TET OFFENSIVE MYTHS DISPelled

RESHAPING LOGISTICS TRAINING
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Cover Photo: Soldiers in combat during the Tet Offensive in Vietnam

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Do you have an opinion concerning one of the stories in this issue? We would like to print your responses in our Letters to the Editor column. Have you researched a topic that is of interest to Infantry Soldiers? Submit it to us as an article for the Infantry Bugler. Do you have personal experiences or valuable lessons learned that would benefit other readers? Let us be your vehicle for delivering those thoughts. Send your submissions to bugler@infantryassn.com.
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From the Chairman

Please note our announcement on page 9 in this Infantry Bugler about teaming with the Association of the United States Army (AUSA). If you are a National Infantry Association (NIA) member, you are now an AUSA member too, unless you opt out. The benefits of being an AUSA member are significant, and I strongly recommend that NIA members take full advantage. The teaming of our associations will make both of us stronger. On the NIA side, we are pushing closer and closer to the important target of 10,000 members, which is a benchmark many companies, corporations and other activities use as a milestone to decide whether or not to support (e.g. The Doughboy Award Dinner) and advertise (e.g. Bugler). So, spread the word to fellow Infantrymen and supporters to join the National Infantry Association and also get a membership in the AUSA. With your help, we can hit the 10,000 target.

In order to join the Army after high school graduation, I needed my parents’ approval to enlist due to being only 17 years of age. That was June 1966 and the Vietnam War was a growing concern to Americans. Five years later, I was commissioned as an Infantry Officer and those five years were very dark ones for the Vietnam War seriously divided the Nation, and to some degree, continues to do so. After 43 years in uniform and eight years retired, I’m like the Farmer’s Insurance advertisement, “I know a thing or two because I’ve seen a thing or two.” One of those is what I call “coming full circle.” For example, when I began my military career, we were training intensively for and fighting a counter-insurgency war. When we put the Vietnam War behind us in the mid-1970s, we focused our attention on a conventional war against a peer enemy army.

Toward the end of my career, I found myself commanding the Multi-National Corps-Iraq and fighting a counter insurgency war. I believe that our Nation is as divided today as we were during the Vietnam War.

Within the cyclic nature of our times, we do have some important constants, one of which is our Nation’s need for dedicated Infantry Soldiers. Missions such as war with a peer enemy, fighting counter-insurgency campaigns, peace keeping, disaster relief and many more, will require dedicated Infantry Soldiers.

The challenges ahead for the Infantry are daunting, to include fighting in an urban terrain of millions of people, only a fraction of whom are our enemy; hunting terrorists across continents; or deploying on short notice to save lives from natural or manmade disasters. Dedicated Infantry Soldiers might also face recruits who don’t have the strength, stamina or values needed for their missions, and only 24/7 leadership will get them ready for those and for combat. Soldiers might also face a public that is not as friendly as it has been since 9/11. What if the nation can’t protect itself via an all-volunteer force and must turn to some type of conscription system? These drastic situations might not be in our future, but we’ll need the best Infantry we can produce to protect our Nation. Infantry Soldiers totally dedicated to their branch, unit, Army and Nation!

From the President

I am again appreciative to be able to recognize our two Official Sponsors of the National Infantry Association, Phantom Products and Defense Products and Services Group (DPSG, USA). I encourage all of our members to reciprocate by supporting them and their products.

Since the last issue, the Maneuver Warfighter Conference, originally scheduled for last September, was postponed due to Hurricane Irma. The conference was held the week of 8 January and the 2017 Doughboy Awards Dinner took place on 9 January. It was a great success with excellent attendance, and I hope that some of you had the opportunity to attend. GEN William Hartzog and CSM Gary Carpenter spoke eloquently and movingly about their experiences as Infantrymen and about what it takes to be one. Mrs. Barbara Carpenter also spoke about her experience as an Infantry wife, and the attendees responded enthusiastically.

Even though the 2017 dinner took place in 2018, the 2018 Doughboy Awards Dinner is tentatively scheduled for the evening of 23 October, during the week of the 2018 Maneuver Warfighter Conference. I don’t know who will be the recipients, but I’m hopeful that you will mark that date on your calendars. The NIA is pleased to be able to support the Chief of Infantry in this endeavor.

