for people out of town. Even the **Division apparently no longer considers it worth the sending of an Honor Guard**.

What do we need to do to **fix this problem**? I believe we should start with **reorganization of the program's events** to meet the **realities of Memorial Day weekend**. We should establish an **advertising campaign** to get the word out locally and in the **Association** as a whole. We should also make a **liaison effort** with the **Military District of Washington** to reach **local 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne veterans** who just might join our Chapter and participate in our **Memorial Day** observance if they knew about it in the first place and thought from what they learned that it would be worthwhile.

Here is my proposal for the Memorial Day Weekend.

**SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:** (Notional)

**FRIDAY:**

1:00 P.M.                      Opening of Hospitality Suite

3:00 P.M.                      Laying the wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

**SATURDAY:**

10:00 A.M.                      Wreath Laying at the World War II, Korean War and Vietnam Memorials.

3:00 P.M.                      Ceremony at the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division Monument

6:00 P.M.                      Cocktail reception in some form at the Sheraton Hotel to meet the Division's Representatives.

**SUNDAY:**

1:00 P.M.                      Cocktail Hour and Get together at the Sheraton followed by

2:00 P.M.                      101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division Memorial Luncheon and Memorial Day address by guest speaker, Reports from Division and National Association representatives.

**MONDAY:**

1:00 P.M.                      Gather for and participate in the National Memorial Day Parade for those interested.

I intend to seek a prominent *pro bono* speaker for the **Memorial Day luncheon** whose participation we will advertise in order to maximize the events appeal. I will also ask the **Division to restore** the participation of the **Honor Guard**. The Division's Acting Senior **Commander, BG Scott Bower**, agreed to **consider this** when I asked him about it last Memorial Day. Employing the **honor guard with weapons** at the monuments downtown may be **problematic** but we can look into that through the **Military District of Washington**.

I urge **everyone** to share their thoughts on how **we should stage** next year's **Memorial Day observance**. I am setting a **deadline of December 31, 2016** for the establishment of a revised, **workable program**. We will also need to reflect on an appropriate public affairs strategy to **advertise** as extensively as possible once we have **agreed on a Memorial Day Program**. We should **include suggestions** of what **other things Washington, DC** has to offer while people are here for our program. I seek **volunteers** in the **Washington, DC area** to form a **Public Affairs committee** for the Chapter that will look at how we will get the word out once we put together the bones of a new and **invigorated** National Memorial Day program. They can work together by phone and Email.

I look forward to the challenges we will face in the coming year. I hope to hold a **Chapter Christmas Party** at my son's home on **King Street in Alexandria, VA**. We all know that we need to expand our membership and hopefully **reinvigorate** it with **veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan**. I think we can do that better if we can put together a **really great Memorial Day program** that will attract their attention. In the meantime, I think we should look at **Veterans Day** as a chance to test our ability to reach **veterans** in the **National Capital Area Chapter's** immediate area. I look to our membership to help develop ideas on how we can accomplish that short term mission. We can do this! Please **contact me** with any and **all ideas**. Thank you all for allowing me to again lead our Chapter. *"George Malleck"*

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## MEMORIAL DAY, 2016:

The **National Capital Area Chapter** again hosted the Association's annual national Memorial Day observance in **Washington, D.C. and Arlington, Virginia**. The program began on Friday, May 27, 2016 at 1:15 PM when **Bob Ponzio, Chapter Vice President** and **Walter Tangel, veteran of 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn, 11<sup>th</sup> Abn FA** placed the Association's wreath at the **Tomb of the Unknowns in Arlington National Cemetery**. Following the ceremony the customary **Hospitality Suite** opened at the **Sheraton Pentagon City Hotel**.

On **Saturday, May 28, 2016** Association wreaths were placed at the **WWII Memorial, the Korean War Memorial and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall**. Association Vice President **John Sosa** spoke about the accomplishments and **sacrifices of veterans** of that war, the **Greatest Generation**. Association **Past President**, retired **COL Larry Redmond** spoke eloquently at the **Korean War Memorial** about the **187<sup>th</sup> Airborne Regimental Combat Team's** record in that war and their subsequent integration into the **101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division**. At the **Vietnam Wall Chapter Vice President Bob Ponzio** spoke of not only fifty-eight plus thousand stories on the Wall, but also of the countless hundreds of thousands of stories of families and friends of those on the Wall. Participants spent the rest of the day touring the city.

