



National Capital Area Chapter

The 101st Airborne Division Association

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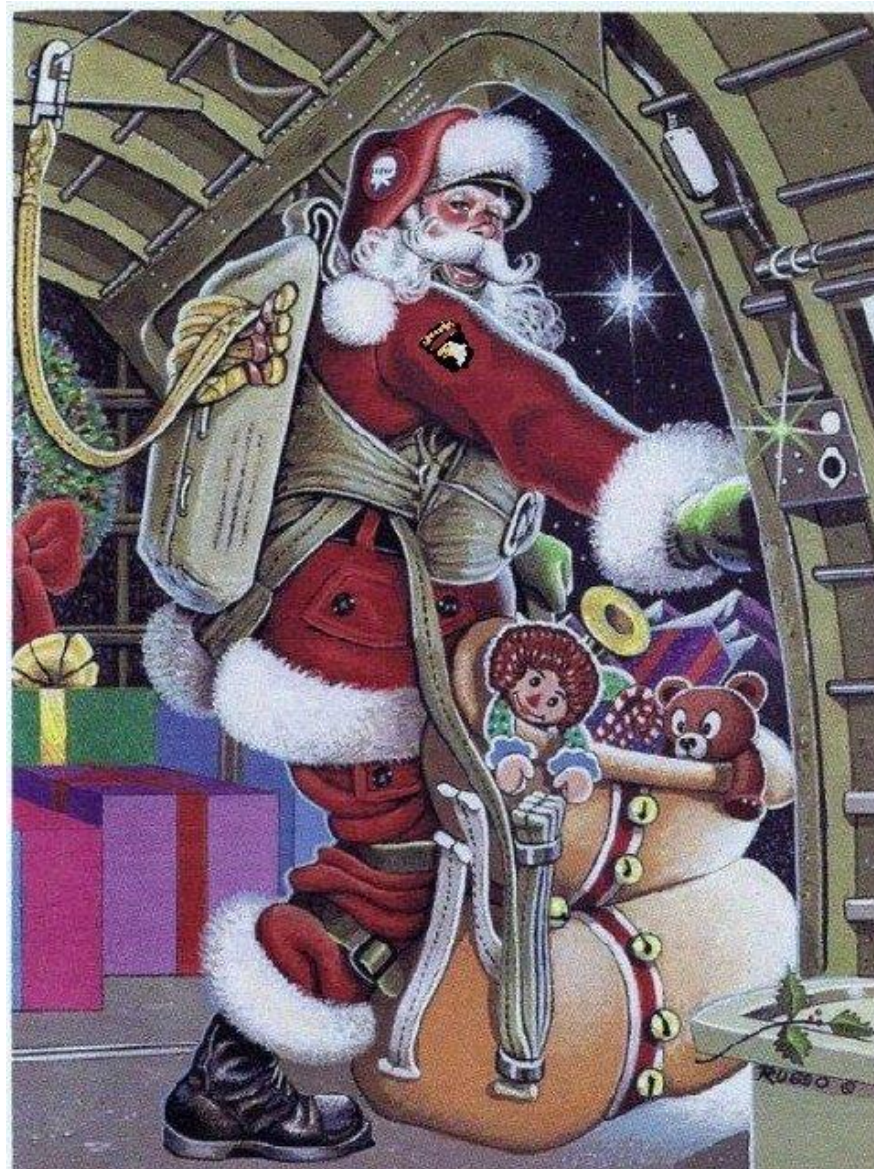
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NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER – DECEMBER 2018

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“WE WISH ALL OUR FELLOW SCREAMING EAGLES A MERRY HOLIDAY SEASON AND MAY 2019 BE A HAPPY AND HEALTHY ONE FOR ALL.”

CHAPTER NOTES:

The National Capital Area Chapter hosted a **Hospitality Suite** from Friday **November 9th** until **Sunday November 11th, 2018** at the Pentagon City Sheraton Hotel. We were pleasantly surprised by visitors from a retired **Army Chaplains group** and members of a group called **GI Forum** who were also having events in the hotel. There were a number of people from those two groups who either had friends formerly serving with the **101st Airborne Division**, and some who were actually present at their respective activities. Needless to say, several of these folks showed up to partake of our hospitality and a great time was had by all. A number of Chapter members also attended over the weekend, some bringing friends and/or family who were there for the **Veterans Day** experience. Overall, we had a very positive and enjoyable time in the Hospitality Suite.