The announcement has been made that MG Eric Wesley has been nominated for promotion and assignment to TRADOC as Deputy CG and Director of Futures at Army Capabilities Integration Center. By the time you read this, he may be on his way, and we wish him the very best. Replacing him as CG, MCOE will be a great Infantryman (and NIA member), MG Gary Brito, currently CG at Ft. Polk. We look forward to welcoming him back to Fort Benning and to working with him in the future.

In LTG Metz’ column and later in this issue you will read about the NIA’s affiliation with AUSA. We’re justifiably proud of this, and I believe that this results from an initiative by another great NIA member, GEN Carter Ham, president of AUSA. He mentioned to me an idea similar to this at the 2016 Doughboy Awards Dinner, and all of a sudden, here we are. Many of you will not be old enough, as I am, to remember that in the mid-1950s, the combat arms associations, including the old Infantryman’s Association, realized that while they all did well supporting their branches, there was a need for an organization that would support the whole Army so they gave up their charters to form AUSA. That was a great move for all of us, and now we’re renewing that affiliation. We hope this will also do as well for both associations.

Finally, to our NIA members, again my thanks for your continuing support, especially that of our active chapters that promote the branch and the Association through their activities. As of this writing, our membership has passed the 9,200 mark on its way to our goal of 10,000 and beyond. The brotherhood we share and support comprises America’s best.
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From the Chief of Infantry

Lethality is one of the most critical aspects of the Infantry. The Infantry Soldier’s ultimate mission—to close with and destroy the enemy by fire and maneuver—demands lethality to win this close combat fight. Precision marksmanship is the key to lethality. Our existing qualification standards fail to accurately reflect the basic tactical employment skills, leader commands and the requisite sense of urgency essential during reloading, changing positions or fighting from cover on today’s battlefield.

We must improve our marksmanship training to increase Soldier lethality. The new rifle marksmanship course of fire—still with 40 rounds—includes prone unsupported (10 rounds); prone supported (10 rounds); kneeling supported (10 rounds); and standing supported (10 rounds). These four firing positions more accurately replicate combat conditions. Under fire, they can be readily assumed whenever the Soldier receives enemy contact and finds it necessary to deliver aimed fire on an enemy. Each firing position provides a stable platform and body position that maximizes cover and concealment from enemy fire.

Our new rifle marksmanship training strategy is tied to an improved integrated weapons training strategy that is designed to evolve with technological enhancements but maintains a train-as-we-fight philosophy. The success of this concept is dependent on six principles, broken down into the following six tables:

Table I - Preliminary Marksmanship Instruction and Evaluation: The foundation upon which the Soldier builds the skill sets to sustain him through becoming a successful and proficient marksman. During this phase, his first line leader instructs and tests him on the basic knowledge, skills, tasks and actions that govern the use and employment of his weapon system.

Table II - Pre-Live Fire Simulations (EST/SVT): The Soldier learns basic and advanced engagement techniques in a virtual environment using iron sights and some magnified optics. This includes both CBRN and night fire qualification requirements as well.

Table III – Drills: Hands-on training of critical tactical employment skills required of all Soldiers. This is also used for concurrent training during live fire events.

Table IV – Basic Grouping and Zero: Grouping exercises for the primary optic, built upon the skills trained during previous training events. Zeroing exercise includes confirmation at distance using new zero target.

Table V – Practice: Live fire tactical engagements that include all firing positions, target presentations and sequences that are more difficult than the test.

Table VI – Qualification: Army-standard demonstration of performance of basic tactical employment of the weapon system using the primary optic. The changes to qualification standards replicate a course of fire based on combat criteria and are designed to increase Soldier lethality. Forty target exposures remain constant (thus requiring no additional ammunition resources), but the qualification ratings and target exposures change slightly. The qualification ratings are qualified (23-27); marksman (28-31); sharpshooter (32-35); and expert (36-40).

To increase lethality and test Soldiers’ improved marksmanship skills, target exposures increased from four to six exposures at 250 meters and from four to five exposures at 300 meters. The employment of four firing positions using 4 x 10 round magazines requires Soldiers to identify and conduct three magazine and firing position changes as the qualification table continues to run to better replicate combat conditions. This firing sequence reduces qualification firing times by an average of three to six minutes per iteration over the old qualification course of fire. This saves a significant amount of time for leaders to utilize in their training schedules.

This new and improved Marksmanship training increases Soldier lethality and enhances Soldiers’ ability to fight, win and survive on the battlefield.