The official Association **memorial service** was held at **10:30 AM on Sunday morning** at the **101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division Memorial Monument**, located on Memorial Drive in Arlington National Cemetery. The monument, built in 1977, required approval of Congress before it was erected. The ceremony was conducted by **Chapter President George Malleck** who has assumed presidency of the Chapter following the death of the Chapter's recent President, **Charles K. Gailey**, who passed away unexpectedly in February of this year. Representing the Division were **BG Scott E. Brower**, Acting Senior Commander of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division and Fort Campbell, Division **Chaplain MAJ Jefferey Jay** and **CSM Gabriel Espinosa**. Vice President **John Sosa** represented the National Association. A **color guard and bugler** were provided by the **3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment, the "Old Guard"** and the **US Army Band**. After remarks, **34 wreaths** were placed in memory of units and personnel. The playing of Taps by the bugler concluded the ceremony. Following the ceremony, a **luncheon** was held at the **Sheraton Hotel**, where **Association VP Sosa** briefed the attendees on activities of the National Association and **BG Brower** briefed on the latest activities of the Division and answered questions.



*Larry Redmond at the Korean Memorial*



*Wreath laid at the 101<sup>st</sup> Memorial Arlington*

On **Monday, May 30, 2016** Chapter members attended and **participated in Washington D.C.'s national Memorial Day parade**. We were joined by members of the **Central Virginia Mustang Club** with six of their beautiful vehicles. Chapter President **George Malleck** and Chapter member **Bill Barth** rode on two of the vehicles proudly flying **the Division colors** and were warmly greeted as they paraded before the reviewing stand and the public at large.

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## REPORT ON WALTER REED:

The **101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division** has completed multiple deployments to **Iraq and Afghanistan since 2003**. On each of these operations, young troopers have **suffered life-changing wounds and injuries**, and in most cases, these casualties **require long periods of therapy and recuperation** before they can get on with their lives, either returning to active duty or leaving military service. For the past and current overseas deployments of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division, the our **National Capital Area Chapter** of the **101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division Association** provides **support** to our **wounded troopers and their families** when they arrive back in the United States.

The majority, **between 2003 and 2010**, came to the **old Walter Reed Army Hospital** in Washington DC, which was closed in 2010. Now all wounded arrive at the **former Navy Hospital in Bethesda, Maryland** was expanded with new recovery facilities and is now named the **Walter Reed National Military Medical Center**, as the two hospitals merged in 2009. This merged facility is now staffed by Army, Navy, and Air Force medical personnel has become an **integrated military medicine center** and tri-service hospital. Of course, many wounded can go to other medical facilities throughout the USA.

The **National Capital Area Chapter** of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division Association has been **visiting and supporting our wounded and their families** since the first deployment in 2003. During the first visit to the soldier, each **wounded soldier** is provided with a **101<sup>st</sup> baseball cap, 101<sup>st</sup> T-shirt, 101<sup>st</sup> break-away nylon trousers and gym shorts**, all with the **Screaming Eagle patch**. These sharp looking clothing items help our soldiers feel proud and **raise morale** as they settle into their lengthy recoveries. In addition, each soldier also receives a **large 101<sup>st</sup> flag** with a silver glitter marker so visiting family and friends may **write personal get-well wishes**. Also, small 101<sup>st</sup> pins are provided parents, wives, and other familymembers.

Our **veteran visitation program**, more importantly, ministers often to **unrecognized needs** of both the **wounded trooper and his/her family**. When we walk into to the **soldier's room** for the first visit, we meet **their mothers and fathers, their wives and children, aunts and uncles, younger and older brothers and sisters, and other family friends**. Their needs during this difficult time of recovery are **sometimes similar**, but can **vary greatly**. The **members** of the National Capital Area Chapter **assess** the needs of **each trooper** and their **family** and **provide assistance** through continued visitation, to include **financial support** which greatly assists the **travel expenses** and other **unanticipated needs** of the wounded soldier's family. Over this period of time, we also bring the **wounded troopers** into the **'brotherhood'** of our veteran family. As their recoveries progress, the soldiers may take convalescent leave to their homes for a couple weeks before moving from the hospital wards to out-patient facilities. Once our **wounded and recovering soldiers** are in these **out-patient facilities**, they have more **independence** to go back and forth to the hospital for their appointments and physical therapies. These out-patient facilities also **accommodate family members** to stay with the soldier as they are like a small apartment with a living room and small kitchen.

