



**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" ...April 2005**

**Quarterly Newsletter  
" We Ride For Those Who Can't "  
April 2005**

**Inside this issue:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· <a href="#">THE PENDULUM SWINGS BACK TO PATRIOTISM</a></li> <li>· <a href="#">THE JOURNEY WITH THE CENTRAL ROUTE FROM THE HEAD SHED</a></li> <li>· <a href="#">RFTW SOUTHERN ROUTE 2005</a></li> <li>· <a href="#">RIDE SAFELY ON THE RUN</a></li> <li>· <a href="#">ONE RIDERS OPINION</a></li> <li>· <a href="#">SUPPORTING OUR TROOPS</a></li> <li>· <a href="#">PAY ATTENTION!</a></li> <li>· <a href="#">MISSING SOLDIER'S CASE TO BE REVIEWED</a></li> <li>· <a href="#">COME TO "THE GATHERING"</a></li> <li>· <a href="#">NATIONAL FORMER PRISONER OF WAR RECOGNITION DAY, 2005</a></li> <li>· <a href="#">TAPS FOR PAUL KAREN</a></li> <li>· <a href="#">BIKERS KNOW</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· <a href="#">BELATEDLY, SOME THANKS FOR VIET VETS</a></li> <li>· <a href="#">VIETNAM VETERANS TO BE HONORED POSTHUMOUSLY</a></li> <li>· <a href="#">RAINELLE, WEST VIRGINIA SCHOOL</a></li> <li>· <a href="#">HELP TO RETIRE YOUR WORN FLAG</a></li> <li>· <a href="#">PASSING OF A GENERATION</a></li> <li>· <a href="#">WELCOME HOME MY BROTHER</a></li> <li>· <a href="#">A SOLDIER'S HERO</a></li> <li>· <a href="#">NEW HANDBOOK UPDATES VETERANS BENEFITS</a></li> <li>· <a href="#">JOINT POW/MIA ACCOUNTING COMMAND</a></li> <li>· <a href="#">OUR FAVORITE "BISCUIT BOY" MAKES EAGLE SCOUT</a></li> <li>· <a href="#">AID FOR IRAQ WAR VETERAN AND HIS FAMILY</a></li> <li>· <a href="#">WHAT TO PACK FOR THE RUN</a></li> <li>· <a href="#">CARRY YOUR EMERGENCY MEDICAL INFORMATION</a></li> </ul>
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**THE PENDULUM SWINGS BACK TO PATRIOTISM**

By Sandra "Little Bit" McKinney

The participants of Run For The Wall have been feeling the flow of patriotism growing across the United States over the past few years. Whether we are traversing the Interstate Highways, or traveling on the smaller back country roads, we encounter patriotic individuals waving flags, roads lined with small flags, or just individuals waving wildly, giving us the thumbs-up symbol. It is often hard to swallow those throat lumps that occur when we look up at a freeway overpass and we see a Tow-Truck with a huge American flag hoisted high above. The tears will flow even from the biggest, toughest biker as he sees a little child grinning and waving a little flag of red, white and blue.

On April 16th, Jackie and I participated in a WELCOME HOME parade for the local National Guard 1116th Transportation Company that just returned from Iraq. What an up-lifting experience! The streets were totally lined with people holding red, white and blue balloons and flags plus signs proclaiming Welcome Home! The 34 National Guard members were seated on bales of hay on a huge flat-bed truck. As they made their way down the parade route, the cheers and whistles would burst forth from the crowd. Every vehicle in the parade had a banner proclaiming the name of their loved-one returning home.

We have decorated a 24 foot trailer with RFTW Graphics for use as the Merchandise Trailer on the Central Run. We pulled this trailer in the parade and it made a very bold statement in support of our POW's and MIA's, plus it brought

forth questions about Run For The Wall and our Mission. We were very honored to have local Congressional Medal of Honor recipient Hershey Miyamura and his wife Terry ride in our truck with us. Mr. Miyamura, a Korean War Veteran, was so proud to be able to greet and support the returning troops.

We as civilians can offer our support and assistance to the veterans, but there is such a special bond and camaraderie between Veterans of all wars that only a Veteran will understand. I am aware of many of you veterans who work in Outreach Programs to assist those just returning home. Who knows better what these young people have faced than you older veterans who have seen it all, too. But it is so very important that we all continue to reach out to the troops, send out those care packages, participate in the Homecoming Parades, and wave our flags!!! The next young person you see in uniform, walk over to them and shake their hand and express your gratitude for the job they are doing. I guarantee that you will both receive benefit from the experience.

God Bless our Troops!!!!

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[top of page](#)

## **THE JOURNEY WITH THE CENTRAL ROUTE**

By J.R. "Cleaner" Franklin

In a matter of days our 17th Annual Mission of Run For The Wall will begin its journey in crossing this great country. While I prepare for the responsibilities of being the Central Route Coordinator, I cannot help but reflect on previous years. I remember times of anticipation, anxiety, brotherhood, emotional highs...and lows, along with a patriotic sense that "We Do Make a Difference"!

Our growth has spurred new riding procedures, different stops and a seemingly overwhelming desire to make this the best year ever. I realize that the past cannot be made better, but we must always strive to be more efficient.

Our Mission Statement has always declared our purpose as a healing for Vietnam Vets, bringing awareness to the POW/MIA issues and to Honor those KIA while in service to their country. This year's mission will include and recognize our brave young men and women who are currently in harms way. We will remember, as we pass thru the many cities on our itinerary, that there is no doubt family members in each area we touch, are currently worried about their loved ones on active duty. This thought alone should keep each and every one of us humble in the eyes of all who support our mission.

We will ride as a beacon of hope for those who have suffered or are now suffering. We will show respect and honor all who come out to be a small part of our journey, as they are grasping our time together as their link to America's history. We are committed to take the hearts of our supporters to our Nation's Capitol and, in turn, receive a personal satisfaction of a mission accomplished.

A few last words that will make this job possible:

1. I expect all participants to be prompt, if not early, to each morning's meeting. The camaraderie is abundant and nothing better sets the tone of the Run like the fellowship experienced and the relaxed feeling of not rushing into your day.
2. Rider's Meetings are MANDATORY! Have your equipment and yourself ready, as we will roll immediately following morning meetings. Don't think you know everything, as we have to be flexible and the meetings are essential in supplying new information.
3. Our meetings will always convey and instruct the riding procedures we expect everyone to follow. Right now, I want to detail our starts. As the front of the pack moves out, recognize that this is not a race. A Road Guard

funnel-team will be counting bikes and inserting pace-setters. Be aware as they will ask you to make room for the pace-setter and his wing-man. We will continue a slow pace; usually 30-35 mph until the whole pack is onto our highway of travel. We will then bring the pack up to speed, approximately 5mph every mile until we reach cruising speed. We have experienced riders leaving the staging area and running up on the pack, requiring them to slow quickly, dropping two gears, and causing much duress on those following. Don't fall into this trap! The pack is rolling slower than you think. Pay attention and stay alert. Stay in lower gear until you must shift and roll the throttle off, this will prevent lurching and provide you and those around you a more comfortable ride. Remember a tightly wound gear provides much better control.

4. Obey the Road Guards! They are privy to the most expeditious ways to assist the whole group. While it is easy to think you know what is best, our Road Guards are better informed in making decisions that will place the hundreds of bikes in the best possible scenarios. There can be no deviation. By following all instructions without question, you will exude confidence in yourself and all around you.
5. Recognize and support our FNG's (Fun New Guys). This ride can be intimidating. Fear and intimidation is always decreased by a sincere "Atta-Boy"!
6. As a previous National Coordinator once told me, "If you know nothing but the license plate number of the bike in front of you when we arrive at each stop, you did your job!" Stay alert and pay attention to your surroundings at all times.

