



DONAHOE KEARNEY  
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

1901 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Suite 900  
Washington, DC 20006  
202.393.3320  
DonahoeKearney.com

PRST STD  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
BOISE, ID  
PERMIT 411



DONAHOE KEARNEY  
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

# BRIEF

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 The Most Important Holiday of All
- 2 The Most Important Holiday of All ... continued
- 3 The Complex History of Voting by Mail  
  
Do You Know a Family With a Special Needs Child?
- 4 Frank's Column: A Lot to Be Thankful For

## FRANK'S COLUMN

### A LOT TO BE THANKFUL FOR

**Yes, even this year.**

**I don't know about you, but I am over people starting every call, interview, or conversation with some version of "this is a really bad year."**

**Yeah, no kidding. I get it. We all get it. But we have to deal with it.**

**So, we need to do something about it. We can control how we think about challenges, how we respond, and how we act. We talk to people about cases and legal issues every day. And many times, that leads into how your life has been affected, how to plan for the future, and ideas for changing careers.**

**That's kind of the "secret sauce" of what we do — help people figure things out when their life takes a different turn due to a serious injury or medical condition.**

**And COVID-19 has made a lot of people's lives take a different turn. So if you are going through this, and you want to talk it through, just call. It will get better. It always does.**

**Happy Thanksgiving from Keith, Frank, Brooke, Priscilla, Jamie, Edwin, and Summer!**

DONAHOEKEARNEY.COM

NOVEMBER 2020

## THE MOST IMPORTANT HOLIDAY OF ALL

This month we have Election Day. We have Thanksgiving Day. Neither one matters without Veterans Day. We've been privileged to represent a lot of veterans over the years — and besides Memorial Day, I think this is the most important holiday we have, so I asked current client Chuck Turpin if I could interview him about his life in the Army. He had a long, important career, so these are just a few highlights.



### Why did you join the Army?

I originally wanted to be an Air Force pilot — my dad was retired Air Force — but my eyesight was so bad that I couldn't be a pilot, so when I graduated from high school in 1969, I joined the Army. Since I couldn't fly, I thought I'd enjoy tanks. When I reported to basic training, they told me I was too tall to be a tanker (6 feet, 4 inches) and tried to get me into field artillery, which I wasn't interested in. Thankfully, I had high scores on the Army testing and they flagged that and gave me Military Intelligence. I needed an immediate security clearance, which they were able to push through since I hadn't had so much as a parking ticket.

Of course, we were at war in Vietnam. And after my stateside training, by the end of 1970, that's where I was.

### So much has been written and filmed about Vietnam. What was it really like?

I was assigned to the 509th Radio Research Group, which was a cover because we were a classified Army security agency unit. I had just gotten off the plane and was relaxing in a hooch, which was dug into the ground and fortified with sandbags, in a bunk reading the Stars and Stripes newspaper when the first mortar rounds came in. The other new guy and I just looked at each other like, "Should we be scared?" I'd been in the country for just a few hours and was

waiting to get taken to Pleiku in the central highlands.

It really hit home soon after that when I was in Saigon having lunch at the Enlisted Club with a couple of guys. An E8 (master sergeant) came to the door on crutches. He'd had both legs blown off and was a double amputee. He was about 40 and I remember thinking, *That sergeant is somebody's dad, somebody's husband.*

No question, Vietnam was a tough environment. There was drug use and racial tension, and in 1970, there was a major transition at home and the war became very unpopular. The movie "Platoon" actually encapsulated all that was bad — the director, Oliver Stone, was a Vietnam vet.

But the thing is, all those issues disappeared when you went out on patrol. None of that mattered.

### How did you leave Vietnam and what was it like coming back?

I had applied for an appointment to go to West Point. We were on a convoy operation picking up equipment from another unit. When we got there, a sergeant said, "Is there some guy named Turpin in this convoy? Get to the helicopter pad. You got orders to go back." I'd made it into the prep school for West Point. But the transition from Vietnam to prep school was a hard one, and I didn't get the appointment. So, I decided to go to Officer Candidate School (OCS) instead.



In Vietnam

Continued on Page 2 ...

... Continued from Cover



**Tell us about some of your challenging assignments.**

I made it through OCS and was commissioned as an officer and sent to Germany. I was trying to get my college degree and eventually took command of the Battalion Headquarters Battery as a field artillery lieutenant. I had command of 340 soldiers, went to school part time, and was tired all the time. But the HQ was in the old Nuremberg SS barracks. There was a field in front of the huge marble structure where Hitler gave so many of his speeches — and that's where we played football.

Korea was a critical assignment and probably the highlight of my career. It was tense. We had tactical nuclear weapons and a critical mission we were responsible for, including covering the evacuation of South Koreans if the North attacked. It's a one-year assignment, but every time my year was up, the commander said, "Turpin, I got your extension papers on my desk. Come on over and sign 'em." I was there three years.

One funny thing — we had just finished a joint exercise when a USO show pulled up and had some NFL players on it, Mark May from the Redskins and Matt Suhey from the Bears. In Korea, there are buildings called blue buildings that are half in North Korea, half



in South Korea — literally a line down the middle of a table where we'd have diplomatic meetings. You couldn't cross that line. And the North Korean guards would always try to intimidate you or harass you, but you couldn't react or they'd file some kind of complaint with the UN. So, we were taking the players around base, showing them the artillery and all that, and we got to the blue buildings. May was very calm and just taking it all in, but Suhey gets in there and is going crazy with the North Korean guards, yelling "You commie @\$% come and get it," cursing, giving them the finger.

