



WE HONOR OUR KILLED IN ACTION AND WANT AN ACCOUNTING OR RELEASE OF OUR MISSING IN ACTION OR PRISONERS OF WAR.

Official Newsletter of... "Run For The Wall"...Spring 2001

Quarterly Newsletter
" We Ride For Those Who Can't "
Spring 2001

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Oral History Project Underway For RFTW XIII Central Route

As part of our ongoing mission to promote healing among veterans and their families and friends, we will be documenting the personal stories of those who wish to share their experiences. Sharing personal history has been proven to be one of the most powerful tools for healing that we have available. By sharing your unique stories about how the Run For The Wall has helped you, you can help others. Our goal is to extend our healing beyond the ten days in May and to all of those who make the journey.

The project, once completed, will be available on CD-ROM directly from RFTW and will include interviews and photos. The interviews will be conducted on the Central Route during this year's Run.

- Those interested in participating can schedule an interview time via e-mail, by telephone or on the Run itself.
- Interviews will be conducted throughout RFTW 2001, from California to Washington D.C., on the Central Route.
- Participants may choose to be interviewed anonymously.
- Send suggestions and questions via email to: oralhistoryproject@rftw.org, or call (773) 761-3354.

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Riding in Formation

Just a couple of comments about the RFTW formation. We ride in a side-by-side motorcycle formation. This run is a mission to raise awareness about the need to do something different about all POW/MIA's, past, current and future. We are making a statement to the public; we are a group of motorcyclists on a mission, not a bunch of bikers on a tour of the USA. We ride in a two second formation, which means that there is a 2 second space between each pair of motorcycles.

At our cruising speed, the easiest way to measure a 2 second space is to measure your position against the centerline dashes. Two seconds is about 2 spaces between you and the motorcycle in front of you. That gives you plenty of time to maneuver and brake in case of an emergency.

The most important factor in riding a smooth formation is individual throttle control. Each rider is responsible to learn to smoothly roll the throttle to adjust speed up and down in ¼ and ½ mph increments. Then if the rider focuses on staying in position, there will be minimal movement in the pack. This technique can be easily practiced on your own. While riding, pick your cruising speed and then slightly roll the throttle up and down to hold that speed. I have a throttle lock on my Wing, which greatly relieves some of the pressure of holding the throttle in position. I have it set so that it holds the throttle, but I can still move it to adjust speed. If you work on practicing that technique until we get together in May 2001, you should be pretty good at holding your position in the RFTW formation. Till we ride together again, keep your head up and your wheels down.

- *Nayber*

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Order of the Silver Rose

Agent Orange, a chemical defoliant, was a weapon of war deployed by American Forces against the enemy during the Vietnam War. Accidentally, many of our own servicemen and women were also wounded and killed by it. No Military Order of the Purple Heart has ever been awarded to a Vietnam veteran whose exposure to Agent Orange resulted in internal, invisible wounds, which are revealed only by the passage of time because at this time, Agent Orange exposure is NOT considered an eligible wound.

The Order of the Silver Rose was created by private citizens to honor the courage and heroism of American service personnel who were exposed to Agent Orange in a combat zone, and who have been identified under the 1991 Agent Orange Act of Congress. The organization not part of any government program, and is funded entirely through private donations. The award consists of a numbered, embossed certificate and a round silver medal, engraved with an American Beauty rose.

The medal has also been awarded to citizens in recognition of their outstanding service to veterans. In February, longtime RFTW Family members Tom and Christine Margetich received this special honor for their devotion to veterans and the POW-MIA cause over many decades. Tom and Christine are certainly deserving of this recognition. Anyone who has ever been present at Christine's POW-MIA Table Ceremony, and anyone who wears the RFTW POW-MIA bracelet, which Tom makes, can attest to the dedication and patriotism of this delightful couple.

If you or a loved one suffers from exposure to Agent Orange, you can apply to receive this medal.

Information is available on the Order of the Silver Rose website: <http://www.silverrose.org>

Or contact:

Gary J. Chenett, National Director

The Order of The Silver Rose

1301 Jim's Smokehouse Rd.

Rockport, Texas 78382

(361) 727-0445

Missing Man Formation

The "Missing Man" is a flight formation where the slot or number two position is left vacant. It is traditionally flown by a Group or Squadron in honor of fallen or missing comrades.

Looking heavenward you cannot help but shed a tear... mournful... lonesome... a hole that screams out almost as loudly as the roar of the engines that pass overhead.

