



**John A Barnes III (MOH)
New England Chapter 9
173rd Airborne Brigade Association
Newsletter**



December 2009



The Officers of Chapter 9 wish you a happy Holiday Season. Our Holiday prayer is safety to all our Country's Warriors and Veterans that they may find peace and happiness during the coming year.

The Chapter elections are over. There are old and new faces within our Presidency:

Peter Klausner, President
James Lemoine, Vice President
Dennis Hill, Secretary
Bill Maloney, Treasurer

The Membership has responded well so far to our cry for money to support our troops down range. To date we have received over \$2,000.00. Our goal remains \$5,000.00, It is not too late to send in a check earmarked "For the Troops". With the Brigade not fully deployed we have decided to wait a month or so until they are in place before shipping. All monies should be sent to Dennis Hill, the mailing address is on our website: http://www.newenglandskysoldier.com/Chapter_Administration.html .

The Chapter relies heavily on membership dues. Expiration for 2009 dues is 31 Dec. Those of us annual members need to get our money in as quickly as possible,

The new President has implemented a strategy in moving the meetings within our Chapter boundaries. The Feb. meeting will be held on 20 Feb 2010 in Brandon Vt. Exact location will be in our January newsletter. We are in hopes of meeting our members that have not been able to attend previous meetings.

The 4th Battalion now has its own coin: <http://www.geronimbattalion.com/Coin.html>

Dennis Hill's beautiful wife Maria has recently undergone surgery. We as a Chapter wish her a speedy and full recovery.

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President:

Let me take a minute to introduce myself and to give to a thumbnail view of the goals I intend to present to the Chapter:

Before I get started, I personally want to thank Fred Lewis and Sean Roden as well as all the previous Officers for their work in the Chapter. It was because of their leadership and devotion to the Chapter that we were so successful during our previous two years.

I am Peter Klausner, A 4/503 66 – 67. I retired from the Army after 20 years of active duty as a 1SG. I have been the newsletter and website person for about 2 years. Although I officially am not the President until 1 Jan 2010 I have begun working with the current Presidency. Our primary goals will remain unchanged: Members, current Warriors, and our Fallen. With these goals in mind I have begun instituting secondary goals: the moving of our membership meetings out of MA, more member involvement, the adding of a 5th membership meeting annually, finally better communication with National so that we are able to better support You our members.

Goals are easy to make, hard to keep. That's why they will be presented at our membership meetings, if approved or not, they will be written into our minutes, and published to everyone. I am certain that we are a good Chapter, and with some effort from us all we can be a Great Chapter. We are in excess of 400 members (3 rifle companies), there is nothing that we can't do with these numbers.

Dues are the life blood of our Chapter. With each \$24.00 dues paid, the Chapter keeps \$8.00, There are approximately 100 annual members within our Chapter. Our annual mailing cost alone is \$700.00. Keep in mind that we are a 501 (C) 19 Not for Profit Organization that provides written receipts for donations to individuals and companies. Donations are welcomed.

I am extremely pleased with the members that have stepped forward for the officer positions. We will work hard, be completely transparent, and keep our membership informed as to what is going on.

I look forward to the tasks ahead. I thank you for your vote of confidence; I am available via the web logpc@comcast.net . I answer my emails and look forward to communicating with you.

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Secretary:

Hello Everyone,

Here we are at the end of the year and it will be time for a new Chapter President and Vice President to take the reins and lead our Chapter forward into the years 2010 & 2011.

The last two years have been a whirlwind of events and projects for the Chapter. There were many challenging goals that the Chapter had set, I feel that most of these were accomplished. There is no doubt that the next two years will also be challenging and it will depend on membership participation if we are successful or not.

In the last two years there have been 107 new members located, communicated with, and recruited into the Chapter. This is in fact one of the biggest accomplishments for the Chapter. National and the other chapters are wondering what we did and how we were so successful. Our membership rolls now contain over 400 members past and present.

I know that the economy is not up to par and money is tight for many, but now is the time to send in your membership dues for 2010. There are many members with membership that will expire by the end of December. If you are one of these members, please consider sending in your dues as soon as you are able.

I want to thank the Chapter President (Fred Lewis) and the Chapter Vice President, (Sean Roden) for allowing me to work closely with them for the past two years. It was an honor to have worked together side by side.