A soldier would get in all kinds of trouble for that, and the MPs were having a fit, but we couldn't do anything about a civilian. When we got back, May said, "Yeah, when Suhey was going crazy, I went over to the North side and slapped a Redskins sticker under their side of the table!"

During the Gulf War, I missed being deployed after spending so much of my career with troops, but I was working a field artillery intelligence position, part of a group providing technical assistance on Iraqi artillery and weapon systems, acquiring and prioritizing targets, that kind of thing.

A few years later, I was commanding the transportation division for the Clinton inauguration (all of the drivers and vehicles were military). My wife, Carolyn, was on an annual ski trip we would take with some friends, and someone watching TV said, "Hey, your husband's shaking hands with the president," which was pretty cool.

**Chuck, I know you retired from the Army in 1997, and then you went into government service and just retired from that career recently — that's 50 years of serving your country.**

Look, if you cut me, I bleed red, white, and blue. We're a country that provides so many benefits to our citizens and to people all over the world. This country is your home, your mother. You owe it something, whether that is service in the military or volunteering in the Peace Corps; do something. You will get back so much in terms of skills, education, and opportunity.

And this is in spite of the problems we have. What we're going through today is serious, but it's not new. It's like that old Charlie Daniels' song: We may fight among ourselves, but outside people better leave us alone.

There are Americans who gave the full measure of everything they had to give for their country. And that continues today. As a veteran, I'd say we can't forget our military, first responders, health care workers, police, firefighters, people volunteering to fight wildfires, people on the front lines — the ones who step up and make a difference, where their job puts their lives at risk, and they know that. There are not enough accolades to do them justice.

*Chuck Turpin*  
**Army Veteran**

# FROM THE MAILBOX TO THE BALLOT BOX

## THE COMPLEX HISTORY OF VOTING BY MAIL

Voting has long been a right for American citizens, and it is an important way for people to effect change on a national level.

This year's COVID-19 pandemic may have stolen some of the spotlight from the election, but it has also ignited a debate about *how* we vote. During the pandemic, mail-in voting has become more popular, and NPR estimates that at least 70% of voters will cast their ballot by mail for the 2020 presidential election. However, the ability to do this differs by state. Nine states and Washington, D.C., mailed ballots to every eligible voter, while seven others have proclaimed that COVID-19 is not a valid excuse to warrant a mail-in or absentee ballot. Why are states so varied in their approaches to mail-in voting? To answer that, we have to go back in time.

Mail-in voting began as a way to give Civil War soldiers who were stranded far away from home an opportunity to vote in the 1864 presidential election. From 1862 to 1865, 20 states passed laws that required absentee ballots for soldiers. Meanwhile, nine states fought these laws all the way to their state Supreme Courts, and four states struck down the laws and upheld in-person voting as the only way to cast a ballot. Experts at National Geographic report that this was done to protect the "purity" of the vote.

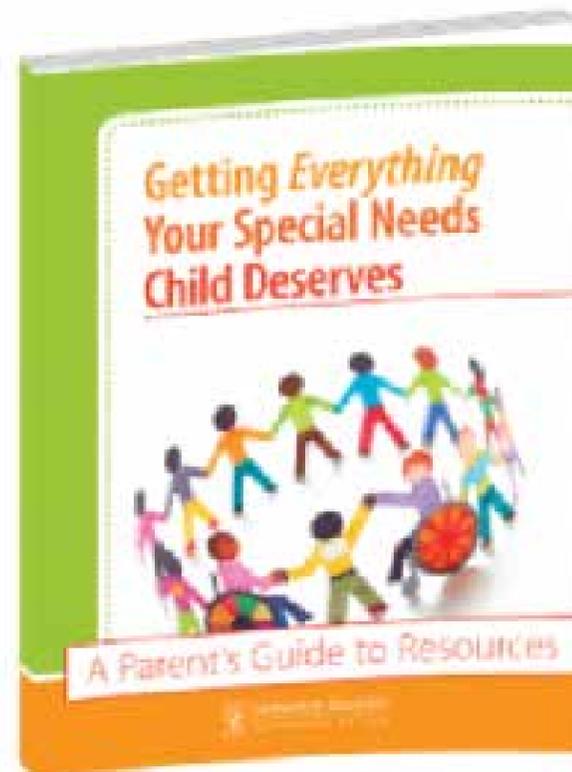
However, since that time, every state in the Union has passed laws that allow mail-in voting of some kind, largely to increase access to



voting. Each state still has the leeway to determine voter eligibility, the rules of the process, and the legality of mail-in voting.

Today, voting by mail is actually much more secure than it was in the mid-1800s. State laws were created to suppress voter fraud by requiring notary signatures and/or specialty ballot boxes. According to experts, those laws seem to be working. NPR reports that of the 250 million ballots that have been cast by mail nationwide in the past 20 years, only 143 have led to criminal convictions.

Mail-in voting may never leave its controversial past behind, and its prevalence in future elections is yet to be determined. But from a legal standpoint, as long as you follow your state's regulations, you don't have to fear breaking any laws when you vote by mail.



## DO YOU KNOW A FAMILY WITH A SPECIAL NEEDS CHILD?

Today, now more than ever, families with special needs children are facing even greater challenges. And we want to help. We've helped hundreds of families in the DMV, either with a legal case (we've proved some injuries and medical conditions, like cerebral palsy, were caused by medical malpractice) or with our specialized guide to resources. Just call us at (202) 393-3320 and we'll send it to you or anyone you think it can help. Best of all, it's totally free to whoever needs it!