Send Us Your News

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Around midnight on 30 January 1968, Vietcong and North Vietnamese Army troops began a massive surprise attack on U.S., South Vietnamese and Allied forces across South Vietnam.

The Tet Offensive, as it came to be known, was actually a three-phase campaign, lasting from 30 January to 28 March, 5 May to 15 June and 17 August to 23 September.

“The event really defined the course of the rest of the [Vietnam] war and how it ended, which was a pretty inglorious ending,” says former Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel. Hagel, who was with the 47th Infantry Regiment in Vietnam during Tet, spoke at the “Vietnam: The Tet Offensive” panel discussion on 25 January at the National Archives.

Then a 21-year-old private first class, Hagel, who had been in country just two months, says his mechanized Infantry unit sustained heavy casualties in the vicinity of Long Binh.

The attack was a complete surprise, he says. What happened in Long Binh was typical of what was happening across the country.

The U.S. had completely underestimated the strength of the North Vietnamese army and Vietcong guerrilla forces from South Vietnam, he says. It came as a shock to the American public and turned public opinion against the war.

One of the myths of Tet, he says, is that it was a big enemy military victory, he added. It wasn’t.

“Our military actually did very well, considering,” he says.

Erik B. Villard, a historian with the U.S. Army Center of Military History and a panelist at the recent National Infantry Museum Leadership Seminar on Vietnam, says there were other myths about Tet, some of which he wrote about in his Center for Military History book, Combat Operations: Staying the Course, October 1967 to September 1968.

One myth, he says, was that the North Vietnamese orchestrated a number of major battles prior to Tet in the autumn of 1967 to draw U.S. forces away from the cities so they would be in a better position to succeed in capturing the urban areas.

The real story is more interesting, he says. The 1967 battles were local and regional campaigns, planned over the spring and summer of that year.

The idea for the Tet Offensive did
not even occur to the enemy at the
time, as their strategic planning process
tended to be short-term and at times
very chaotic, he says.

Also, why would they want to
launch a major battle in November
1967, just months before Tet when full
strength would be needed? There
wouldn't be adequate recovery time, he
says, noting that the National Archives
provided some key documents he used
in his research.

A second myth, Villard says,
was that GEN William
Westmoreland, the
commander of
American forces in
Vietnam, “… was wedded to
this notion of victory
through attrition; that
the way to
succeed was to
kill enough of
the enemy that you
crossed this
imaginary threshold
and you could just kind of
grind your way toward success.

“Westmoreland deserves far more
credit than he's gotten in my view,”
he added.

He was a shrewd person who
understood the value of pacification
and cutting enemy supply lines, as he
was doing in secret operations to cut
the Ho Chi Minh Trail, Villard noted.

A third myth, he says, is that
U.S. military policy changed when
Westmoreland was replaced by GEN
Creighton Williams Abrams Jr. in
June 1968, in the middle of the
Tet Offensive.

Abrams and Westmoreland saw
mostly eye-to-eye on strategy, he says.
The mission continued to be defending
bases and lines of communication, as
well as air interdiction operations and
supporting pacification.

Pacification was a term used at the
time to denote counter-insurgency
operations, which included advise and
assist missions and winning over the
loyalty of the local population.

Policy didn't actually change until
after mid-1969 when Vietnamization
took hold, he says. Vietnamization
consisted of drawing down U.S. forces
and transferring responsibility to the
South Vietnamese forces.

The buildup of forces into 1968
and the draw down a year later had
already been planned on
Westmoreland’s watch, he says.

Merle L. Pribbenow II, an
author specializing in the
Vietnam War, with five
years of service in
Vietnam during
the war as a CIA
operative, says
that a
widespread
myth was that
the
Tet
Offensive was a
well planned
and executed
enemy attack.

That’s
completely false, he
says, referencing documents
and interviews of NVA and VC
commanders after the war.

Many of those generals became
bitter with the way they and their units
were treated by their own military and
political leaders and the high numbers
of casualties that resulted, he says.

“We focus on how we felt Army
commanders screwed up and were
unprepared,” he says. “[The North
Vietnamese] were saying the exact same
things again and again.”

After the war, the Vietnamese did
tactical reviews and battle studies, just
as the U.S. Army did, to learn lessons
and assess strengths and weaknesses,
he noted.

The takeaway from that
assessment, he says, was that the
communists acknowledged that a lot of
the poor decision-making during Tet
resulted from underestimating U.S.
military response, as well as the loyalty
of the South Vietnamese people.