Thank you for your attention. Start focusing now to stay in tune. Our staff's commitment is to effectively lead you to THE WALL! Remember the Mission!!!!

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[top of page](#)

## **FROM THE HEAD SHED**

By Milo (Nayber) Gordon  
President  
Run For The Wall

As I write this column, it is the middle of April and a beautiful spring day here in Wisconsin. In about three weeks, I'll be leaving for California to get the final elements of RFTW XVII organized. In a month, John and JR will be leading the troops out on our 17th cross-country pilgrimage. It doesn't seem that a year ago RFTW XVI was the pressure and RFTW XVII was a distant dream. Soon the wind will be in our faces, we will be sittin' tall and riding proud on our mission. My heart swells at the thought.

Some items of importance: First, in this newsletter, some experienced RFTW participants have shared their knowledge on riding in our formation. I suggest that everyone closely read these articles. There are some good suggestions on how to ride in our formation. For you experienced riders, it will serve as a reminder. For new participants, it will explain some important tips on how to make this formation work for you. Bear in mind that riding procedures CAN and DO differ between the two official Routes. That is a decision of the Route Leadership.

I am going to emphasize one aspect of motorcycle riding that I think is critical in maintaining your place in the formation. That aspect is throttle control. If you have a cruise control, turn it off. If you have a throttle lock, set it really light. When in formation you will need to adjust your speed constantly and in minute increments. Watch the opposite line to see what is occurring in traffic. Look at least six bikes ahead. Your peripheral vision will warn you of close up traffic changes. If the bikes ahead suddenly take off on you, DO NOT accelerate to catch them. Slowly increase speed to reach them and to close the gap. When you see them slow down, and they will, slow down also so that you roll into your position without needing to touch your brakes. Brake only when absolutely necessary. Use your throttle and transmission to make minor speed adjustments. This brings to mind the Jack Rabbit throttle man.

This rider, apparently, likes to hear his pipes. He is constantly cranking his throttle. He is up and down all the time, causing his pipes to rap loudly. If you are that guy, get out of the pack! Get ahead, or better yet, get behind us. Then you can rap your pipes to your hearts content, without disrupting the pack. To ride like that in the pack causes major problems with the formation.

Another change for this year: We are requesting that you register at a scheduled overnight stop. You will not be allowed to just join into our formation. We will have motorcycle registration and special motorcycle identification. If your motorcycle is not identified as being registered, you will not be allowed to ride in our formation. You will get your motorcycle identification at the time you register.

We have made some special provisions for the Northern Independent Riders to register. Papa Smurf and Recon Don will have that information. We wish the group up North a blessed ride.

We will not collect emergency information this year. We have decided that it is your responsibility to take care of yourself with respect to that data. We have created an Emergency Data form which is included in this newsletter. You can print this out ahead of time and bring it with you. We will also have copies available at registration. We will provide a 4 x 6 inch plastic pocket for identification protection. We suggest that you complete one form to carry on your person and one to place on your bike.

A web site issue: We have had numerous questions about what happened to the photos. It seems that the problem is file size. We have limited space on our web site. Therefore, in order to utilize our space for as much information as possible, we limit file size on photos. In the past, we have asked that photos be sent in jpeg basic format. Some people do and some don't. We have received file sizes from 3 to 7 Meg in size. Those files shut down our photo system. Also in the past, we have tried to work with them. Now we are just going to dump file sizes that are too large. Follow the guidelines if you want your photos published. We are also going to selectively edit photos. We will only publish those that seem to be of general interest to Run participants or that are of acceptable quality. More on this will be published later.

**THE GATHERING:** We have put together a special end of RFTW XVII at the primary hotel. This get together will take place Friday evening. We will have food and beverages, including some tap beer. There will be entertainment by the Coordinators Comedy Tour. Plus we have a few other activities in development. Don't miss it. Cost will be \$20 per person. Please plan on joining us for an evening of reunion, fun and fellowship in celebration of the successful completion of our pilgrimage.

I will be on the Southern Route again this year. Those friends that I have on the Central Route, may you have a good ride; and the Good Lord willin', I'll see you in DC. My new friends on the Southern Route, may we enjoy the warm wind in our faces together. I'll see you along the way. 'till later.

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[top of page](#)

## **RFTW SOUTHERN ROUTE 2005**

By John "Slammer" Gebhards

Welcome to the Southern Route of "Run For The Wall". Our Mission for the 17th year will be to tell our story to countless Americans who have never heard it. "To promote healing among all veterans and their families and friends, to call for an accounting of all Prisoners of War and those Missing in Action (POW/MIA), and to honor the memory of those Killed in Action (KIA)". We will be assisting in a healing that is 30 plus years overdue for some, and we will be rejoicing with family we haven't seen in a year or more.

I would like to share some very important information with all of you before you begin the Run. First of all, remember that this is a MISSION, not a party. We are riding for those who can't. We want to make sure that every

rider gets to their appointed destination, and that those that need healing receive it.

There are a few simple rules that will assist all of us in making this happen. First of all, remember there are many FNG's (Fun New Guys) with us and we need to assist them as often as we can. Secondly, we have Road Guards (those wearing the yellow arm bands) who will be putting themselves in harms way to make sure we all get to DC. Please follow their instructions without question. They know what they are doing, and have our best interests and safety at heart.

Next, remember that the Southern Route riding order is lead element, 1st Platoon (side-by-side), 2nd Platoon (staggered), 3rd Platoon (staggered), 4th Platoon (staggered) and large groups (i.e., American Legion Riders), 5th Platoon-trikes, sidecars, and bikes with trailers, white support van, chase trucks and finally our Administration Trailer. We will be placing Platoon Leaders and Pace Setters in the lead of each platoon. Be sure when you register to get a hand book. This will give you all the up-dated Run information, as well as, the hand signals. You will also receive a wrist band, bike identification and an emergency and bike information form.

Fill out the emergency information and bike disposition form and keep the form with you at all times. We will provide you with a plastic holder and you can purchase an RFTW lanyard at the merchandise trailer.

Every morning we will have a rider's briefing (7:30-7:45am); this meeting is MANDATORY for ALL riders. You will need to have your bike packed, checked out, gassed and ready for departure. We expect to see you there, as important new information will be given out as needed.

Gas stops are another thing you need to understand. Before you leave home, supply your wallet with \$5 bills and \$1 bills. When you pull up to the pump (side by side) have your money (cash) ready, as we will be filling up and going to staging as rapidly as possible. We will have pump jockeys that will handle the gas pump and receive your money and assist you. When you pay, we round UP to the next dollar (the excess helps gas the chase trucks). There will be a credit island for those who will be paying with plastic. Watch for the Road Guards directing you to the credit pump. Pay and immediately move on to staging. Follow the instructions of the Road Guards and Staging Manager, as they will direct you to staging. Then you can use the facilities, and/or purchase any needed items.

For those of you who are friends of Bill W., meetings are coordinated throughout the Run. Be sure to find out who the Bill W. coordinator is within your Route group. There is great strength and help in this area among the RFTW group.

There is an emergency phone number that will be included in your Daily Itinerary. Call your loved-ones and share this number with them before your departure on the Run.