This is The Missing Man Formation... perhaps the most magnificent and solemn aerial maneuver ever seen. Whether flown with the wingman spiraling off into the great beyond, or, flown consistently with that awful hole where a buddy should be... this dignified, almost painful to watch maneuver is a part of POW-MIA and combat history.

The genesis of this maneuver is one shrouded in years of faded memories, long fought battles and countless missions almost a century old. Rumored to have begun when British fighter pilots flew over the funeral of Manheim 'The Red Baron' von Richthofen as a sign of respect by his fellow aces, the formation does find its birth in World War I. At some point during the Great War, the RAF pilots created an aerial maneuver known as 'The Fly Past'... whether this was before or after the alleged von Richthofen loss is unknown. But it is British in origin and it was used infrequently and privately during the War.

The 'Fly Past' remained a private affair... returning aircrews signaled to the ground their losses upon their return.

The first written account of the maneuver shown publicly is by the RAF in 1935 when flying over a review by George V. Prior. During World War II, it morphed and evolved into a ceremonial tradition as part of RAF programs. The US first began the tradition in 1938 during the funeral for MG Westover with over 50 aircraft and one blank file. The 8th Air Force with her legion of Flying Fortresses, the Bloody Hundredth and other combat weary groups adopted the maneuver when returning home from a 'milk run.' Again, it signaled to those on the ground the losses incurred during the last mission... and held a place of honor for their fallen comrades.

The Missing Man formation, as used in the United States, was rarely if ever seen by the public. Only those privileged to attend military funerals and ceremonies were familiar with it. But during the Second Indochina War, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, the public at large got its first glimpse of this sobering moment.

The first time a military aerobatics unit ever performed the Missing Man Formation was during the war in 1969 when the USAF Thunderbirds flew the maneuver for the first time to honor the men and women who were then POWs in Vietnam. Other aerial demonstration squadrons, both military and civilian, have adopted the formation and perform it during ceremonial events such as National POW-MIA Recognition Day, Memorial Day, during funerals and at the interment of repatriated remains of Prisoners and Missing. Aside from the fixed wing maneuver, a rotary wing version is flown by National Guard and Reservists with exceptional beauty and solemnity.

Perhaps it is fitting that the true history of this exquisite yet sad tradition should be unknown... its history with those whom it honors and is named for... Missing.

- From All POW MIA/USAF Historical Archives/Thunderbirds Archivist/RAF Historical Archives

RFTW runs a Missing Man Formation directly behind the lead element (Route and State Coordinator,) all the way across the United States, in honor of those servicemen who are KIA, or still POW or MIA. The position of Missing Man Rider is one of honor, and is sought by many. In order to accommodate the most people, the Missing Man Rider changes after each gas or meal stop. Participants who wish to ride in the formation in honor of lost friends can sign up with the

Missing Man Coordinator for the RFTW route they are planning to travel.

Missing Man Coordinator Central Route	Missing Man Coordinator Southern Route
RC Busha (520) 708-0723 rcbusha@aol.com	Mike "Omaha Mike" Smith (402) 384-9691 vvavet279@aol.com

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The Missing Man

I stood beside the empty grave
Waiting for my friend,
Saying deep within my soul,
"This cannot be the end."
Then I heard a mighty roar;
Looked into the blinding sky
As four planes in close formation
Streaked above to say good-bye.
In a single moment
One pulled out, up, and away
And left a gaping hole
In that formation on this day.
As he did a "barrel roll"
(Bounding upward to disappear)
I heard my friend's bright laughter
As I wiped away a tear.
In that priceless, shining moment
My heart leaped up with pride
For I knew my friend would forever fly.
I knew he had not "died."
--*Esther B. (Campbell) Gates*
(In memory of Lieutenant General John R. Murphy, USAF, Ret.)

This poem is reprinted courtesy of:
<http://www.arlingtoncemetery.com/missingman.htm>

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Calling All Road Guards

By Harley Rodg

In 1998, I went through every emotion imaginable in that short trip across the United States in a "guarded" atmosphere. In 1999, I got a chance to *experience* the Run For The Wall and meet some "forever" friends, again feeling safety in this brotherhood.

When I first volunteered to be a Road Guard on the Run back in 2000, I was grateful for the opportunity to give something back to Run For The Wall, and to give the FNGs the same feeling of protection that I had when I was new to the Run.