Like the Americans, the
communists also inflated their own
body counts, minimized their failures
and exaggerated their accomplishments,
he says.

The biggest problem, he added, was
that shortcomings were not reported up
the chain of command and authorities
refused to listen to subordinates.

As a result of the assessment, he
says the military leadership of Vietnam
decided on a new approach. From then
on, leaders were instructed to encourage
subordinates to tell the truth, even if it
wasn't something they wanted to hear
or went against their own thinking.

Gregory Daddis, an associate
professor of history and director of
Chapman University’s Master of Arts
program in War and Society, says
another myth was that the U.S. media
was to blame for the lack of political
will after the Tet Offensive.

There’s a tendency, he says, to
find someone to blame when a bad
outcome occurs.

Looking back 50 years ago to the
Tet Offensive gives everyone an
opportunity to gain a better perspective
on everything that took place, he says.

An important takeaway from Tet,
he says, is that sometimes military
action might not be the best tool in all
situations to achieve the desired
political effect.

“It’s become clear that the
sacrifices made by over 56,000 Americans
who lost their lives and hundreds of thousands
of individuals who were wounded, and
all who served, were never really given
much recognition for an assignment
they didn’t choose. But they served and
they served honorably, and did what
their country asked them to do. And I
think that’s a part of this story that
needs to be told more often.”

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News Service. ★
The 2017 Doughboy Awards were scheduled to be presented on 12 September 2017; however, Hurricane Irma decided to visit the Columbus-Fort Benning area at that time, forcing cancellation of the scheduled Maneuver Warfighter Conference and Doughboy Awards Dinner. The conference was rescheduled for the week of 8 January 2018, and thus the dinner occurred on 9 January at the National Infantry Museum and Soldier Center.

The dinner was preceded by a reception with music from a combo from the MGCoE Band and the event was very successful, with more than 260 people in attendance. BG Peter Jones, who had been the Chief of Infantry when the awardees were selected but since retired from active duty, was able to attend as the new president of the National Infantry Museum Foundation. BG Christopher T. Donahue, the 57th Chief of Infantry, was assisted by CSM Martin Celestine in presenting the Doughboy Awards to GEN (Ret) William Hartzog and CSM (Ret) Gary Carpenter.

President/CEO of the NIA LTG (Ret) Tom Metz presented the special Doughboy Order of St. Maurice in presenting the Doughboy Awards to GEN (Ret) William Hartzog and CSM (Ret) Gary Carpenter. He also presented the Shield of Sparta—Heroine of Infantry—awards to Roberta Hartzog and Barbara Carpenter. Mrs. Hartzog had originally been presented Shield of Sparta number 29 in 1998—one of the first—so this award was a representation of that original award.

The NIA greatly appreciates the support of the following sponsors who made this great event possible. The 2018 Doughboy Awards Dinner is tentatively scheduled for 23 October.

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This new offer gives you additional member benefits, such as a digital subscription to AUSA’s professional development publications like ARMY Magazine and AUSA News. The full range of AUSA member benefits is on their website at www.ausa.org/benefits-services. If you are already a member of AUSA, this membership will be in addition to and not change your current AUSA membership. AUSA, like NIA, respects the privacy of its members and will not share contact information with anyone outside of the Association.

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Protecting the Arm that Powers the Fist

Reshaping the Way We Train Logistics

Throughout history, powerful militaries have either learned to master logistics or have withered without it. Keen military strategists, such as Julius Caesar and Genghis Khan, recognized that if they cut off the supply lines (inappropriately labeled the tail, but more properly the arm), they could simply wait for the enemy to weaken or grind to a halt as flow of logistics trickled and stopped. As the Army shifts its training focus from fighting counter-insurgency to combating a hybrid threat, it is increasingly important to address how the Army’s logistics infrastructure, security and training support the continued combat forces.

Questions for the Future Fight

During World War I and World War II, U.S. forces had advance warning and a period of protection from Allied forces in which to mobilize. Production facilities had years to ramp up the war effort. As the wars progressed, the relative isolation of the United States kept its manufacturing resources safe, however, this may not be the case in the next major conflict. How long will U.S. stockpiles of materiel last? Are the Nation’s logistics assets ready to provide continual support across the world?