The Chapter's **formal activities** commenced on **Sunday November 11th** with the initial placement of the **Chapter/Association/Division wreath at the Vietnam Wall Memorial**, which was placed by Chapter members **Bill Ramsey** and **Mike Trochan**. Later in the afternoon the Chapter conducted our annual **Veterans Day** wreath laying ceremony at the **101st Memorial** statue at the entrance to **Arlington National Cemetery**. **Eleven wreaths** were placed commemorating units and individuals from the Division's history. There were more than **forty people** in attendance for this event and a good number of them retired to our Hospitality Suite after the ceremony.

The National Capital Area Chapter will again be **hosting Memorial Day** activities/events for this coming **Memorial Day weekend, May 2019**. Dates and times and hotel information will be provided in the next issue of the **Screaming Eagle** and will be provided via the Chapter's and Association's **websites** at a later date. Everyone is encouraged to contact our Chapter directly for information and assistance at the phone numbers and email addresses provided in the **Chapters section** of the

The Chapter will conduct a **flag placement** ceremony at **Arlington National Cemetery's Section 60 and Columbarium Court 1 on December 12, 2018** in honor of the casualties of the air disaster at **Gander, Newfoundland on December 12, 1985**. The Chapter has conducted this event for the past **seven years** since the commemoration of the **25th Anniversary** of that fatal event in which **248 members of the 101st Airborne Division** were lost. Anyone interested in learning more about this event or wishing to participate may contact **Bob Ponzio** at oznopsf@gmail.com or **540-659-7212**.

The Chapter is very proud and happy to announce that **Madison Ann Pearson**, daughter of Past Chapter President **Morris Pearson**, has been presented with an offer of appointment to the **Virginia Military Institute, Class of 2022**. For many years young **Madison** was a very active and productive participant in our **Chapter's activities** to support wounded **Screaming Eagles** at **Walter Reed Military Medical Center**. Her efforts during the Chapter's many Memorial Day and **Joint Service Open House** activities resulted in the collection of many **thousands of dollars** which went directly to the **wounded soldiers** and/or members of their families. Congratulations to **Madison** and her parents for an honor well deserved and our best wishes to her and them for the future.

WALTER REED UPDATE:

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. By assessing the **needs of each trooper** and their family, we can **provide** the right level of **assistance** during our weekly visitations. We additionally provide **financial assistance** for the unexpected needs of the family, such as **travel costs**, **child support** and other **related expenses** while the family is at **Walter Reed**. We have often assisted the soldiers in **resolving problems** and worries that work against the **positive attitudes** necessary for a **good recovery**. Lifting such burdens from wounded soldiers allows them to fully apply their thoughts and energies to **their recoveries**. Once they become **out-patients**, we **sponsor community activities**, such as summer BBQs for the soldiers and their families, along with other opportunities for the soldiers and their families to leave the hospital grounds to attend concerts, sporting and other social events. We are currently working closely with the **1st Brigade Combat Team (BCT) at Ft Campbell**, which is scheduled to deploy to Afghanistan in the next few months. As there is presently **no 101st Airborne Division Liaison NCO at Walter Reed**, we are providing the **1st BCT Rear Detachment Chain** of Command, and their **Family Readiness Group leaders**, with a detailed

understanding of the procedures and life at **Walter Reed Army Hospital**. This includes medical evacuation procedures from **Germany to Walter Reed**, understanding the differences between the daily routines of **In-patients** and **Out-Patients**, recommendations for family **travel to Walter Reed**, information on family support and **lodging** while at Walter Reed, expected support from the **101st Airborne Division Association**, education opportunities for out-patients while at Walter Reed, and information on the **Integrated Disability Evaluation System**, which determines a **soldier's eligibility** for retention after recovery, and if not retained, the **disability benefit ratings**, along with other areas to help the soldier and family better understand and adjust to life at Walter Reed Army Hospital.

IN MEMORIAM:

Tom Taylor, a member of our chapter passed away on Oct 1, 2017. **Tom** is buried at **Arlington Cemetery**. **Thomas Happer Taylor** was a highly decorated veteran of the United States Army, a military historian, an author of seven books, and a champion triathlete. He served in Vietnam following in the footsteps of his father, **General Maxwell D. Taylor**. He arrived in Vietnam as a **captain in July 1965**, joining the First Brigade of the **101st Airborne Division**, which his father had commanded in **World War II**. Taylor was awarded a **Silver Star**, two **Bronze Stars** for valor and the **Purple Heart**, the latter involving a wound that ended his command of **B Company**. In

1982, **Tom's Vietnamese interpreter, Ben Cai Lam**, came to the US and his story of **imprisonment and escape** was documented by **Tom in his first nonfiction book *Where the Orange Blooms*** (McGraw-Hill, 1989). This was followed by a second nonfiction book, ***Lightning in the Storm*** (Hippocrene), the story of the **101st Airborne Division's** role in the **Gulf War**. Now a well-known military historian, Taylor was commissioned by the **US Army Ranger Association** to write ***Rangers Lead the Way*** (Turner Publishing, 1996).