On January 1, 2001: Milo asked me to be Road Guard Captain for the Central Route, and to recruit a dozen or so men and women to be of service to Run For The Wall 2001, as Road Guards. This could be your opportunity to help out.

The criteria are:

1. Must have been on the Run for 2 years, but need not have gone "All The Way" either time.
2. Must have current motorcycle endorsement/license for the state of licensure, and proof of insurance for the motorcycle being ridden.
3. Must be a well experienced motorcycle operator. Successful completion of the MSFER Course is desirable, but not required.
4. As servants to the Run and to the public, Road Guards must treat everyone with honor and respect. Their function is to provide safe travel to both the Run and the public.
5. Must be riding alone. No passenger may ride with an on-duty Road Guard.
6. Must attend daily morning muster/briefings.
7. Not required to wear a RFTW backpatch, but may not wear any backpatch other than RFTW patch, large American flag or large POW-MIA patch.

If you're interested Road Guard in 2001, please contact Rodg or C.J.

Central Route Road Guard Captain	Southern Route Road Guard Captain
Rodger Michael Harley Rodg@aol.com (760) 320-8968 (evenings)	Carl C.J. Nisely cnisely@yahoo.com (719) 638-1259

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No Attitudes

Experience The "Healin'." A friend of mine had this spelling on his Nam Vet licence plate. Unfortunately, he died before the healing occurred. He is one of the reasons that I ride RFTW.

RFTW is not a motorcycle tour. It is an organized demonstration. We are making a statement to all the people that we pass. We are on a mission to ensure that our POW/MIA's are not forgotten. We are on a mission to help the victims of all wars to recover from their injuries. The wounds that we help to heal are the ones that no one can see. They are the emotional wounds from the losses that have occurred as a result of military service. Many times participants are not even aware of the impact of those wounds until they participate in RFTW. Not every one who participates in the Run can go all the way to the WALL. Regardless of their level of participation, they experience the healing that occurs on this mission. As I write this note, I again see the Police Officer, standing in front of his squad car, at a good hand salute, as RFTW rode past him. He was experiencing some of the healing that occurs as a result of our MISSION.

An important aspect of our Mission is NO ATTITUDES. Now I know that I have a whole lot of attitudes that are not necessarily agreed to by other people. However, when I am riding RUN FOR THE WALL, those attitudes have no place on my bike or in my activities toward other people. This mission is open to all people regardless of motorcycle type,

racial background, clothing style, military or lack of military background, sexual persuasion or lack of sexual persuasion. When we ride, others watch us. What they see is some times the only message that they will get about RFTW. Therefore, we need to be careful about the symbols that are displayed from our rides. If it is offensive to other people, maybe, for this event, we need to take it off. Now, I understand that many of the patches on our vests and jackets may seem that way to some people. I do not mean those items. At 60MPH, it is pretty hard to identify those items. However, flags and banners are pretty easy to see. Now, I am not going to go around and police all vehicles in RFTW to make sure that they meet my standard. I have way too many other things to do. I will ask each of you riders to police yourselves. If you have something on your vehicle that might be offensive to others, take it off for this ride. We do not want to exclude anyone because of an offensive statement that is not really part of the RFTW mission.

See you in May. Keep your helmets up and your wheels down.

- *Nayber*

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Chicken Soup for the Veteran's Soul

Veterans have many inspiring stories to tell. The "Chicken Soup for the Soul" series of books are collections of true stories about ordinary people doing extraordinary things - stories that open the heart and rekindle the spirit. The latest in the "Chicken Soup" books is Chicken Soup for the *Veteran's Soul*, which will go on sale nationwide on May 15, 2001.

The book includes 101 stories from every war, and every branch of service. Topics include Heroism & Bravery, Comradery & Closeness in Combat, Leadership, Laughter from the Front Lines, Patriotism, and Understanding.

The stories in this book will help people learn what veterans have gone through to defend our freedom, and will heal hearts through inspiring personal accounts that touch the soul, acknowledge and appreciate the sacrifices made by Veterans.

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Fundraising Policy

The Board of Directors has learned that there are several events scheduled in different areas of the country being advertised as fund-raisers for Run for the Wall.

Please be advised that Run for the Wall does not authorize or sanction these events. Further, Run for the Wall does not accept funds generated in this manner. It is the stated policy of Run for the Wall that no fundraising is to be conducted. Run for the Wall receives adequate revenue from the sale of merchandise and unsolicited donations to be able to finance itself.