Current operational logistics training includes abundant supply that is usually within proximity and is provided with little regard to time, distance, priorities, repair or
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This raises the following questions: Can combat leaders function with limited supply? When was the last time they did? Are U.S. forces conditioned to expect bottomless supply? Protecting the supply lines is important in sustained conflicts. No amount of combat power can win a battle while it waits for fuel and ammunition.

**Current Training**
The current Army training structure focuses on preparing the combat arms branches for conflict anywhere in the world. The first-class training facilities and personnel at the National Training Center (NTC) in California, the Joint Readiness Training Center in Louisiana and the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Germany do an excellent job of preparing forces for combat. However, they fail to stress logistics infrastructure or to teach vital lessons in resource management and expectations. While there are challenges, there are no true limits on available supply; no consequences exist for losing supplies during enemy action; and support moves over hours, not days.

I propose that because our logistics system is so reliable, some combat leaders dismiss proper logistics planning and have not experienced the effects of limited or lost supply. It is vital to stretch current logistics capabilities and allow limited disruption of the supply chain in order to reinforce proper contingency planning and resource management.

**Training for Distance**
Logistics systems and units are designed to move supplies over the long distances that contingency operations will likely present, yet the Army trains with logistics in proximity. During training, even long haul transportation assets drive just a few miles to resupply the sustainment brigade’s combat sustainment support battalion (CSSB) or the brigade combat team’s (BCT) brigade support battalion. This availability diminishes the need for correct tracking and reporting because resupply is never far away. What happens when the CSSB is located 100 miles from the front lines and has to support several BCTs?

There is not a perfect solution, but it would add training value for both the logistics unit and their customers to push the CSSB and higher echelons of support from much farther away. At NTC, the CSSB could be placed at Twentynine Palms Marine Corps Base, or for JRTC, locating the CSSB at Barksdale Air Force Base would create distances of around 150 miles. The extended distances would benefit both the supporting and supported units because it would ensure each forecasts and validates requirements prior to logistics convoys. It would also allow convoy commanders to gain experience with complex, long-distance moves.

**Supply**
It is hard to imagine having a lack of fuel, ammunition or parts. From my experience as forward support company (FSC) commander in a cavalry squadron, the FSC did its best to provide as many supplies as

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possible. The logistics status reports sent from the supported companies were not accurate, but it did not matter that much. The FSC pushed fuel and food daily and mission-configured loads of ammunition any time there was a firefight. The FSC’s Soldiers took a lot of pride in not allowing logistics to be the point of failure. However, this is not realistic and does not teach the supported company executive officers how or why to track their internal supplies, especially fuel.

There is value in limiting available supplies. For instance, given a constrained amount of fuel and ammunition, what units have priority for the next mission? How much fuel is held in reserve? I would wager that in this scenario the senior commanders would pay more attention to logistics movements, distribution and sustainment rehearsals, which in turn would result in more well-rounded leaders.

The Consequences of Loss
Perhaps the most important element missing in training logistics is the consequences of loss. Too often, logistics assets are soft targets with limited radio or battlefield tracking systems. Units are frequently left to defend their own convoys even though they do not have the equipment or personnel to do so. Vehicles are retrofitted with radio mounts and machine-gun ring mounts, but security has not been made a priority. The combat battalions resist losing forward assets to defend supply routes and convoys. Logistics units are most often left to defend themselves and, for the most part, do a fine job of executing missions. However, they are also left relatively undisturbed during combat training center rotations. There may be an improvised explosive device here or there (or maybe some small-arms fire or civilians blocking the road), but the supplies never stop.

If a convoy is attacked and the observer-coach-trainer assesses that one fuel truck and one palletized load system carrying meals ready-to-eat (MREs) have been destroyed, then why allow the resupply to continue to its destination?

If that destruction were reality, then the logistics planners such as the FSC leadership, battalion S4s, and the brigade support battalion support operations officer would have to work together to develop an integrated resupply plan. They would have to put thought into alternate routes, various start point times and asset management. The logistics and combat elements would have to fully develop primary and tertiary plans, mitigate risks and provide cohesive support rather than each element narrowly focusing on its supported battalion. No Soldiers would starve, but they may have to eat two MREs that day instead of three. The loss of fuel might require tanks to turn off instead of idling all day or scouts to use high mobility multipurpose vehicles (HMMWVs) instead of Bradley Fighting Vehicles for a reconnaissance mission. Interrupting supply chains will not stop the combat missions, but it will broaden the scope for the commanders and staff officers taking part.