We will be sharing much more information with you as you register, and at each morning briefing. Please feel free to ask questions of the Route Coordinator, John Gebhards, Assistant Run coordinator, Don Morris, Road Guard Captain, Joe Cappell, Administration/Registration, Shirley Scott, 1st Platoon, Ron Berg and John Duffy, 2nd Platoon, Frank Perry and Greg Smith, 3rd Platoon, Roger Mead and Glenn Scott, 4th Platoon, Rich Little and Dick Jacobs, 5th Platoon, David David and Jim David, and any Road Guard, as we are all here to assist you.

Helmets will be worn in States where the law requires them and also during Rolling Thunder's "Ride for Freedom".

Welcome Home and Welcome to the "Run for the Wall" family.

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[\*top of page\*](#)

## **RIDE SAFELY ON THE RUN**

By Lee "Stump" Vela

Leave no one behind! The RFTW organization says this is a mission, not a party. Whatever tugs your short hairs, YOUR GOAL should be to arrive safely in Washington, D.C. along side your brothers and sisters. Remember the fallen, the missing, the unaccounted for, and, most of all, never forget their living souls in the faces of your brothers and sisters.

This is our yearly trek in celebration and respectful remembrance of all of our brothers and sisters, past, Present and future. Remember this...Be worthy. Be upright. Leave your 'tudes at home. Be safe. Do I hear a hoo-rah?

With these things in mind, I come to the gist of this little article. There is not enough said about the pack's safety. Pack safety comes down to the individual riders. Every year, and most recently, the two RFTW Routes have had their fair share of "incidents." Many of these incidents are ostensibly caused by inattentive riding. The Road Guards can't be everywhere.

The platoon system was implemented in 2002 by a thoughtful BOD. It was hoped that this system would cut down the number of safety incidents by reducing the number of bikes in a pack. It has not panned out thoroughly. Though I do not have the exact numbers, there are too many accidents. The factors vary; green riders, zoned-out riders, careless riders, lack of sleep, lack of riding skills, lack of safety consciousness, equipment failures, lack of experience, road hazards, weather, aggressive cage drivers, et al.

This may come as a surprise to many that I would advocate this, but I think a motorcycle safety class should be mandatory. OK, if not mandatory, strongly advised. This, and a check for valid motorcycle license. Yeah, it is a free country and you can do what you want, but riding like a hapless fool in a 500 plus pack deserves its own rewards -- a good kick in the butt.

It is never too late to take a safety refresher motorcycle course, basic or advanced. If you do not have a motorcycle endorsed license, you have no business in a pack, go to the rear. This is no white river rafting trip. Practice! Practice! Practice! Know this: You can never have enough riding experience. Practice riding two-up. If you are uncomfortable riding two-up, go to the rear. Review your strengths, review your weaknesses. Anyone cocky enough to think they are too good to practice is a fool looking to get his or her butt kicked and someone else injured. Remember this as you prepare for this year's Run.

Put a good number of miles on your bike before the Run, especially if you just bought the dang thing. I remember one guy with 20 miles on his new scooter when he showed up in Ontario. Get real! Know your bike.

Get your bike properly serviced by motorcycle professionals. If you have the knowledge and the skill, do it yourself, but get it done. In 1999, one foolish rider came with no brake pads, worn tires and unsecured fender struts. No, he did not kill anyone, but he could have. Service and safety inspect your bike!

Pay attention. If you are tired, pull it over. Fatigue and drowsiness can impair your ability to react. Really, if you find yourself suddenly realizing (huh?) you are in a pack, you were probably half asleep with your head in your rear -- pull it over. You know where the next stop is or you should know. Know the route itinerary. You can and will catch up.

If you are uncomfortable with the present circumstances and position in the pack you find yourself in, pull the heck over, go to the rear of the pack (NOTE: Look and signal before you do so). No one needs or wants someone in the middle of the pack nervously throttling back and forth, trying to determine if they are too close or too far from the next scooter up. If you are warned more than three times by an irate Road Guard, it is a safe bet that you are riding like a fool. Go to the rear of the pack, do not Pass Go, do not collect \$5.

When in the middle of the pack, do not lock up your brakes. Find an out and take it. There is no reason for you or anyone else in the pack to panic and lock up your tires. Use your transmission gears to slow your bike down, stay off your brakes as much as possible. If you cannot gauge your riding distance properly, go to the rear of the pack. C'mon, this is not rocket science!



The whole tamale is to get to Washington D.C. safely on your scooter, not in an ambulance. Be safe!

### **WATCH THE BLIND NO-ZONES**

Try not to hang out in a truck's blind spot or "No-Zone." Trucks and cages both have No-Zones on both sides, front and back. Truck drivers cannot see you when you ride in these blind spots, which allows for a greater chance of a crash. The front blind spot is particularly dangerous if you need to stop quickly. Generally, your bike can be seen as you are in the pack, but never assume this. Avoid crashes before they happen.

### **ALWAYS WEAR A HELMET**

Make sure to always wear a helmet. Yeah, I know, there are states that do not require you to wear a helmet and, therefore, you have your choice. BUT, helmets are the most important piece of equipment you can wear when riding your motorcycle on the highway. A helmet could save your brain in a crash.

### **DRIVE TO SURVIVE**

Motorcycles are the smallest vehicles on the road. They provide virtually no protection in a crash. You are in a large pack so the cage drivers will see the pack, but not if you break away. Whether in the pack or riding solo, you must be aware of everything on the road. Be extra cautious, paying attention to the signals and brake lights of other vehicles, especially trucks. Ride with caution and ride defensively. Even though you think you are the biker nation's premier rider, adhere to the laws of the road. Don't instigate aggressive driving with cage motorists; you will only increase the chance of a crash for you or your fellow riders.

### **CHECK YOURSELF AND YOUR BIKE**

Conduct a safety inspection of your motorcycle at each stop and start, and wear protective clothing including gloves, boots -- no tennis shoes -- and a jacket. Proper maintenance and protective clothing will help reduce your chance of a crash or the severity of injury if you are involved in a crash. Know your skill level.

### **WATCH YOUR SPEED**

Of all vehicles, motorcycles accelerate the fastest. Duh! Watch your speed - especially in bad weather or at night. Remember you may not be the only one out there that is invisible. Colliding with the back of a truck will end your riding days. Keep a steady throttle in the pack. Keep a consistent braking distance. Know what your riding partner is going to do before he/she does it. Expect cage drivers to assume that all bikes will stay together in turns and at stops. Expect cage drivers not to see you when you are riding solo. Scan ahead. Pay attention, be alert. Be sober and responsible. Stay alive. Be a good rider. Protect the safety and well being of your brothers and sisters.

Ride free and ride hard. You can rest when you're dead! See you all soon. Never Forget.

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[top of page](#)

### **ONE RIDERS OPINION**

By Les Egge

If you are thinking about joining the Run For The Wall, read this and pay attention!!!

### **THIS RIDE MAY NOT BE FOR YOU!!!**

This is a demanding ride that may be above your skill level. This run may well be the largest, fastest long distance ride in the world!!! Of the 300,000 or so bikes that fill the pentagon parking lot for "Rolling Thunder" - RFTW is unique.

- This ride takes teamwork. This is not "your" ride, this is a unit ride with a serious mission.

- If you find it difficult to conform to the rules that are explained at every morning meeting, this ride is not for you.
- If you are not able to develop precise throttle control, this ride is not for you.
- If you are an inexperienced rider or lack confidence in your skills, this ride is not for you.

To get skills every rider must take a rider's course. The only riders who do not think a rider's course is needed, are people who haven't taken one. Lack of skill puts you and everyone around you at increased risk.