His next project was ***The Simple Sounds of Freedom*** (Random House, 2002) based on the life of **Joe Beyrle**, the only American to have fought and been wounded in both the American and Russian armies. The book's title was borrowed from President Clinton's address on the 50th Anniversary of D Day at the Cemetery in Normandy: **"These are the men who gave us our world. The simple sounds of freedom we hear today are their voices speaking to us across the years."** The Library Journal commented: "This is the riveting story of **Joe Beyrle's** amazing **World War II odyssey...Taylor** skillfully intermixes **Joe's** ordeal with the **101st's** battles **against the Germans**, from **D-day to Bastogne**. He has carefully corroborated the details of **Joe's adventures** with other **POWs** and available documents. It conveys **Beyrle's** courageous actions directly to the avid audience for these stories. In the 1960s, while enrolled at **West Point**, Taylor had been the captain of the school's **Modern Pentathlon** team. Competition involved five activities: running, swimming, pistol marksmanship, fencing, and horsemanship. In 1982, he won the **U.S. National Champion** in his age group, a feat that he repeated in 1985. His next championship came a quarter century later, with his victory in the 75-79 age category. Owing to his Purple Heart, he was named to be the American flag bearer for **Team USA** in the **World Championships at Gold Coast, Australia**, and at Budapest, where he finished fifth. "I wore mine for soldiers earning Purple Hearts in Iraq and Afghanistan."



A REMEMBRANCE OF TOM TAYLOR:

I thought I'd first met **Tom Taylor** back in the early 1990's when I became a member of the **National Capital Area Chapter**. At that time and over the next 8-10 years all I knew about him was that he was a Vietnam veteran of the 101st as a Company Commander and that he was the **son of General Maxwell Taylor, Commander of the 101st Airborne Division in WWII**. Of special interest, General Taylor had been the **Ambassador to South Vietnam** while his son was in country. During the years I knew **Tom**, he had written several books, mentioned in the previous paragraphs, the most recent of which, at that time, was "**Simple Sounds of Freedom**." At a lunch gathering after one of our Chapter's events **Tom and Joe Beyrle** were selling and **autographing** copies of that book. I gladly purchased a copy, which I still have and cherish. A number of years later, I looked at that book and read the list of **Tom's previously published books**. I noticed that his very first published book was a novel **titled "A-18" copyrighted in 1967**.

From **June to December 1967** I had the dubious distinction of being a member of an **Infantry OCS class at Fort Benning, Georgia**. Somewhere in the last few weeks of that incarceration we were allowed to make a trip to the Post Exchange where I encountered an **Infantry Captain** who was selling and autographing a novel, he had written about an **Army Special forces Detachment in the Vietnam War**. I bought the Captain's book because I had a strong interest in **Army Special Forces** and wanted to read about his experiences with that organization. I don't remember when I was able to read the book but I have had it in my possession since those days. Sometime in those ensuing years I came to the realization that my autographed copy of "**A-18**" a novel by **Thomas Taylor** was, in fact, **Tom's** first book. So, in actuality I had met **Tom**, however briefly, in **October 1967**. Years later at one of our Chapter's many gatherings I announced to Tom that "I have a copy of your first book, A-18, signed by you on October 18th, 1967 at Fort Benning when I was in OCS." In **Tom's** own inimitable manner his response with a very dour look on his face was "**BURN IT!!!**"

As I write this, I have my copy of "**A-18**" on the desk next to me bearing **Tom's inscription** from 18 October 1967. I will read it again sometime in the near future to see if I remember any of it and to see if it really deserves **Tom's** declared desire to see it become ashes.

Regardless, I will keep this this book, unburned, as a lasting memory and tribute to a former Chapter member and a valiant "**Screaming Eagle**."

Bob Ponzo

DUES:

This is the season for giving and so I ask our members to please send in their dues. We wish to thank all members who have sent in their dues, we appreciate your support. If you have **not already paid dues** for 2019, please send a check for **\$20.00 payable to National Capital Area Chapter** to **Sylvia Schonberger, Secretary, 8804 Kenilworth Drive, Springfield, VA 22151**. For the past nine or ten years the Chapter has afforded the members the opportunity to pay **\$101.00 for a six-year membership** which a significant number of members have taken advantage of. We encourage you to consider this option and **take advantage** of it. It serves a dual purpose of saving a member one year's worth of dues and significantly lightens the Chapter's administrative burden of keeping up with annual dues. Thank you again and we look forward to seeing all of you in the coming months for Veterans and Memorial Days activities.