In the Maneuver Center of Excellence’s latest Army Functional Concept for Movement and Maneuver (AFC-M&M), it describes a future in which the BCT will operate semi-independently at a high operations tempo for periods up to seven days over extended lines with reduced reliance on echelons above brigade support. In order for the Army to enable the freedom of maneuver described in the AFC-M&M, commanders and staffs must think through all the problems, not just the combat one. There is truth to the military adage “amateurs talk tactics, while professionals talk logistics,” but we continue to ignore the potential weaknesses in our support structure.

In the current structured training scenarios, the supply flow is not touched for fear that it will interrupt the combat training. Disruption is exactly what will happen, but when properly administered, it will have positive training value for both logistics and combat leaders. History implores us to train, build and protect the tail of the tiger as much as we do the teeth, and it is imperative that we do not wait. While both offensive and defensive tactics and technology perpetually seek to counter one another, logistics remains the true linchpin in victory or defeat.

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CPT Travis Michelena

CPT Travis Michelena is a senior observer-coach-trainer and the S3 for the 1-351st Brigade Support Battalion, 181st Infantry Brigade, at Fort McCoy, WI. He is currently completing his master’s degree in emergency management through Arizona State University.
Pete Jones Leads National Infantry Museum Foundation

The Infantry’s grip on BG Pete Jones is as tight as ever, despite his recent retirement from the U.S. Army. He’s an active board member for a defense contracting company, he consults the Army on his area of expertise—Russian New Generation Warfare—and he’s the new President and Chief Operating Officer of the National Infantry Museum Foundation.

A third generation Infantryman with 32 years in the Army, Jones had no trouble deciding what to do after his Army service. “I knew I wanted a second career—I have two kids to put through college—but more importantly, I knew I wanted to stay tied to the Army,” he says. “I also knew that my family wanted to make Columbus our home.”

So, when his former battalion commander and mentor, COL (Ret) Greg Camp, retired from his second career at the National Infantry Museum, the stars were aligned. Jones moved into the corner office of his new non-profit world on 12 January 2018.

“I think the kicker was the Global War on Terrorism memorial dedication,” he recalled. “The way this staff, this museum, the leadership of Greg Camp and Ben Williams pulled that together with GEN Abizaid to make a living, breathing monument to service and sacrifice, and then have a great event to kick it off, just reinforced that this is the type of team I want to join and work with.”

Jones’ last Army job was as Chief of Infantry and Commandant of the U.S. Army Infantry School. The leadership skills he learned there and in previous commands will serve him well in managing a non-profit organization. And he believes his command of “Army-speak” will position him as an effective bridge between the military and civilian communities the museum serves.

But he acknowledges there’ll be challenges, too, like learning the relationships that the museum has developed over the years, building new ones and finding his place in the community. He says he’ll rely on his predecessors, who have remained actively attached to the museum. “While I know nothing about running a museum, I do know that given the level of support of the staff and the former presidents that are here, along with NIA and National Infantry Museum Foundation Chairman and CEO, LTG (Ret) Tom Metz’s leadership, I’ll always have a lifeline,” Jones says. “The institutional knowledge that built this place from the ground up is not running out the door. Everyone is still very much tied to the accomplishments that will happen next.”

After stints at the Pentagon as Executive Officer to the Secretary of the Army and at Fort Stewart, Georgia, as Deputy Commanding General of the 3rd Infantry, Jones took his last position as 56th Chief of Infantry in 2015. There, he made sure every one of the trainees he was responsible for visited the museum to learn more about the brotherhood they were joining.

“No many commandants get to say they have the No. 1 museum in the United States. It’s a phenomenal place. I took a lot of pride in it then, and I, obviously, take even more pride in it now.”

Jones says his mission at the museum is to look five to 10 years down the road, both to ensure the museum’s ongoing financial solvency and to continuously enhance the visitor’s experience.

“Honoring Soldiers and their families is the core competency that will never change. What may change is how we do that,” he says.

He’ll look at creative ways to leverage the world-class facility and at providing new services and programs for military families, veterans and civilians. He’ll work to keep the galleries current, both with the stories they tell and the way they’re told. An example would be adding new technology to give visitors their own virtual docent.