Your bike must be in good working order, with good brakes and tires. Remember, we are putting our lives in each others hands.

### RIDING INTERVAL

The formation must be tight to maintain safety and group cohesion. Large gaps invite cars and trucks to enter the formation which creates all sorts of problems. Sometimes you must let cars enter and exit through the pack. If an experienced rider or road guard is present, they will make a hole for the car to pass through, if not you may have to make the decision.

We generally ride two-up. It might be best for FNG's to ride on the right side and experienced riders to be on the left. To ride side by side someone must set the interval and having the left lane set the interval avoids confusion.

Road guards will come along beside you and ask you to get closer. They are not "mad at you" they are just keeping you safe.

### RUBBER BAND EFFECT

This is when the rider in front of you accelerates and widens your gap, forcing you to twist your throttle to maintain the interval. This is a normal condition that can and does get out of control. This is where "throttle control" is paramount.

### THROTTLE CONTROL

This is the amount you increase or decrease your throttle. To help pace your control, do not watch just the rider in front of you, watch the third rider in front of you in the opposite lane; this way you will get a much better feel for what the pack is doing. Example: the rider in front of you is pulling away and you see three riders ahead in the pack that are actually slowing. What do you do?? You start pacing to the pack farther ahead and either maintain your speed or start slowing gradually. This is all very subjective and the experience you gain as you go makes it easier.

### BRAKES

I'm convinced that if we disconnected every brake on every bike we could come very near to stopping the rubber band effect. OK, we can't do that. SO, DON'T HIT YOUR BRAKES UNLESS IT IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY!

Down-shift whenever possible. If you had been paying attention you probably wouldn't have needed either.

Remember throttle control?? When you hit your brakes every rider behind you hits theirs or backs off the throttle.

Now you just stressed all the riders behind you and if you do this all day long, this ride is beyond your ability. Some bikes don't slow as rapidly as others when the throttle is backed off. Goldwings, in particular, have a tendency to "light up their brakes". If you have this problem, run in a lower gear. This is not going to hurt your bike. I ride a Honda so I'm not picking on Hondas.

### HAND SIGNALS

If nobody hits their brakes and everybody is down shifting, how will you know when to start slowing? The answer is hand signals. The one for slowing is "flapping" your left arm up and down. If the riders in front of you are "flapping" you are to pass the signal back until you can see at least a couple bikes behind you signaling. If you see the slow signal way ahead, hold off until you are sure it's not just a localized event. When in doubt - "flap away". All the other



signals will be explained at every morning meeting.

## MORNING MEETINGS

Every morning there is a Riders Meeting. All riders **MUST** attend. If your time is too important to attend you are much too important to ride with RFTW. All riders must sign in and register to ride with us. Sign-in is before every morning meeting; this is where you receive your ID bracelet and your bike identification. This is how you are recognized as an RFTW Participant and how you can enjoy the benefits provided to us. Do not join the pack if you are not signed in. Ride on ahead and join up the next morning. There is much more to learn at the morning meetings and these are mandatory for all riders, **BE THERE!**

I would like to welcome all new riders and did not write this to scare you into not riding with RFTW, but rather to give you a heads-up on what to expect. Ask experienced riders for tips to help make your ride safer and more enjoyable. You will find a brotherhood in RFTW that is very open and willing to help. Don't be too "macho" or embarrassed to ask for help, we all need help. Remember, this is a team effort. "Never forget."

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[top of page](#)

## SUPPORTING OUR TROOPS

By Jim "Jumper" Braga



As you already know, a number of us Southern Cal. types who participate in the annual Run For The Wall got together on Saturday, January 22, 2005 and rode out to the City of Lake Elsinore to show our support for a wonderful lady named Paula Garver who for the past two years has been at the corner of Diamond Blvd. and Mission Trail Rd. in front of the Burger King showing her support for our troops serving overseas. I guess the best way to explain this to you is to begin at the beginning.

Shortly before the Christmas holidays I was driving through Lake Elsinore on my way to go skydiving and saw this lady with this huge smile, alone, standing on the sidewalk in front of the Burger King holding a poster and waving to motorists as they drove by. Around her were other posters and banners that read "WE SUPPORT OUR TROOPS" and "SUPPORT OUR TROOPS- HONK"!!! as well as, American flags and flags depicting the various branches of our military.

Being a Vietnam combat veteran, this really tugged at my heart and my emotions. I just had to stop and thank her for her patriotism and to find out just who this lady is. Paula Garver is a U.S. Marine Corps. Lt. Colonel, Retired, who served in Vietnam, Bosnia and Kosovo. She remembers when soldiers returning from Vietnam were looked down on, spat on and called names. She says that regardless of our views on the war in Iraq or Afghanistan we need to support our troops. After all, there just doing what they are told. They are the ones that are making the sacrifices. We need to show our support for them.

Paula began the "Support Our Troops " demonstration nearly two years ago as a fund raiser to send care packages to the troops. She said that there have been motorists stop and criticize her for her activities and for supporting the war, but she says she's not there to support the war, but to support the troops.

Paula is on a mission and said she will continue with this mission as long as our troops are in harms way. She is at the corner of Diamond Dr. and Mission Trail Rd. in Lake Elsinore, California every Saturday from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm rain or shine, most of the time she is alone except for her dog "Babushka" who accompanies her weekly. I was so taken by her sincerity and commitment that some of us Run For The Wall types got together and rode out to support her and the troops. Some of us also took care



packages for Paula to send to the troops. I want to thank Quick Throttle Magazine for their generous contribution of magazines for the troops.

You can bet we will be doing this again. Paula is some kind of lady.

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[top of page](#)

## **PAY ATTENTION!**

By Tom Lockett

Well the saddle sores aren't hardly healed from last year and here it is almost time to load up and hit the road once more on the most exciting, excruciating, heartbreaking, heartwarming, tear shedding and joy filled ride you will ever take. The sense of family that grows from L.A. to D.C. just can't be explained. This will only be my third year, but I can tell you that The Run has made a lasting impression on my life and from day one I have been richly blessed.

Altho we really do become like family and build friendships that are real and lasting to us, we usually want to, no, many of us have to be alone. So why are we riding thousands of miles in a group of wild eyed vets and supporters? We ride to heal and we heal by riding for this very just cause. Too many of our citizens don't have a clue as to how many of our brothers and sisters are still unaccounted for. Who can tell them better than those that served with them?

As part of the family, and I do feel like a part of this family; I would like to share a few things I have learned. PAY ATTENTION, PAY ATTENTION, PAY ATTENTION and then PAY ATTENTION once more. The people that ride in the positions of Coordinators, Pace Setters and Road Guards are there because some one believes that they have the abilities required to do the job. Watch them and learn from them. Always follow their directions. It just might save you or someone else from serious injury or worse. None of us like to see folks involved in accidents. But I believe that most can be avoided. All we have to do is PAY ATTENTION. Bad things happen to good people. RFTW has a system in place that tries to insure that all participants make it to D.C. safely. Remember that the Road Guards have to make decisions based on what they see at the moment. Some times it is a split second decision. Just Do it! They are there for you. It is a thankless job that deserves a lot of THANKS! Encourage them instead of arguing with them. My first year, J.R. yelled at me so much that I felt like I was in Boot Camp again. But I learned so much from him and the other Road Guards because I didn't take it personal. They were literally trying to keep us not only alive, but safe from harm. Remember that when they are trying to fit hundreds of bikes into a small area, it only takes one to throw the rest behind him out of sync.