Our Chapter's database has a lot of information missing on members. Most of the members who we have little information on are the life members. In the near future I will be contacting you to see if we can update your information for our records.

I wish you, all and your family a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Airborne All The Way
Dennis Hill, (Secretary)

Service Officer:

Evidence Is Everything with the VA

When making a claim with the VA always keep in mind you must have evidence to support your request. Over and over I hear from angry veterans "they denied my claim." When in reality the vet is at fault for not providing reasonable evidence to support the claim. I spend 90% of my time with veterans working entirely on this essential issue.

Once a veteran submitted a claim to the VA for service connection of PTSD subsequent to having been assaulted by his fellow service members, his claim was denied for several reasons:

There was no medical evidence in the vet's service medical record (that the VA had obtained on his behalf) of ever having been injured. The veteran did not provide any evidence of his own as instructed by his state's Regional Office. A year or two later he submitted new evidence consisting of pages copied from a year book that had individual pictures high-lighted with fluorescent yellow. These pictures were accompanied by a statement from the vet saying these were his fellow service members who had assaulted him and now we had the evidence we needed to give him the favorable decision that he demanded, and I mean demanded. Can you see the weakness in all of this?

At this point you may be thinking each vet is not cookie cut and molded. Thus evidence comes in many forms focused on the needs of each veteran. So what evidence does the VA need?

The basic requirements for evidence that the Veteran's Benefits Administration needs is fairly simple. Something happened on active duty and it is still causing you problems. Now there must be evidence linking your ailment to what happened on active duty. Evidence links both the present and the past.

For issues such as arthritis of the joints it's pretty simple. You were injured in service and now there is traumatic arthritis. You identify to the VA that you were injured playing unit sports, etc. The VA then obtains your service medical records and finds that you were injured playing in a game. Your present doctor gives a history of complaints and diagnosis.

But what about when you get hurt and there are no records because you went to your good buddy the Medic. I have seen many vets get favorable decisions when they submitted good lay statements from people who witnessed the injury, or treated the injury. Former commanders, NCOs, medics, and/or several folks who witnessed the same thing are excellent sources of evidence. People who stand to benefit from any favorable decision are not usually considered good lay witnesses.

How do you locate former members of your unit? There are many easy ways that do not trespass any privacy laws. Go to www.theveteransvoice.com and you will find links to some of my favorite sites for this. Go to your old unit and see if there is any one you remember or who remembers you. Establish contact and see if that person remembers the incident and will write a statement.

Do an internet search for your unit and repeat the above process. Most units do have some sort of reunion functions. Old letters to friends and family carry very valuable credible for proof. I have also seen old newspapers do the trick for a deserving vet.

Sometimes there is no clear link between what you have and what happened in the service. This is when a written opinion of an expert explaining why your disease is linked to Agent Orange

Exposure in Viet Nam: This is just one example, but an expert opinion with a credible explanation usually works for all issues.

Frequently I have seen claims for PTSD denied for lack of a credible stressor event. This is when a lay statement from a former buddy comes in. Another example; a vet was in the artillery and as such would not receive a Combat Infantry Badge. Yet he was in frequent fire fights protecting his firebase. The VA denied his claim for lack of proof of a verifiable stressor such as a combat award. But the vet provided details as to the time he was in the unit that was attacked. He provided time, places, details and the name of key personnel he served under. All of his information was verified through the various methods that VA has and granted him a favorable decision.

In almost all cases when a claim has been denied, it usually is the lack of good strong credible evidence. So that is where you start if you submit an appeal or a notice of disagreement. Plan your evidence carefully.

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Health Care Reform and the Veteran. <http://www.military.com/features/0,15240,206499,00.html?ESRC=marine.nl>

The Brigade has completed deploying from Italy:

[http://www.usag.vicenza.army.mil/sites/commander/History/Dec%2009/17DEC09%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.usag.vicenza.army.mil/sites/commander/History/Dec%2009/17DEC09%20(2).pdf)

There are many ways to support the Troops: Send a card to someone deployed, it's fast and easy.

www.letssaythanks.com

"If everybody is thinking alike, then somebody isn't thinking"

General George S. Patton

We wish you a good door position and safe landing.