For these soldiers in out-patient facilities, the National Capital Area Chapter has **coordinated** with several **local VFW lodges** to provide spring and summer **BBQs** for the **soldiers and their families**. In addition, many **other caring local organizations** and individuals provide other opportunities for the soldiers and their families to leave the hospital grounds to attend **musical concerts, sporting events, fishing and hunting trips, luncheons and other social events**. The National Capital Area Chapter also brings wounded soldiers and their families to our **Veterans Day and Memorial Day** ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery. We also provide **financial support** to the soldiers to assist them with their travel back to **Fort Campbell**, to be there on the airfield when their unit returns from deployment. The Army has a **Warrior Transition Brigade** at Walter Reed for all recovering soldiers. Similar Warrior Transition Battalions (WTB) have been organized at many **Army installations** in the U.S., including a large new facility at **Ft Campbell**. The soldiers are organized into squads, platoons and companies that provide **close supervision** and coordination with their **nurse case managers**. The soldiers have formations **several times a week**, their appointments **schedules are reviewed**, and any **problems are resolved** with the support of their chain of command. Soldiers are also strongly encouraged to take **educational courses**, and participate in **internship programs** offered by **various commercial and US government agencies** during their recoveries. As they near the end of their recoveries, many soldiers are now ready to **return** to their units at **Fort Campbell**, and continue their care at the WTB on post. Some soldiers will also **leave the Army** and return to civilian life.

As of **15 July**



2016, we are supporting **only three WIA at Walter Reed** and all three will be **medically discharged** within the next few months. Hopefully, there will be **no more combat-wounded**, however, if there are, **we will be ready to support** them and their families during their recoveries.

Our **chapter** of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division Association is **very proud to help our wounded Eagles** make the challenging transition to a new life. Your **ongoing support** for this program is appreciated reflecting the links that bind all Screaming Eagles.....”Airborne, Air Assault, All the Way, All Together.....Always!”

Current deployments.....The Division Headquarters is **currently deployed to Iraq**, departed Ft Campbell in **March-April** timeframe and expected to return to **Ft Campbell in early 2017**.

The **2BCT** is currently deployed to **Iraq**, departed **Ft Campbell in March-April** timeframe and expected to return to **Ft Campbell in early 2017**.

The **3<sup>rd</sup> BCT** is expected to deploy to **Afghanistan in late Fall 2016** with two battalions, **3-187 and 1-187**. The other **3<sup>rd</sup> BCT** deploying battalion, **2-506**, will deploy in **August 2016**. All **3<sup>rd</sup> BCT** units should return **mid 2017**, or later in the **summer 2017**.

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### **NEW CHAPTER WEBSITE:**

The Chapter is in the process of creating a **new website**. We have been fortunate to have working with us the website developer of **Bob Ponzo’s Special Forces Association Chapter** who created and is managing that Chapter’s website for several years. Our new domain name will be **NCAC101.org** and the home page is already online. It is a work in progress and will take several months to be fully operational. Any suggestions or ideas are solicited and welcome, address them to **Bob, Diane, George or Sylvia**. Anyone interested can review **SFA Chapter 19’s** website at [www.sfa19.org](http://www.sfa19.org) to see the quality of what our site can become. Again, input from the membership is requested and welcome.

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### **NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS:**

As George Malleck has requested earlier in this Newsletter, we are hoping for recommendations, suggestions, new ideas and constructive criticism about George’s ideas about revamping Memorial Day activities. We also would appreciate the same sort of input from the membership about the Newsletter. We welcome any ideas and thoughts you all might have concerning topics of interest we can include in our Newsletter. We have gone from a quarterly issue to one every 4 months, but might shift back to the quarterly schedule if we can generate enough topics that will be interesting and informative to our readership. Please consider this and send us your ideas and suggestions.

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### **FUNERALS:**

On **June 7, 2016** Chapter member **SSG Bob Lott, 401<sup>st</sup> Glider Infantry Regiment**, was laid to rest at **Arlington National Cemetery**. The service was attended by Chapter members **Richard and Sylvia Schonberger, Ed Davis, Bill Barth and Bob Ponzo**, along with many members of **Bob’s family** colleagues and friends. Bob Lott was one of the very few remaining WWII veterans in our Chapter and Association. He is **interred in Section 51, Grave #3213**.

Recent **Past Chapter President C.K. Gailey** will be laid to rest at **Arlington National Cemetery** with **full military honors** on **Friday, November 4, 2016**. **CK’s funeral** will be conducted from the **Cemetery’s Administration building at 9 AM**. Those **wishing to attend** should plan to be at the **Admin building** by **at least 8:30 AM**. Information about public transportation and directions to the cemetery can be found on the Cemetery’s website: <http://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil>. The site can also be reached by searching “**entering Arlington National Cemetery and following the appropriate prompts.**”

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### **LICENSE PLATES:**

If you live in Maryland and are interested in obtaining **101st License Plates** - send an email to: [telemere@gmail.com](mailto:telemere@gmail.com). The subject line should say “**101st License Plates.**” You have to be a **member of the 101st association to get tags.**

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