Also, remember that as The Run progresses we all get more fatigued. The Pace Setters are there to try and keep a safe distance between the groups/platoons, however, we are all responsible for our own reaction time. Don't get hypnotized by the bike in front of you. Be aware of everything and everyone that might be a danger. This should be old news for anyone that has been through Basic Training and surely for combat vets. Reaction or lack of it is what made it a good day or a very bad day. That still holds true on this Run. Use your instincts. If you don't feel comfortable for any reason, get out of the pack in a safe manner. Don't endanger anyone else by being macho. **MACHO KILLS!**

Folks, it is just real easy to blame others for our weak areas, remember it is possible to fall asleep while riding. Take responsibility for your own actions. The life you save might be mine. The bottom line is, when you are sliding down the pavement, it is not the guys around you that are to blame. You are the only one in control of your machine. If it wasn't so, most of us wouldn't be riding. Because we know who's out there. RIDE SAFE and I will see you in Ontario.

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[top of page](#)

## **MISSING SOLDIER'S CASE TO BE REVIEWED**

USA TODAY - April 5, 2005

BATAVIA, Ohio - Each morning before she leaves for work, Carolyn Maupin says a prayer that someone will find or rescue her son Matt, the only U.S. soldier classified as a captive in Iraq and unaccounted for.

Now she has another wish -- that the Army will continue to believe he is alive.

On Wednesday, almost exactly a year after Spc. Matt Maupin disappeared, the Army is scheduled to convene a panel to decide whether he should remain classified as a captive or be considered dead.

"We don't want him to be forgotten," Carolyn Maupin said. "I am just afraid that if they move on, then what will we say when he shows up alive and we aren't there waiting for him?"

Top Army officials said Maupin has not been forgotten.

"We continue to look for Spc. Maupin, but we cannot provide any further details about those efforts," said Lt. Col. Pamela Hart, an Army spokeswoman.

Still, the law requires the Army to re-examine his case after a year, and a panel of officers will meet in Washington to review evidence linked to Maupin's disappearance.

They will decide whether to reclassify him as "deceased, body not recovered."

If reclassified, he would join 1,531 other service members who have died in the war in Iraq.

Maupin, who joined the Reserve in 2003, was captured April 9, 2004, after a firefight with Iraqi insurgents that killed two other soldiers from his platoon. He was later shown as a hostage in a video broadcast on an Arabic-language news channel.

Thousands of well-wishers have written or called his family.

In February, when the 724th Transportation Company out of Bartonville, Ill., his Reserve unit, came home, it did so without Maupin. That doesn't mean the Army will give up on him in Wednesday's meeting, said Sgt. Mike Bailey, 49, a member of the unit who said he got to know Maupin fairly well.

"I am an old Ranger, and we don't leave a soldier behind," Bailey said. "I don't think the Army will, either."

If the Army decides that Maupin is dead, it may be in part because of a second video that was shown on Arab television in June. That video purports to be footage of Maupin's execution, and it shows a uniformed figure with his back to the camera fall into a shallow grave.

"It just doesn't look like Matt," Carolyn Maupin said. "In my heart, I just knew it wasn't him. I still believe he is alive and out there somewhere."

Rob Lindley, a friend of Maupin's since sixth grade, said he is not surprised Maupin's disappearance has drawn so much attention.

"Matt gave a face to the war," Lindley said. "You can see him there in that video, you can empathize with him. He could be anybody's son, anybody's best friend."

*(The family of Matt Maupin will be joining the Central Route in Frankfort, KY. Mike Miles has confirmed that WLWT*

*TV from Cincinnati will be there, also, for media coverage.)*

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[\*top of page\*](#)

## **COME TO “THE GATHERING”**

From Patrick “Dragonrider” McCarthy

We are very pleased to announce that we are bringing back “The Gathering” on Friday night in Washington, DC. What a super way to celebrate the completion of our 10-day trek across the United States. This will be a time to wind-down, relax, mingle and meet riders from ALL of RFTW!

The event will be held at the Holiday Inn Arlington on Friday evening from 6:00pm to 10:00pm.

- **The Fare...**simple: Hamburgers and Hot Dogs, Potato Salad, Soft Drinks, etc.
  - **The Cost...**reasonable: \$20.00 per meal plus cups of draft beer available @ \$1.50 each.
  - **The Friendships...**PRICELESS!
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[\*top of page\*](#)

## **NATIONAL FORMER PRISONER OF WAR RECOGNITION DAY, 2005**

White House Press Release

A Proclamation by the President of the United States of America

From the time of our Nation's founding, members of our military have built a tradition of honorable and faithful service. As they fought to protect our security and defend our ideals, some endured the extreme hardship of enemy captivity. On National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day, we remember those courageous individuals taken prisoner while defending our country, and we honor their extraordinary sacrifices.

America's former prisoners of war are among our Nation's bravest heroes. Under the worst conditions, they fought fiercely and served with honor, and they continue to inspire generations with their strength and perseverance. In serving our Nation, each demonstrated personal courage, love of country, and devotion to duty. Because of their sacrifices, and the selflessness and heroism of all who have served in our Armed Forces, millions of people now live in freedom, and America remains the greatest force for good on Earth.

On this day, we honor their role in protecting our country and the liberty of mankind. Today, our brave men and women in uniform carry on their legacy -- unrelenting in battle, unwavering in loyalty, and unmatched in decency. As we pursue victory in the war on terror, I join all Americans in expressing our deepest gratitude to every service member who has been a prisoner of war and to their families.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE W. BUSH, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 9, 2005, as National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day. I call upon the people of the United States to join me in remembering former American prisoners of war by honoring their sacrifices. I also call upon Federal, State, and local government officials and private organizations to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this First day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty ninth.

GEORGE W. BUSH

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[\*top of page\*](#)

## **TAPS FOR PAUL KAREN**

From Barb Rosato

We have received notice of the passing of Paul Karen, (05/10/49 to 04/27/05) a Vietnam vet with two Purple Hearts. Paul passed away on Easter Sunday at the Syracuse, NY VA Hospital. Paul suffered a lot the last two years from Agent Orange complications. He was affectionately known as Panhead Paul. He built and rode vintage Harleys. Paul was known all over the country, as he sold vintage motorcycle parts. Paul was a true motorcycle man, proud veteran, a veteran's advocate, and involved in POW/MIA issues. We lost a good man, Paul will be missed by many. May he rest in peace.

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[\*top of page\*](#)

## **BIKERS KNOW:**

From Ken Sabo

Midnight bugs taste best.

Saddlebags can never hold everything you want, but they CAN hold everything you need.

Home is where your bike sits still long enough to leave a few drops of oil on the ground.

The only good view of a thunderstorm is in your rearview mirror.

Bikes don't leak oil, they mark their territory.

Never mistake horsepower for staying power.

If you don't ride in the rain - you don't ride.

A bike on the road is worth two in the shed.

Young riders pick a destination and go. . . Old riders pick a direction and go.

A good mechanic will let you watch without charging you for it.

Sometimes the fastest way to get there is to stop for the night.

Winter is Nature's way of telling you to polish your bike.

Well-trained reflexes are quicker than luck.

The best alarm clock is sunshine on chrome.

A friend is someone who'll get out of bed at 2:00am to drive his pickup to the middle of nowhere.

There's something ugly about a NEW bike on a trailer.

Practice wrenching on your own bike.

Never be ashamed to unlearn an old habit

Maintenance is as much art as it is science.

If you ride like there's no tomorrow - there won't be.

Gray-haired riders don't get that way from pure luck.

There are drunk riders. There are old riders. There are NO old, drunk riders.

No matter what marquee you ride, it's all the same wind.