The Board of Directors recognizes that several different organizations, such as ABATE chapters, HOG chapters, VFW and American Legion posts, etc., conduct their own fundraisers in order to be able to provide Run for the Wall with meals, fuel and other non-monetary items. This policy does not prohibit these groups from raising funds for their own use in supporting the Run, nor does this policy prohibit RFTW coordinators and/or riders from working with and assisting in these groups' efforts to provide these services to Run for the Wall.

In order to protect the name and reputation of Run for the Wall, the Board will aggressively prosecute any and all individuals and/or groups improperly claiming to be associated with, or raising funds for, Run for the Wall.

If there are any questions regarding this policy, please contact a member of the Board of Directors for further guidance.

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RFTW Gains New Supporter

My name is Emily Hoffman and I am a senior in high school. I love to ride motorcycles and learn about all the different bike events. I was informed that in order to graduate I needed to do a project on a topic of my choice. I knew exactly what I wanted to do, something that would show how bikers make an impact on society. I thought back to a few years ago when my dad and I were in Breezewood, PA and we saw several hundred bikes going past. They all had POW-MIA and American flags on there bikes. I asked my dad where they were all going and what the flags meant. He told me it was Run for the Wall and they were going to Washington, DC. He explained to me about all our lost veterans and how these bikers were riding in remembrance of them. I had so much respect for what they were doing, and when I found out about the project I knew RFTW would be perfect.

Next, I went to the RFTW website, which gave me tons of information. It also helped me get in touch with state and national coordinators that could give me even more info. Everyone I talked to who was involved with RFTW were extremely kind and helpful. They sent me t-shirts, pictures, bracelets, hats, and lots of valuable information that was very helpful. The favorite thing that I received was a video on RFTW that JR and Billie Bubala sent me.

While I sat there watching it, tears started rolling down my face. I thought to myself, if I get this emotional by just watching it on video I can only imagine what it would like to be there in person.

After reading all my information, watching the video, looking at pictures, and talking to JR and Billie I was ready to put my project together. I made a fact sheet so that people could get a general idea of what RFTW was all about. I was so proud to be able to tell people about this awesome event. Along with the fact sheet, I also made a poster and wrote a paper on RFTW. In the end I had an excellent project that I was proud to present to my fellow students and teachers. Everyone was shocked by how many POW-MIA's we had in this country. They were curious about RFTW and asked a lot of questions, which I happily answered.

I believe it opened people's eyes and showed them what a wonderful and meaningful event Run for the Wall is. I want to thank every person involved with RFTW. It is an important event that I think everyone should know about.

I respect you all so much, and hope you continue what you are doing, it is greatly appreciated. I think all of our lost veterans would be very proud of what you do, I know I am. By the way the teacher said I passed with flying colors!

- Emily Hoffman

Editor's Note: *Seventeen year old Emily Hoffman hopes to be able to attend Rolling Thunder on her own motorcycle this year, and plans to ride with RFTW in the future.*

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Whatever Shall We Bring?

Hi, my name is Peggy Bundy. Al's decided to go on RUN FOR THE WALL. I'll tell you gals I can't tell you how many times he's packed and unpacked his motorcycle. He's a class act...all THIRD, of course. The reason for this note to y'all is because the children don't want him to be uncomfortable on this trip. I asked around for a list. Some things are obvious - leather jacket, chaps, gloves, helmet, eye protection, money, credit card, insurance card, drivers license,

sweatshirt, cap/hat, shaving gear, deodorant, toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, towel, comb/brush, medication...but after that there's no tellin' what you could add to the list. This WWI Vet said he'd just add a pair a socks to the list and that'd be all he'd need. Another Crusty Infantry type said "Just bring another set of clothes and a rain suit." At the other end of the extreme his mother gave me the following list:

- **Wear:** boots, socks, pants, underwear, belt, suspenders, T-shirt, vest, dark glasses, cap, riding gloves, watch.
- **Carry with you:** Wallet, money, identification, credit card, chapstick, penknife, reading glasses, flashlight, handkerchief, pen and notebook, camera.
- **Keep close at hand:** Leather jacket, chaps, sweatshirt, cold weather gloves, rain suit, extra film, sunblock.
- **Pack:** 3 pair socks, 3 pair pants, 3 T-shirts, 3 set of underwear, 1 additional sweatshirt, something to sleep in, shower shoes, towel, tennis shoes, one pair of shorts, one pair of sweatpants, 2 bandanas.
- **Personal Hygiene:** (Unless you want to be like Al) razor, shaving cream, after shave, shampoo, deodorant, soap, comb/brush, nail clippers, toothbrush/paste, mouthwash, medications.
- **Tools:** as needed (some can do a complete motor tear down and re-build, then detail the bike with polish and wax from their tool bag.)
- **If camping:** Tent, ground cover, sleeping bag, tent pegs, air mattress, air mattress inflation system, bug repellent. This is an absolute "bare bones" list. Chairs, lamps, coolers, coffee pots, stove, pictures of the family, pots and pans, cleaning supplies....the list can be endless. Remember there's no space for your stuff on or in someone else's ride.

Well, I can't decide what to have Al pack, I wish he knew he could do laundry on the way. I would go with him, but he refuses to pack the 35 outfits I may want to wear. I told him I'd cut down, but he still isn't happy about the hair dryer, curling iron, hot rollers, overnight make-up case, make-up remover, skin conditioner, different boots to match every outfit, Sandals in case it's hot, swimming suit, Beach Towel, Suntan lotion, Teddy-Bear, Bon Bons, Radio, Headphones, Conditioner, Mousse, Gel, Hairspray, Bubble Bath, Lotion, Perfume, round Brush, square brush, pick, comb, Electric Toothbrush, Teeth Whitening trays and product, Manicure set, nail polish, feminine hygiene products, jewelry, maps, my diary, This month's issue of Cosmo, last year's pictures, cell phone and charger.....well, I hope your fella is easier than Al....oops Gotta go, Oprah's on!!!! Bye Now!

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Overflow Hotel Information

This is the current list of Additional Motels for the Central Route of RFTW XIII. These Motels are available in addition to the Motels listed on the Central Route Schedule Sheet (Included in this Newsletter.) When contacting them, mention RFTW - some have offered special rates.

Gallup, NM

- Best Western Inn & Suite 1-800-722-6399
- Econo Lodge 1-505-722-3800
- Best Western Royal Holiday 1-505-722-4900

Cimarron, NM

- Kit Carson Inn 1-800-293-7961 Free Tent Space
- St James Hotel 1-505-376-2664
- Johnson's Cabins 1-505-376-2210 (2 only available)

Raton, New Mexico

- Motel 6 1-505-445-2777
- Holiday Inn 1-505-445-1500
- Holiday Classic 1-505-445-5555

Limon, Colorado:

- Travel Inn 719-775-2821
- Super 8 Motel 719-775-2889
- Best Western 719-775-0277
- Comfort Inn 719-775-2752,
- Econo Lodge 719-775-2485,
- Safari Motel 719-775-2363,
- Midwest Country Inn 719-775-2373, No PETS, No Smoking,
- Silver Spur Motel 719-775,2807,

Carefree, IN:

- Overflow is located at Corydon, milemarker.105
- Baymont 812-738-1500
- Best Western 812-738-4192
- Hampton Inn 812-738-6688
- Holiday Inn Express 812-738-1623

Rainell, WV:

- Overflow is located at Lewisburg
- Brier Inn, 540 N Jefferson St. 304-645-7722
- Budget Host Ft. Savannah Inn, 204 N Jefferson St., 304-645-3055

Washington DC:

- Comfort Inn, 122 Glebe Rd. Arlington, VA 703-247-3399, Group # 1275

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The Southern Route's March On Washington

It is March, 2001. It is hard to remember that dates on a calendar are closer than they appear. Start making your plans. The time is relentlessly moving and the flexibility to make plans and to investigate alternatives is coming to a close. Through the effort of some dedicated hard working folks the plan is coming together.

There was a question about the change from I-10 to I-40 this year. The Southern Route will go through Gallup, New Mexico using Interstate 40. There are only two ways of crossing the "Rockies" south of Colorado. The Southern Route, in its embryonic stages, has the flexibility to examine this alternative to Interstate 10. Jack McKinny, from Gallup, has kept SR people informed and is proceeding to ensure the details are completed.

Speaking of coordinators, If you are able, give them a call. See what details they need to complete. If you can, see were you can help. This group of hard working ladies and gentlemen are want'n to ensure a comfortable, safe, and pleasant journey for ya' all. Gettn'yer all's accent down fer the trip?

