



# BEHIND THE LINES

GrahamVets Post #1 Quarterly Newsletter  
G.C.C. 12078 Illinios Route 185, Hillsboro, IL 62049

## Summer/Autumn 2017



### Decorated Iraq War Veterans Visit Graham

Written by: Kevin Barrington (USAF)

In late July of 2017, Graham C.C. Warden Craig Foster called a special meeting of Graham's incarcerated veteran's organization, *GrahamVets*. At this meeting he introduced two very inspiring special guests, Colonel Patrick J. Malay, USMC (Ret.) and Sergeant Major Robert Buda, USMC (Ret.).

Col. Malay was born and raised near Buffalo, New York. He enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps in May 1981 and earned a commission as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in 1984.

In June of 2003, Col. Malay assumed command of 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 5<sup>th</sup> Marines, 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division, completing two deployments to Iraq, including extensive combat operations during 'Operation Phantom Fury', also known as the 'Battle of Fallujah'. Col. Malay is a highly decorated *Mustanger*, whose numerous personal awards include the Bronze Star with a 'V' for Valor, a Purple Heart, and a Combat Action Ribbon.

It was clear to all present that they were in for an experience when Warden Foster introduced the Col. and Sgt. Maj., and Col. Malay immediately moved the podium and microphone, pulled up a chair. Then sitting, he pulled out a notebook and pen saying, "It really troubles me that so many of my good Marines are getting into trouble after coming home. I'd like to ask you to help me to understand so that I can help them." His demeanor and sincerity immediately abated any tension lingering in the air, setting everyone at ease.

After thanking all the veterans present for their service, Col. Malay shared many of his experiences from his service. He then showed great interest and concern for the lives of incarcerated veterans. He expressed a deep desire to keep current and future veterans from becoming incarcerated.

It is important to note that this is the first time, in the recollection of any current member of GrahamVets, that a guest speaker held a Q & A session where the speaker asked the questions and the audience responded with answers. Many of the questions that Col. Malay asked were incredibly thought provoking, as were the responses that they inspired.

Many of the veterans present wished to express their feelings on the Col. and Sgt. Maj.'s visit, here are a few:

"I learned that there are people in the free world who care and have compassion for us [incarcerated veterans]. The Colonel is very dedicated to helping not only his men, but anyone struggling to cope with their own life" - Jeff Kenedy USAF

"The Colonel was a very respectful person and showed that he was here for the right reasons. I learned a lot about the 'Battle for Fullujah'. I've been *locked-up* for a long time and didn't know much about it." - Art Garrison USA

"I believe that it was very helpful. I say that because all of the GrahamVets gave great input and a few shared personal insights on dealing with veteran issues. I believe that if the Colonel utilizes the information provided, he will be a great asset for veterans leaving the service." - Nate Johnson USA

#### GRAHAMVETS

Wishes to express their gratitude to the  
**Macoupin Baptist Association Carlinville, Illinois**  
For their assistance in the publication of this  
newsletter....Thank You!!

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## 'Veterans Visit' cont.

"It was a great meeting, I really like that he took information from us to help other veterans from coming to prison. He reminded us all that we are still **Men of Honor**". - Jeremy Baker USA

The incarcerated veterans in attendance, GrahamVets all, lived up to the GrahamVet Creed. It is safe to say that Sgt. Maj. Buda expressed this best when he said, "I can see in your eyes as I look around, the attentiveness, respect, and dedication. I know you are serious about your veteran's status"

As a final note, I like to think that I speak for all the GrahamVets when I say, "Thank you Warden Foster for your inspiration and generosity in facilitating this visit by Colonel Malay and Sgt. Maj. Buda, we are much the richer for the experience."

## September 11<sup>th</sup>.....

Written by: Scott Prince (USMC)

For Americans, this day brings about the painful memories of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City in 2001. While it is good that we, as Americans, remember that tragic day, it is also important to move forward and not allow our past tragedies to dictate our future.

One year ago, on September 11, 2016, the incarcerated veterans of Graham Correctional Center, GrahamVets, began to service a flag pole within the institution. This pole, and the subsequent veterans memorial that surrounds it was the result of a years worth of hard work by the GrahamVets Coordinators and the GrahamVets membership.

All of the materials, and/or funds for materials were donated by the incarcerated veterans themselves, the Marine Corps League, VFW, a local building supply company and *outside* individual contributors. The labor was provided by the GCC Maintenance and Grounds departments.