Only a Biker knows why a dog sticks his head out of a car window.

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[\*top of page\*](#)

## **BELATEDLY, SOME THANKS FOR VIET VETS**

Joseph L. Galloway, Senior Military Correspondent  
Night Ridder Newspapers

Johnny finally came marching home again on a rainy day in late March in the town of Quincy, Mass. The town turned out to pay its respects to Edward Alan Brudno and to 47 other hometown sons who made the ultimate sacrifice in a war no one wanted.

Al Brudno was one of the longest-held American prisoners of war during Vietnam. He endured nearly eight years of torture and solitary confinement that began when he was shot down over North Vietnam in October 1965. He was 25 then. He survived to come home with the other POWs who were freed in 1973.

Four months later, the day before his 33rd birthday, Al Brudno took his own life. Last Memorial Day, his brother Bob and his widow, Debby, saw his name join the 58,244 others on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, with four more to be added on Memorial Day.

"The outpouring of respect and honor for my brother some 32 years after he died was extraordinary," Bob Brudno said of the ceremony in Quincy. Brudno said it wasn't too late to welcome his brother home and "it is not too late to welcome those who fought and hold inside the same bitterness that has eaten away at me these many years."

Brudno said the ceremony, held before a standing room-only crowd at the local high school, "was from one small town's heart."

In his own speech at that Quincy celebration, Brudno said, "For a while, I wondered why Alan's story attracted so much attention so many years after his death. I now understand. The war is not over for many who served in Vietnam - not just POWs. Unlike any war before Vietnam and none since, this one offered no glory to those sent in harm's way."

He continued, "Alan's generation, our generation, never got to become the 'greatest generation.' No less brave than those who landed at Normandy, our men were asked to risk their lives for their country and endure the horrors of war, but were denied the thanks and respect of a grateful nation. Today this country truly understands. I am happy that military service is again a noble calling. But for those of us affected by Vietnam directly or indirectly, the pain will



never go away."

Brudno said that even as the crowd recognized the service of his brother, "We must keep in mind the debt still owed to so many. We must never, ever blame the war on the warriors again."

He told the hometown crowd how his brother, a graduate of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology who was pursuing his dream of becoming an astronaut when he joined the Air Force, had resisted his captors in every way he could.

Al became a past master at the art of double-talk in the 20 letters that got through to his family during his long imprisonment. Intelligence agencies assigned specialists who, with the help of Al's family, decoded the hidden messages. Some contained clues to the names of American POWs the North Vietnamese had never acknowledged they were holding; others confirmed that the POWs were being tortured.

The Air Force acknowledged that Brudno was a Vietnam War casualty just as surely as anyone who caught an enemy bullet in the jungle. A military psychiatrist explained to Bob Brudno how his brother could give up even as he regained his freedom: "He just used up everything he had over those long years in captivity. There was no strength left with which to survive."

By his death, Al Brudno helped save many other lives. The military was shocked and realized that all the other POWs needed counseling and needed help restarting their lives. All the POWs began receiving that help, and it's now standard procedure for all returning American POWs.

It was 40 years ago this month that I landed in South Vietnam and began covering Americans at war in that place. In my four tours, I lived with and marched with soldiers and Marines and counted myself honored to be welcomed as one of them, through good times and bad.

They were fine young men, average age 19, doing their best to do their duty, doing their best to survive to make it home. What they found when they got home was a nation divided, many of their fellow Americans hating the war they had been ordered to fight. Some even hated them. Some called them baby-killers and murderers. Some spat on them and their uniforms.

Bob Brudno is right. This should never ever happen again in the land of the brave and the home of the free. Next time you see a Vietnam veteran, go over and thank him for his service to our country, then watch the tears come to his eyes.

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[\*top of page\*](#)

## **VIETNAM VETERANS TO BE HONORED POSTHUMOUSLY AT VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL IN WASHINGTON, DC**

In Memory Day Ceremony Recognizes Those Who Died From Non-Combat Injuries

Monday, April 18 at 10 a.m.

East Knoll-Constitution & 20th Street, NW

WASHINGTON, DC – One hundred thirty-seven (137) American war heroes will be honored posthumously at the Seventh Annual In Memory Day Ceremony at The Wall, announced Jan C. Scruggs, founder and president of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. ([View 2005 Honorees](#))

The event pays tribute to those who died prematurely due to non-combat injuries and emotional suffering caused directly by the Vietnam War, but who do not meet [Department of Defense guidelines](#) for inscription on The Wall. Many of their deaths are a result of Agent Orange exposure and emotional wounds that never healed.

More than 1,000 family members, friends and fellow veterans are expected to visit the nation's capital for the Ceremony on April 18 at 10 a.m. at the East Knoll, near The Wall at Constitution Avenue & 20th Street, NW.

During the ceremony, family members will read aloud the names of their loved ones in chronological order by date of death. Following the ceremony, participants will place tributes at the base of The Wall corresponding to the honorees' dates of service in Vietnam so they may rest among those comrades with whom they served. The addition of this year's honorees takes the In Memory Honor Roll up to more than 1,500 individuals.

"The Vietnam Veterans Memorial stands for all who fought and died in this war," Scruggs said. "This annual event brings together families and friends who have sustained similar tragedies, giving them the opportunity to share stories and help each other begin healing."

Welcoming Remarks:

Jan C. Scruggs, founder and president of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund  
Vikki Keys, superintendent, National Mall and Memorial Parks Speakers:

Linda George, wife of 2004 In Memory Honoree, Robert Lee George. Chief Warrant Officer George flew gunship cover for those spreading Agent Orange. He died of lung cancer and was buried with full military honors in Arlington National Cemetery.

Richard C. Schneider, executive director for government affairs for the Non Commissioned Officers Association. The Association's mission is to enhance and maintain the quality of life for non commissioned and petty officers in all branches of the Armed Forces, National Guard and Reserves. Performer:

Country musician and U.S. Navy Veteran, Chuck Price pays tribute to Vietnam veterans through many of his songs including: The Unsung Heroes and At The Wall. Event Sponsor  
The Non Commissioned Officers Association of the USA, with its headquarters in Alexandria, VA, is sponsoring the Seventh Annual In Memory Day Ceremony.

Patriots Day

The annual In Memory Day Ceremony is held on the third Monday of April. It coincides with Patriots Day, which commemorates the battles of Lexington and Concord at the start of the Revolutionary War – the first time Americans fought for freedom and democracy.

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[top of page](#)

## **RAINELLE, WEST VIRGINIA SCHOOL**

From Denise "Krispy" Ferris

For many years now, RFTW Central Route has been assisting the elementary school in Rainelle, WV. Along the route from Ontario all the way to Rainelle, we collect donations for the school in the "Million Pennies" jar. Shown below is a letter from John Lewis, Principal of the Rainelle Elementary School, to Denise "Krispy" Ferris, the West Virginia State Coordinator:

Denise,  
I wanted to share with you how things are going in Rainelle. Perhaps you could pass this information along to others.

We formed a committee to decide how the RFTW/RT money could be spent to best benefit all the kids at Rainelle. The committee, including a parent representative, listed several types of purchases that they felt would benefit all of our students. When you arrive, feel free to look around and see how your generosity has benefited our kids.

1. Equipment and supplies to make the library more appealing to kids.

2. Books and encyclopedias for the library.
3. Supplies for all kids to use.
4. Awards for achievement and recognition for the kids.
5. Gym toys and balls for the playground.
6. Flags for the classrooms and the flagpole
7. Spotlight on Schools performances at Carnegie Hall in Lewisburg.