Jones believes success—whether on the battlefield or in the museum—always comes down to one thing. “The mission cannot be accomplished without the people. It is a combination of the staff, the volunteers, the community and the Maneuver Center of Excellence coming together that makes this museum a success.”
The 50th anniversary of the Tet Offensive is a good time to take a look at a Medal of Honor recipient who was given the award for his heroism during the Vietnam War.

Drew Dennis Dix was born 14 December 1944 in West Point, New York, but he grew up in Pueblo, Colorado. Like his father, he joined the Army at age 18 in hopes of joining Special Forces. But because of his young age, he would have to wait three years before being accepted into the elite corps. In the interim, he served in the 82nd Airborne Division’s Operation Power Pack in the Dominican Republic.

By 1968, Dix had been promoted to staff sergeant, assigned as a military adviser to the Army of the Republic of Vietnam in Chau Phu, South Vietnam, near the Cambodian border. On 31 January 1968, Viet Cong forces attacked Chau Phu in the first days of the Tet Offensive. Throughout that day and the next, Dix led groups of local fighters in rescuing endangered civilians and driving Viet Cong forces out of buildings in the city.

For these actions, Dix was awarded the Medal of Honor by President Lyndon B. Johnson at a White House ceremony in January 1969. He became the first enlisted member of Special Forces to be awarded the Medal of Honor. His citation reads:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. SSG Dix distinguished himself by exceptional heroism while serving as a unit adviser. Two heavily armed Viet Cong battalions attacked the province capital city of Chau Phu resulting in the complete breakdown and fragmentation of the defenses of the city. SSG Dix with a patrol of Vietnamese soldiers was recalled to assist in defense of Chau Phu. Learning that a nurse was trapped in a house near the center of the city, SSG Dix organized a relief force, successfully rescued the nurse, and returned her to the safety of the Tactical Operations Center. Being informed of other trapped civilians within the city, SSG Dix voluntarily led another force to rescue eight civilian employees located in a building which was under heavy mortar and small-arms fire. SSG Dix then returned to the center of the city. Upon approaching a building, he was subjected to intense automatic rifle and machine-gun fire from an unknown number of Viet Cong. He personally assaulted the building, killing six Viet Cong, and rescuing two Filipinos. The following day SSG Dix, still on his own volition, assembled a 20-man force and though under intense enemy fire cleared the Viet Cong out of the hotel, theater, and other adjacent buildings within the city. During this portion of the attack, Army of the Republic of Vietnam soldiers inspired by the heroism and success of SSG Dix, rallied and commenced firing upon the Viet Cong. SSG Dix captured 20 prisoners, including a high-ranking Viet Cong official. He then attacked enemy troops who had entered the residence of the Deputy Province Chief and was successful in rescuing the official’s wife and children. SSG Dix’s personal heroic actions resulted in 14 confirmed Viet Cong killed in action and possibly 25 more, the capture of 20 prisoners, 15 weapons, and the rescue of the 14 United States and free-world civilians. The heroism of SSG Dix was in the highest tradition and reflects great credit upon the U.S. Army.

Dix later received a direct commission to second lieutenant, eventually retiring as a major after 20 years of service. His last duty assignment was Executive Officer of the 4th Battalion 9th Infantry, 172nd Infantry Brigade (Separate), Fort Wainwright, Alaska, (1981-1982). After leaving the Army, he worked as a security consultant, ran an air service in Alaska and served as Alaska’s deputy commissioner for homeland security.

In 2000, he wrote a memoir about the fight for Chau Phu entitled, “The Rescue of River City” and he has made numerous public speaking engagements. In 2010, Dix co-founded the Center for American Values in Pueblo, Colorado. Dix’s vision for the center is to be a source for future generations to learn and explore how doing the right thing for family, community and country will keep America great. A city of just 110,000, Pueblo is the hometown of four Medal of Honor recipients, including William J. Crawford, Raymond G. Murphy, Carl L. Sitter and Dix.

Dix currently resides in Mimbres, New Mexico.
On 2 February 2018 in Eisenhower Hall, the West Point NIA Chapter hosted its annual Infantry Ball. Representing the NIA was LTC (Ret) McDonald Plummer, USMA ’70 and member of the NIA board of directors. Guest of honor was MG (Ret) Peter J. Boylan, who during his active duty career, served two tours in Vietnam, participated in the invasion of Grenada with the 82nd Airborne Division, commanded the 10th Mountain Division and served as an assistant professor of mechanical engineering at the Military Academy. Among other activities at the ball were the traditional Grog Ceremony, a silent auction and presentation of Order of St. Maurice and Shield of Sparta awards.
On 2 December 2017 during the 175th Infantry’s Annual Pass In Review, the following members of the Regimental Association and 1-175th Battalion received the Order of Saint Maurice for their dedication to the Infantry: (left to right) BG (Ret) Thomas Johnson, BG Sean Casey, SFC Michael Cole and MAJ (Ret) Paul Gump.