It is noteworthy that the pole is serviced twice daily, once in the morning for the raising of the *Colors*, and once in the evening for the lowering of the *Colors*. While a light could have been placed at the site, negating the need for daily servicing, it was decided that this would not be done, as a daily *Colors* detail would better serve as the means for incarcerated veterans to re-build their sense of honor

and dedication; it would serve to re-ignite patriotism and community responsibility.

Since its beginning in 2016, the men of Grahamvets, dedicated veterans one and all, have served diligently in rain, sleet and snow. Through excessive heat and humidity. Through the 'cat calls' and criticism of non-veterans. Always standing tall and proud, always seeking to honor this great nation and its symbol, 'Old Glory'.

## 'Veteran's Day' 2017

Written by: Scott Prince (USMC)

This year marks the twenty-seventh '*Veteran's Day*' celebrated by the GrahamVets here at Graham Correctional Center. The very first was held in December of 1990, in which less than twenty veterans participated. In the following year GrahamVets grew and became an established inmate organization within IDOC. This first Veteran's Day celebration also marked the first meeting of GrahamVets.

Since that day, GrahamVets has grown, not just in membership, but in maturity as well. Last year, the celebration entailed an outdoor ceremony with GrahamVets founder, Mel Durbin being the guest of honor. It was a memorable day for all to say the least.

This year, a different tack was taken. With so much work going towards the GrahamVets becoming an officially supported program within IDOC, the Veteran's Day celebration was one of minimal pomp and ceremony.

As tradition dictates, the celebration began with posting of the *Colors*, accompanied by the membership singing '*My Country Tis' of Thee*'. Immediately following was the singing of the '*National Anthem*', the recitation of the '*Pledge of Allegiance*' and the '*GrahamVets Creed*'.

GrahamVets Commander, Dave Linley addressed the membership welcoming everyone and thanking all for their service to our great nation. Soon after, GrahamVets Assistant Coordinator Webb Cunningham, the *Skipper*, to everyone's amazement, made a brief statement, also welcoming everyone to the 2017 Veteran's Day celebration.

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## 'Veteran's Day' cont.

With little fanfare leading up to it, lunch was served and with good cheer and ample food, everyone present enjoyed fellowship and friendship. A special thank you is due to Mr. Qualls, the kitchen staff and workers for their excellent provisions and the courtesy offered on this day.

With the meal cleanup finished, the customary readings were made, followed by the annual sing-along. It was to the astonishment of all that our Air Force brethren stepped-up to the friendly taunts of the other branches and sang with a gusto, doing all their fellow Airmen, past and present proud.

After a period of fellowship, the meeting adjourned and another Veteran's Day passed. All in all, it was a great day for the members to have a brief respite from the everyday drudgery that comes with incarceration. Now, moving forward into a new year, we look to the future with all of the potential that it holds for us. May we be blessed with good fortune, peace, and brotherhood.

## Those That Serve...

Written by: Kevin Barrington (USAF)

As inmates at Graham C.C., we often find ourselves complaining about any number of current issues that may be plaguing us. But, as veterans and men of honor, we recognize those that have served and are yet serving our country and local communities. Some in the military, some by other means.

It is the goal of this column to, now and in the future, highlight the various members of Graham C.C. Staff who have served and continue to serve their nation, state, and/or community with distinction and professionalism.

Today, we will highlight Mr. R. Barra, most of us know him simply as the "Dentist". Dr Barra D.M.D. and his staff are responsible for extremely important and needed dental care. All of the patients spoken to have stated that the dental work done by Dr. Barra is excellent. Dr. Barra and his staff treat all of their patients with respect and dignity. It is always an encouraging experience and you receive the best possible treatment permitted within the IDOC.

Mr. R. Barra became *Doctor R. Barra* after eight years of college. The first four years were at the University of Illinois Champaign, then another four years of dental school at Southern Illinois University.

After graduation Dr. Barra opened his own private practice in Belleville, Illinois, building a successful business. He kept this practice open for nineteen years. That is, until he grew tired running the office and constantly feeling like he was taking his work home with him. In his own words he said that he was "getting burned out". So, he decided to instead go to work for the IDOC. Sixteen years and thousands of patients later, Dr. Barra is still here, working hard to provide the best dental care possible.