Doorgunner, California, has been busy looking at alternatives to RFTW's old ways. There may be safer and more convenient alternatives for RFTW's large, and no whistling Dixie larger, numbers. Roger Herrick (kind of like from the great escape), Arizona, has things well in hand. Dick Darnell has covered the central route's logistical plan and assisted in a lot of the areas for Arizona. He has become, almost, irreplaceable. Go Dick (Richard).

The rest of the Southern coordinators are new to the jobs, but are taking care of business. Tom Purtle, Texas, has moved like lightning closing in on RFTW's concerns. Linda Thompson, Louisiana, has convinced her husband that being a coordinator for RFTW requires a new bike for her. She has all but stuck up the band for RFTW. Papabear, Mississippi, has the dealership in Jackson (that would be H/D) setting up a 'Look out' for RFTW's arrival. Iceman, Alabama, has reviewed the route about 1000 times. It has been confirmed he is calling the South to rise. Hammer Down, Tennessee, has more than enough to do. We are hoping to stop at a tucked-away VA hospital, off the beaten path, and our over night stay is in his area of operation. He is getting the job done. In Virginia, Airborne, the lady jumper, (not claim, parachute) has all kinds of details to manage. The SR has an overnight in the southern part of the state and then there is the three days in DC to handle for both routes. You go Girl!

Krispy, West Virginia, (did anyone tell you how she got that name?) is working on some changes to accommodate both the Southern and Central route. Looks good. She has been very helpful. Mostly, looking out for people with foolish ideas. Very cool lady.

A secondary objective of the Southern Route is to reduce the number of folks on the central route. The Southern Route Administrative Group (SRAG) is expecting a smaller run than the central route. If you are looking for a close, small group, think about the SR. Skeeter is running last man for the SR. CJ is the Road Guard Captain. Speaking of Road Guards, if you want to be a road guard send up a flare in his direction. Omaha Mike is currently accepting reservations for the missing man formation. Give him a call. Don Weaver, a WW II vet and a guest of the Axis powers, has accepted the invitation to be SR's spiritual leader. Donna E. and company are selling stuff and registering all participants. (No registration, no newsletter next year) Top Biers is checking gig lines and recruiting as many of "Uncle Sam's Misguided Children" as he can find. Some more of any other service would be helpful in keeping a level playing field.

For future FNG's, Shooter, an 'All The Way' FNG from last year is available to answer your questions. Next newsletter should have a bunch of answers to FAQ's. Shooter can be reached at: (909) 359-3402, or by email at: Shooter559@hotmail.com.

There was a military mentor once who said two things. The first, no one can remember. The second was this "no matter how much planning and coordinating

goes on stay flexible, imaginative, resourceful, and independently able to accomplish the mission." This is the first fully supported Southern Route Run for RFTW. There will never be another first Southern Route. Don't miss this exciting opportunity. Remember, the chances of everything going right are zero! (They really aren't even that good) This is an adventure. It is a motorcycle adventure. If you have read this far, there is no doubt you want to join RFTW on this quest. Do not hesitate. Participants are of all ages and all backgrounds. Vietnam Vets are in their fifties. There are more and more folks who have never served in the military, who are honoring those who have, and remembering the sacrifices of those who have served. Smoke, a hero figure to all motorcycle people, has been around for over ¾ of a century and still goes all the way. These are tomorrow's 'good old days'.

Let there be no doubt the Southern Route of Run For The Wall is on a pilgrimage of purpose. All participants are sacrificing time, money, and energy to make this trip. But, as it has been written, do not wear sackcloth and cover your faces in ashes. Enjoy the experience and the others on the road for the ten days.

Looking for you in Ontario or along the way.

- *Centerpunch*

Budgeting With Spock

After using up three pencils, four erasers, all afternoon, and most of my brain, I still couldn't get a budget together for my road trip with RUN FOR THE WALL. I had but one choice left. I jumped my scoot and headed to Spock's house. As I pulled in his driveway I could see him through the open garage door. He nodded. I nodded. I cut the engine and stepped off the bike.

Spock is a numbers guy - he can tell you the square root of 69, total cubic inches after a rebuild, or the least legal amount to pay to the IRS. He can calculate anything. Spock cleared his abacus, turned from his desk and peered over his cropped glasses at me. I knew I had his attention. I laid out my dilemma. I needed to know how much should be budgeted for a trip with RUN FOR THE WALL. Spock looked at me, my ride, and then back at me, and here's what he said: "First, don't leave town without an oil change. That back tire of yours doesn't look like it has 5,000 miles left on the tread. Change it now while you can shop the price or change it on the road at the mercy of the most available dealer. It will cost you at least half a day of travel time if it goes flat out on the road."