We have had a great year and we look forward to seeing you and all the RFTW/RT brothers and sisters in May.

John Lewis, Principal

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[\*top of page\*](#)

## **HELP TO RETIRE YOUR WORN FLAG**

You can retire your tattered, worn out and frayed American flags without cost to you. Send your flags to the Kitchen Table Gang Trust, 42922 Avenue 12, Madera, CA 93638-8866 and we will dispose of your flags in a proper and dignified manner with full honors and dignity pursuant to the United States Flag Code Section 8K (PL93-344). We veterans have been doing this for the past seven years. Our flag retirement ceremonies are held on Flag Day, June 14th each year and are conducted by an all volunteer U.S. Marine Corps Honor Guard led by GySgt. Dan Kelley USMC (Ret.). The Kitchen Table Gang also has a nationally recognized educational program for our young people and students, teaching them the history, traditions and respect for our national emblem.

Thanks, Charles Taliaferro  
[ctaliaferro@kitchentablegang.org](mailto:ctaliaferro@kitchentablegang.org)  
THE KITCHEN TABLE GANG TRUST  
<http://www.kitchentablegang.org>

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[\*top of page\*](#)

## **PASSING OF A GENERATION**

Won't Be Long And They Will Be Gone

From a Military Doctor:

I am a doctor specializing in the Emergency Department of the only two military Level One-Trauma centers, both in San Antonio, TX and they care for civilian Emergencies as well as military personnel.

San Antonio has the largest military retiree population in the world living here as a military doctor, I work long hours and the pay is less than glamorous.

One tends to become jaded by the long hours, lack of sleep, food, family contact and the endless parade of human suffering passing before you. The arrival of another ambulance does not mean more pay, only more work.

Most often, it is a victim from a motor vehicle crash. Often it is a person of dubious character who has been shot or stabbed. With our large military retiree population, it is often a nursing home patient.

Even with my enlisted service and minimal combat experience in Panama, I have caught myself groaning when the ambulance brought in yet another sick, elderly person from one of the local retirement centers that cater to military retirees. I had not stopped to think of what citizens of this age group represented.

I saw "Saving Private Ryan." I was touched deeply. Not so much by the carnage, but by the sacrifices of so many. I was touched most by the scene of the elderly survivor at the graveside, asking his wife if he'd been a good man. I realized that I had seen these same men and women coming through my Emergency Dept. and had not realized what magnificent sacrifices they had made. The things they did for me and everyone else that has lived on this planet since the end of that conflict are priceless.

Situation permitting, I now try to ask my patients about their experiences. They would never bring up the subject without the inquiry. I have been privileged to an amazing array of experiences, recounted in the brief minutes allowed in an Emergency Dept. encounter. These experiences have revealed the incredible individuals I have had the honor of serving in a medical capacity, many on their last admission to the hospital.

There was a frail, elderly woman who reassured my young enlisted medic, trying to start an IV line in her arm. She remained calm and poised, despite her illness and the multiple needle-sticks into her fragile veins. She was what we call a "hard stick." As the medic made another attempt, I noticed a number tattooed across her forearm. I touched it with one finger and looked into her eyes. She simply said, "Auschwitz." Many of later generations would have loudly and openly berated the young medic in his many attempts. How different was the response from this person who'd seen unspeakable suffering.

Also, there was this long retired Colonel, who as a young officer had parachuted from his burning plane over a Pacific Island held by the Japanese. Now an octogenarian, his head cut in a fall at home where he lived alone. His CT scan and suturing had been delayed until after midnight by the usual parade of high priority ambulance patients. Still spry for his age, he asked to use the phone to call a taxi, to take him home, then he realized his ambulance had brought him without his wallet.

He asked if he could use the phone to make a long distance call to his daughter who lived 7 miles away. With great pride we told him that he could not, as he'd done enough for his country and the least we could do was get him a taxi home, even if we had to pay for it ourselves. My only regret was that my shift wouldn't end for several hours, and I couldn't drive him myself.

I was there the night MSgt. Roy Benavidez came through the Emergency Dept. for the last time. He was very sick. I was not the doctor taking care of him, but I walked to his bedside and took his hand. I said nothing. He was so sick, he didn't know I was there. I'd read his Congressional Medal of Honor citation and wanted to shake his hand. He died a few days later.

The gentleman who served with Merrill's Marauders, the survivor of the Bataan Death March, the survivor of Omaha Beach, the 101 year old World War I veteran, the former POW held in frozen North Korea, the former Special Forces medic - now with non-operable liver cancer, the former Viet Nam Corps Commander. I remember these citizens.

I may still groan when yet another ambulance comes in, but now I am much more aware of what an honor it is to serve these particular men and women.

I have seen a Congress who would turn their back on these individuals who've sacrificed so much to protect our liberty. I see later generations that seem to be totally engrossed in abusing these same liberties, won with such sacrifice.

It has become my personal endeavor to make the nurses and young enlisted medics aware of these amazing individuals when I encounter them in our Emergency Dept. Their response to these particular citizens has made me think that perhaps all is not lost in the next generation.

My experiences have solidified my belief that we are losing an incredible generation, and this nation knows not what it is losing. Our uncaring government and ungrateful civilian populace should all take note. We should all remember that we must "Earn this."

Written by CPT Stephen R. Ellison, M.D.  
(at present, the author is stationed at Ft Hood and is MAJOR Ellison)

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[top of page](#)

## **WELCOME HOME MY BROTHER**

By Wayne Nichols

Welcome Home my Brother,  
Sorry it took so long.  
Happy to have you in America  
Back home where you belong.

Welcome Home my Brother,  
It's taken so many years.  
You've never been far from my heart,  
You've often been in my tears.

Welcome Home my Brother,  
We know you did your best.  
We're proud to have you home with us,  
And we'll never forget the rest.

Welcome Home my Brother,  
Thank you is not enough to say.  
Welcome Home my Brother,  
We have prayed for this long awaited day.

*Wayne Nicholls, Vietnam Veteran (1970)*  
*B 2/40 – 199th Light Infantry Brigade*  
*Written: April 13, 2005*

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[top of page](#)

## **A SOLDIER'S HERO**

By John McWaters

New Mexico has a large Veterans community, one that accounts for roughly 12% of the total population. If you include families, all of who share the toll that war takes on a person, that percentage is considerably larger.

How we deal with the toll of wartime and the trauma associated with conflict is telling. Dealing with the aftermath, emotional and physical, tests a government's promise to its people as well as the character of the nation, because combat creates victims and heroes long after the fighting stops.

Recent events have placed a greater emphasis on soldiers, and the yellow ribbon has become a ubiquitous sight on car bumpers and lapels virtually everywhere. It is encouraging to see soldiers receive recognition for their sacrifices. However, the question remains; are soldiers automatically heroes for having served in the military?

We, as Americans, owe a debt of gratitude for any and all of those who answer the call to service. However, when a

soldier has been in combat, their heroism is more than symbolic; the face of death has defined it.

Once the combat soldier is no longer “wet behind the ears” and has experienced the ravages of combat, their outlook changes. Combat, as is said, is “a whole new ballgame”. The winner having taken a life and the loser is having been relieved of theirs.

About 50,000 New Mexicans are combat veterans.

For me, my combat experience in Viet Nam created a long-ranging social and psychological impact that I still feel to this day, and will never forget.

Fortunately, some 30 years after my tour, I met another veteran at the Veterans Administration Medical Center (VAMC) in Albuquerque. This man, who I met by chance, and who shall remain anonymous, knew of my combat experience. He shared my outlook and understood my pain. He also introduced me to another veteran whom would ultimately change my life for the better.