Now, at this point you have to ask yourself; now that Dr. Barra doesn't have to run an office and end up taking his work home, what does he do with all of his spare time? As it turns out, Dr. Barra's hobbies have become prominent in his life, some of which are weight lifting and running. So, while you can always get tips on brushing, you may want to try and get a few tips on bench press techniques, or maybe running routines.

In closing, you should remember that the next time you see Dr. Barra, the Dentist, be sure to thank him for his continued service to us and the community.

## Musings From The Inside...

Written By: W. David Linley (USMC)

### Whom Do You Serve????

Graduating after twelve grueling weeks of Marine Corps Basic Training was a significant milestone in my life. While it was one of the toughest mental and physical tests for me, I noticed that for many of my fellow Recruits it was merely a minor challenge. They were built for being Marines while I had to work for it...of course, I was also only 17-years old at the time.

It wasn't until I was 19-years old on active duty and deployed overseas that I began to 'feel' like I had reached a level of professionalism, experience, and strength. It was when I began to see how others responded to me that I began to truly know that I

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## 'Musings' cont.

was a U.S. Marine. This memory shows me, convinces me that our maturity in any area of skill or profession requires time, focus, and effort.

GrahamVets provides an opportunity for us all to serve ourselves and our fellow veterans once again. Maybe at a time and place where we are more prepared, more mature, more willing to do something that will make a difference.

Every veteran that we can help to navigate through incarceration and become a healthy, disciplined, law-abiding citizen is a service to our nation. Each program that is developed and implemented that helps incarcerated veterans to become stable, productive, and self-confident, thereby rekindling hope, is a service to our nation.

Often, incarcerated veterans are heard in prison saying things like, "I only served a few months..." or "in a reserve unit..." or "I never went overseas...". The fact is we all did serve our nation, starting the moment we took the oath, "...to defend this Nation against all enemies...". Just as the millions of veterans before us, we know that veterans gain and lose favor by our combined effort to help one another. We march, we salute, we have fellowship and raise the *Colors* daily in tribute to our fallen brothers that are no longer able to do so. They gave the ultimate price of life so we could live in freedom. Only you can choose how and whom to serve.....and you can start today.

## 'More' Musings From The Inside...

Written by: Scott Prince (USMC)

It seems that there is a recurring concept in this issue of *Behind the Lines*, that being of course 'Service'. With all that has occurred over the last couple of years in respect to GrahamVets, *service* has become an integral part of what we are, what we believe, and what we practice. It has become something that defines us.

Soon, in January, the GrahamVets will be holding the annual election for its incarcerated veteran Officers. These men, elected by the general membership, are the individuals that must step up and serve their fellow veterans and GrahamVets by taking up positions of leadership.

It is these men that must work, not just to continue the endeavors already underway, but to pursue and expand into new territories, always looking towards a better future for incarcerated veterans.

Service comes in many forms. Some seek to serve by providing fellowship and emotional support to their fellow veterans. Others serve repeatedly on the *Colors* detail. A few serve as Officers within Grahamvets. Regardless of how we serve, we all do serve.

That being said, the upcoming elections provide an opportunity. Many individuals within the GrahamVets have expressed their interest in running for an officers position. Well, the time is here, stand tall, and give your speech. When the votes are counted and you are sworn in as an officer, be prepared, because service is what you will be called upon to give.

## I.V.T.P. Comes to Graham

Written by: Dean Spetnagel (USAF)

It was at a GrahamVet meeting in July, attended by Warden Foster and Asst. Warden Coke, that GrahamVets hosted two veteran representatives from the Illinois Department of Employment Security (I.D.E.S.), Mr. Jorge "Eric" Bermudez and Mr. John Otey.

Mr. Bermudez and Mr. Otey spoke to the GrahamVets about the *Incarcerated Veterans Transition Program* (I.V.T.P.). After explaining the program, they graciously agreed to have the I.V.T.P. instructors return and present the workshops to those incarcerated veterans with less than 24-months to serve until their MSR.

In keeping to their word, Mr. John Stewart and Mr. William "Lee" Russell, I.V.T.P. instructors, returned in September, and over the course of 2-days presented the first three workshops of the I.V.T. Program. In November, Mr. Russell again returned to present the fourth workshop, thus completing the program for 2017. Both professionals dedicated to their jobs, Mr. Russell and Mr. Stewart covered every aspect of their material, sharing an enormous amount of information in the time available.

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I.V.T.P. cont.