"Let's see, it is about 2,700 miles across country." He asked, "Will you be coming back?" (I didn't answer.)

"So that's about 5,400 miles. It's a ten-day trip with a two-day layover for events in D.C., and it should take about half that time to return home." (Spock rattled his abacus.) "Your bike gets about 45 miles to the gallon, with or without a passenger. Gas is going to average at least about \$1.75 per gallon, therefore, 5400 miles divided by 45 miles per gallon equals 60 gallons of fuel. This times a \$1.75 equals \$210.00."

Meals, now this is an area of wide variation. Now some motels are high, some are low. Ten days with RFTW, two days in Washington, D.C. and five days home is a total of Seventeen Days. You could save some of the cost by getting a "buddy" to share a room. Camping is always the least expensive way to go. Of course, there is the occasional curio, souvenir or nick-knack." (...the abacus snapped and spun.)

"Now there," he said with a satisfied smile. "On average, if you camp, the day will cost about \$50.00. If you spend your nights in a hotel room it will cost you \$100.00 per day. This should include your food, gas, and nightly accommodations. If you mix both camping and motels, this rule of thumb still applies. For example, if you spent 8 days camping and 9 days using a hotel the cost of the trip would be approximately \$1300.00.

There are countless variations of this calculation, but Spock could see my eyes were glazing over. He stopped speaking, took a drink from his mystery cup, waited for my head to clear, and gave me these final words: "Don't take advantage of these folks from RUN FOR THE WALL. They will let you because of their generous hearts. If you were ever going to do just one noble act, let it be this. There is no special fund for people who really can't afford to go. There is no special

breakdown fund; it will just come from the people who you're riding with. Have some plan in event of the unexpected, other than the kindness of strangers. Try to contribute more than you take." That was a lot for me to take in. I thanked Spock for his time, checked my pistol, hopped on my scoot and headed for the bank.

SEE YOU IN ONTARIO!

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Calling All HAMs

"CQ, CQ, CQ, this is N7LFK, broadcasting from the road with the 13th annual Run For the Wall."

RFTW XIII's Central Route will be on the air waves in May, via HAM radio. Riverman (aka "N7LFK,") an advanced class amateur radio operator, sold his Harley FXR and will be making the Run this year in his pickup truck. He will bring along his high frequency radio transceiver (100 watts out,) and will broadcast each day while on the Run to promote POW-MIA awareness and the RFTW mission.

Riverman will broadcast on frequencies 14.265, 21.365, 28.36 MHz HF, 146.52 VHF, and 46.00 UHF.

Riverman has alerted several amateur radio magazines of the Run, so most likely there will be hundreds, even thousands of HAMs tuning in from *all over the world* to contact the vets on Run For The Wall.

RFTW participants who are or were radio operators (military and civilian,) and especially Vietnam Vets who operated "in country," are invited to join Riverman to broadcast during the Run. Together they can tell interested HAM operators throughout the world about the many contributions made by veteran to our nation, and about the RFTW mission and "Why We Ride."

After the Run, Riverman will send out real QSL cards to hams that made "contact" with us (N7LFK.)

Let your HAM friends know so that they can join us on the radio during RFTW!

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May I Salute You?

By Patricia Salwei

I approached the entrance to Ft Belvoir's medical facility last year as an old veteran puttered towards me. Easily over 80 years old, stooped and slow, I barely gave him a second glance because on his heels was a full bird colonel. As they approached, I rendered a sharp salute and barked, "Good morning, Sir!" Because they were heel to toe, I began my salute as the old veteran was about two paces from me.

He immediately came to life! Transformed by my greeting, he rose to his full height, returned my salute with pride, and exclaimed, "Good morning, Captain!" I was startled, but the full bird behind him was flabbergasted. The colonel stopped mid-salute, smiled at me and quietly moved on. As I entered the clinic, the utter beauty of the encounter preoccupied me. What prompted the old man to assume that I was saluting him? Perhaps he just thought, "It's about time!" After all, doesn't a WWII vet outrank us all?