On 23 February 2018, St. Mark Chapter President SFC Michael Atchison awarded SSG Scott Dario (left) the Order of St. Maurice, (Legionnaire) at a chapter dinner in Villa Bassana, Italy.

On 2 December 2017 at the annual 278th ACR Cavalry Ball in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, Ashleigh Lee was presented the Shield of Sparta Award. On hand for the presentation were, (left to right), Adjutant General of Tennessee MG Terry M. “Max” Haston and his wife Anne, Ashleigh Lee and her husband SGM Bobby E. Lee Jr.

On 18 September 2017, SFC Christopher Taffoya, the Platoon Sergeant of Caisson Platoon was presented the Order of Saint Maurice Centurion level by LTC Jody Shouse. The ceremony took place in true Caisson fashion on horseback at Summerall Field by Black Jack’s grave.

Damaris Schuler was recently presented the Shield of Sparta award. Pictured with her are, (left to right), LTC Chuck Slagle, SSG Justin Myers, SFC Jeffrey Williams and Cain Schuler. The ceremony was at Fort Jackson, 3-39 Infantry Battalion, 165th Infantry Brigade.
On 12 November 2017, the 65th Infantry Honor Task Force presented veterans from the 65th Infantry Regiment of Puerto Rico the Order of St. Maurice Medal. Included among the recipients was the late SFC Pedro J. Vanga-Escobar, whose award was accepted by three generations of his family. Back Row: SGT Michele Iris Olson, U.S. Army; Anthony Melé, chairman 65th Infantry Honor Task Force; Pedro Vanga Jr, Vietnam veteran U.S. Army; Jorge Luis Vanga, Vietnam veteran U.S. Army; Front Row: Elba Iris Vanga and Lourdes Vanga.

On 23 February 2018, Past President of the St. Mark chapter SGM (Ret) Frank Lauer awarded SSG Steven Thompson the Order of St. Maurice, (Legionnaire) at a chapter dinner in Villa Bassana, Italy.

On 27 Jan 2018 at Operating Base Fenty in Afghanistan, LTC James Uptgraft and CSM Joseph Hissong presented the Order of St. Maurice to 1SG Adam McMurray, (right), shown here with CPT John S. Tilley, the Company Commander for D Co 1-502 IN (ABN).

On 02 Feb 2018, April D. Houten was presented the Shield of Sparta during a ceremony with the New Hampshire National Guard. She is pictured with her husband CSM (Ret) Stephen Houten.

On 11 January 2018, COL (Ret) H.T. Fincher received the Order of St. Maurice from BG (Ret) Mick Zais—a fellow Infantry officer and Fincher’s son-in-law. The award was presented at the American Legion in Chapin, South Carolina.
On 02 December 2017, two Order of St. Maurice presentations were made in Vicenza, Italy. (Left) SFC Michael Atchison presents to SSG Andrew Hopkins and (right) SFC Matthew Staaf presents to SSG Benjamin Lake.

On 23 February 2018, SSG Benjamin Lake awarded SGT (P) Nathan Depretis the Order of St. Maurice, (Legionnaire) at a chapter social in Vicenza, Italy.

On 02 February 2018, LTC Eric B. Hogancamp, pictured with BG Shawn M. O’Brien, was presented the Order of St. Maurice, Centurion, during a ceremony with the New Hampshire National Guard.

On 22 February 2018, 1SG Antonio Paparelli presented the Order of St. Maurice (Legionnaire) to SFC Michael Duvall of the St. Mark chapter.

On 18 November 2017 at the 111th Infantry 61st Regimental Mess, Plymouth Meeting, Pennsylvania, BG (Ret) Jerry Beck presented the Centurion Order of St. Maurice to SGM (Ret) Roman Tymczyszyn.

On 4 November 2017, SPS Bob Spangler was presented the Order of St. Maurice during a tribute celebration at Veterans Plaza in Longview, Texas.
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