The first day of the program, twenty-four incarcerated veterans were in attendance, all showing great enthusiasm and a desire to soak up as much information as possible, learning all they could to help prepare for their approaching release dates.

There was a great deal of much needed, highly valuable information relayed. Although some material covered was necessarily of a more routine, pedestrian nature, it served as an indispensable review to many of the attendees.

In the first workshop, Mr. Russell and Mr. Stewart covered personal evaluations, used to help prepare for presenting oneself in the best possible way while job hunting. Some of the related subjects to this were 'how to deal with stress' and 'knowing your hard and soft skills'. Also discussed were 'transferable skills', those from previous experiences and also military service. It became apparent that looking for a job, *is in-itself* a fulltime job.

Information on various programs available to veterans transitioning back to society was presented. The instructors spoke about the incentives for employers hiring both veterans and recently released 'Justice Involved', more commonly known as 'Ex-Cons'; programs such as the Transitional Assistance Program (T.A.P.) and VETBIZZ.com were mentioned as available online resources. Also discussed was the 'Workforce Investment Opportunity Act', which provides federal funds for training, as also does the 'Illinois Veteran Grant', available at various colleges to qualified veterans.

Sadly, on the second day, a number of veterans chose not to attend. However, Mr. Russell and Mr. Stewart were just as enthusiastic as before, quickly getting down to business with the workshop covering résumé and cover letter writing, and filling out applications.

Of particular note, it was relayed that under the 'Patriot Act', it is a federal crime to provide false information on an application, résumé, or in a cover letter. So, answer **all** questions as openly as possible and write a letter of clarification to play-up your strengths and positive accomplishments, down-playing your criminal background and incarceration.

The workshop also discussed the four different types of résumés. An emphasis was placed

on being prepared with all of your personal information, work history, schooling, military experience, etc... It was pointed out that the résumé is the key to getting an interview. So taking your time and doing it right could make all the difference. On the other hand, presenting a poorly done résumé will definitely get you eliminated from being considered for employment.

The third day, held in Mid-November, got off to a late start due to an institutional security check. Mr. Russell was the lone instructor for this workshop. Regardless of the late start, he did a wonderful job of presenting information on interviewing. Unfortunately, due to the time constraints, he was unable to finish the entire presentation. It was also disappointing to see only fourteen attendees present.

Overall, the I.V.T. Program was an unquestionable success. The recognition by the I.D.E.S. of our need for transitional programs accompanied by the commitment of the vet-rep instructors, Mr. Russell and Mr. Stewart, is a huge step for the Graham Vets. The I.D.E.S. will return in January to present the first workshop again. It is planned that they will present one workshop each quarter of the year. Everyone meeting the requirements are encouraged to attend, you are guaranteed to learn a substantial amount that will help you prepare for your future.

## The Holidays Are Soon Upon Us...



"Sir, he's got a list of names and a suspicious-looking bag."

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## On Nutrition...

Written by: Eric Johnson (USA)

Fundamentally, the most important aspect to health is what we put into our bodies, what it is that we consume as food. Nutrition is the foundation to good health, you cannot build anything strong without a solid foundation.

Our bodies are comprised of trillions of cells. Those cells have requirements to function at their optimal levels; food, energy, vitamins, minerals and nutrients. Without these things the cells begin to die.

When we take the initial steps toward better health and nutrition, the first thing to learn is to be mindful of sugar. Sugar is one of the leading contributors of poor health, particularly inflammation.

90% of illness' in conventional medicine have ties to inflammation. The key to inflammation is control of blood-sugar. Therefore, an initial step is to determine your sugar intake. Once you compute just how much sugar you consume, you can start to reduce your consumption, beginning your journey towards better health.

It is important to remember that all foods except dietary fat and protein (i.e. carbohydrates) are converted by the body into fuel (glucose). Excess fuel (glucose) is stored as glycogen, primarily in the liver. When the liver reaches capacity, the excess is then converted and stored as fat. When we limit our sugar/carb intake the body is forced to use its stored fuel...its fat.

Good health is the result of proper nutrition and exercise. Let this short discussion on sugar be a reminder of that, and remember...every journey begins with the first step, let this be yours toward better health.



### Projected 2018 Meeting Dates

January 4	January 18
February 1	February 15
March 1	March 15
April 5	April 19
May 3	May 17
June 7	June 21
July 5	July 19
August 2	August 16
September 6	September 20
October 4	October 18
November 1	November 15
December 6	December 20

### 'Behind The Lines'

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