I turned my attention to the waiting room taking a moment to survey the veterans there. Service people rushed around, loudspeakers blared, the bell for the prescription window kept ringing. It was a whirl of activity and the older veterans sat quietly on the outside seemingly out of step, patiently waiting to be seen. Nobody was seeing.

My old friend stayed on my mind. I began to pay attention to the military's attitude towards its veterans. Predominately, I witnessed indifference. Impatient soldiers and airmen plowing over little old ladies at the commissary; I noticed my own agitation as an older couple cornered me at the Officer's Club and began reminiscing about their tour in Germany. To our disgrace, I have also witnessed disdain: at Ramstein AB terminal, an airman was condescending and borderline cruel with a deaf veteran flying Space A; an ancient woman wearing a WACS button was shoved aside by a cadet at the Women's Memorial dedication in D.C.; a member of the Color Guard turned away in disgust from a drunk Vietnam vet trying to talk to him before the Veterans Day Ceremony at the Vietnam Wall.

Have you been to a ceremony at the Wall lately? How about a Veteran's Day Parade in a small town? The crowds are growing faint. Why do we expect the general public to care if we don't? We are getting comfortable again. Not many of us around that have been forced to consider making the ultimate sacrifice. Roughly 60% of today's active duty Air Force did not even participate in Desert Storm. I always lament about the public's disregard for the military. I do not count all

the days I stayed in bed instead of going to a ceremony or parade. It was my day to be honored and I deserved to sleep in. It's just like a 28-year-old, whose weapon was Microsoft PowerPoint Slide Presentation during the last conflict, to complain about recognition.

Sometimes I wonder who is going to come to our parades in 20 years; will anybody look me up in the Women's Memorial Registry? The answer lies in the present. We will be honored as we honor those who have gone before us. The next generation is watching. It is not my intention to minimize the selfless service of our modern military; my comrades are the greatest people I know (and frankly should be treated better). But, lately I'm wondering if the public's attitude towards the military isn't just a reflection of the active duty military's attitude towards its own veterans. It's time to ask - do we regard them, do we consider them at all? How does our attitude change when the hero is no longer wearing a uniform? I was proud to wear my uniform. Can I admit that I thought I was cool?

There is no denying that there is something about our profession, combined with youth, that feeds the ego a little. We have all seen a young pilot strut into the Officer's Club with his flight suit on. He matters; he takes on the room; he knows he can take on the world. But, one day he will leave his jet for a desk, and eventually he will have to hang up that flight suit.

A super hero hanging up his cape.... How will we measure his value then? He will no longer look like a pilot, an officer, a colonel. He'll just look like an old man coming out of the clinic with his prescription. But, is he less of a hero? Will anybody remember or care about all the months he spent away from his newborn daughter while making peace a possibility in the Balkans? Probably not. Our society has a short memory. Maybe it is not for the protected to understand. Rather, it is my hope that when a young lieutenant walks by him they will each see themselves reflected in the other - one's future, the other's past. In that moment, perhaps, the lieutenant will also see the hero, now disguised as an old man, and thank him.

The truth is, there are heroes in disguise everywhere. I used to wonder why people would want to chat with me when I was in uniform - telling me about their four years as a radio operator in Korea. So what? I wasn't impressed relative to my own experiences. Now I understand that they were telling me because nobody else cared. Proud of their service, no matter how limited, and still in love with our country, they were trying to stay connected. Their stories were code for: "I understand and appreciate you, can you appreciate me?"

The answer is, yes. I separated from the Air Force in February. I'm out of the club. Still, I want you to know that I'll attend the parades, visit the memorials, and honor you. All this while my kids and your kids are watching. Then, maybe, someday when I'm an old woman riding the metro, a young airman will take a moment of her time to listen to one of my war stories. I, in turn, will soak in her beauty and strength, and remember.

Today, as I reflect on my adventures in the Air Force, I'm thinking of that ancient warrior I collided with at Ft Belvoir. I'm wondering where he is, if he's still alive, if it's too late to thank him. I want to start a campaign in his honor - Salute A Veteran. What a great world this would be if all our elderly veterans wore recognition pins, and we would salute them even if we were out of uniform and saw them coming out of a Seven-Eleven. Yes, this started out as a misunderstanding on my part. But, now I get it. That day was the first time in my life that I really understood what it meant to salute someone.

Dear Veteran, I recognize and hail you! I do understand what I have and what you have given to make it possible. So I'm wondering if we meet on the street again - *may I salute you?*

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