That veteran, George Martinez, an Air Force Vet, is a Veterans Service Officer (VSO) with the New Mexico Department of Veterans’ Services. He was located in the VAMC at the time. Although not a combat veteran, Martinez remains a hero to me and I owe him a lot for what he has done to help me on the road to recovering from the traumas of combat.

Martinez was quick to determine my Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and he advised me how to start the process of recovery and, specifically, how and where to receive access to appropriate health care. Martinez also helped me file a VA disability claim for PTSD.

I was an Infantry Army platoon leader with the 25th Infantry Division in Viet Nam. In addition to Martinez the veteran who got me in to see a VSO also deserves to be designated a hero for the concern and direction he gave me after the firefights had ended. I had been urged to get help by many close friends but it took another veteran to get my attention to act on it.

I too want to be a hero now, helping other veterans from the current conflicts. All combat veterans should be encouraged to seek out similar assistance to that George Martinez offered me. Veterans of combat in Afghanistan and Iraq are similarly disposed to a wide range of PTSD-related problems, such as homelessness, substance abuse, anger, depression, and suicide, among others. Untreated, these problems ravage a person’s whole life, as well as the lives of those they love and of those who love them.

The service of combat veterans is extraordinary; consequently, the pain they have experienced should not be considered ordinary pain. It is unique and requires special attention. Having them directed into treatment, the more recent combat veterans – and those who provide them guidance and support – can ensure that their lives and their families are less disrupted than one who suffers from lifelong PTSD as I did.

For starters, local Vet Centers, VAMC Mental Health Departments, NMDVS, and NM State Health Agencies want to help. Whether or not you have seen combat, to returning veterans, you can be a hero now. Let them know that it is all right to be troubled by what has happened and help them to seek out help. It will make a world of difference to how they live the rest of their life.

*John McWaters was awarded the Purple Heart and the Combat Infantry Badge. He recently left the New Mexico Department of Veterans’ Services, where he served as Deputy Director. He is now the Veterans Outreach Director for the Democratic Party of New Mexico and can be reached by email at [john@nmdemocrats.org](mailto:john@nmdemocrats.org) or by telephone at 505-830-3650.*

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## **NEW HANDBOOK UPDATES VETERANS BENEFITS**

WASHINGTON (April 15, 2005)-- A new edition of the popular handbook Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) updates the rates for certain federal payments and outlines a variety of programs and benefits for American veterans.

Most of the nation's 25 million veterans qualify for some VA benefits, which range from health care to burial in a national cemetery. In addition to describing benefits provided by VA, the 2005 edition of the 120-page booklet provides an overview of programs and services for veterans provided by other federal agencies.

Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents includes resources to help veterans access their benefits, with a listing of toll-free phone numbers, Internet addresses and a directory of VA facilities throughout the country.

The handbook can be downloaded free from VA's Web site at <http://www.va.gov/opa/feature/>.

The handbook is one of the top selling consumer publications of the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO). GPO accepts credit card orders for the publication at 866-512-1800 (toll-free) for a cost of \$7 each to U.S. addresses, or \$67 for bulk orders of 25 copies. It can be ordered by mail from the GPO at Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250-7954 (stock #051-000-00228-8).

In addition to health-care and burial benefits, veterans may be eligible for programs providing home loan guaranties, educational assistance, training and vocational rehabilitation, income assistance pensions, life insurance and compensation for service-connected illnesses or disabilities. In some cases, survivors of veterans may also be entitled to benefits.

The handbook describes programs for veterans with specific service experiences, such as prisoners of war or those concerned about environmental exposures in Vietnam or in the Gulf War, as well as special benefits for veterans with severe disabilities.

## **JOINT POW/MIA ACCOUNTING COMMAND**

*Fulfilling the Mission of RFTW to call for an accounting of all Prisoners of War and those Missing in Action (POW/MIA)*

The Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), located on the island of Oahu in Hawaii, was activated on October 1, 2003. JPAC's mission is to achieve the fullest possible accounting of all Americans missing as a result of our nation's previous conflicts. Our highest priority is the return of any living Americans that remain prisoners of war.

JPAC was created from the merger of the 30 year old U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory, Hawaii, and the 11 year old Joint Task Force - Full Accounting. This 425-person organization, commanded by a flag officer, is committed and dedicated to bringing home the nation's service members and civilians who made the ultimate sacrifice.

JPAC recognizes that the efforts and involvement of our POW/MIA families contribute significantly to our success. JPAC owes a great deal of gratitude to the families and veterans who support our mission.

We are a jointly manned unit with handpicked Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines with specialized skills and

Department of the Navy civilians who make up about 25 percent of the organization. The laboratory portion of JPAC, referred to as the Central Identification Laboratory (CIL), is the largest forensic anthropology laboratory in the world.

Our mission is daunting, with approximately 78,000 Americans missing from World War II (of those, an estimated 35,000 are deemed recoverable, with the others lost at sea or entombed in sunken vessels), 8,100 missing from the Korean War, 1,800 missing from the Vietnam War, 120 missing from the Cold War, and one serviceman missing from the Gulf War.

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[\*top of page\*](#)

## **OUR FAVORITE “BISCUIT BOY” MAKES EAGLE SCOUT**

Kyle "Biscuit Boy" LaFrenier, a young man close to the hearts of many of the RFTW family, has reached a major goal in his young life, the achievement of Eagle Scout on March 18, 2005. We are very proud of you Kyle and wish you many more great successes in your life!

Kyle lives in Colorado Springs, Colorado. He is 15 years old and in tenth grade. He has been part of our RFTW Family since 1999.

Kyle's dad served 14 years in the Army, where he led the soldiers of "Devil's Den Forward," the official field kitchen of Fort Riley's 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division. In 1999, Kyle came with his dad's platoon to help make breakfast for RFTW in Salina, Kansas. Kyle wore his Boy Scout uniform, and got the job of serving the biscuits. Biscuit's?..... Wonder why we call him "Biscuit Boy"????

At that breakfast in Salina Kyle not only got his nickname, he won the hearts of dozens of riders with RFTW, and Biscuit Boy and his family became a permanent part of the RFTW family.

Kyle's grandfather was a Korean and Vietnam War Vet. He always wanted to ride with RFTW, but health problems prevented him making the trip. During RFTW 2000, Kyle's grandfather was in Hospice and an RFTW Rider put Grandpa's name on the front of his bike and took him to the Wall with him. When RFTW reached DC, Kyle was with his grandpa as they watched CSPAN and they told Grandpa about his rider, HE CRIED! Kyle's Grandpa passed away August 1, 2000. At his funeral in Logan National Cemetery, he received his well-deserved full military honors. Kyle remembers that he cried when TAPS was played, and he jumped at the 21 gun salute.

In 2002, Biscuit Boy and his family met the Run in Colorado Springs, and accompanied the Run to Limon. While the rest of the family traveled on 4 wheels, Kyle put on his helmet and joined the pack as a passenger on R.C. Busha's bike, a ride that is a treasured memory for both.

For Kyle, (as with so many of us,) RFTW is not just a once-a-year event, but an extended family, and a passion that lasts all year long. In 2002, Kyle decided to be a part of the RFTW Mission in a very special way - by making Run For The Wall the beneficiary of his Eagle Scout project.

Earning the rank of Eagle Scout is an achievement that requires years of dedication to attain. In addition to earning at least 21 merit badges showing proficiency in many areas, ranging from first aid and Life-saving to communications, camping and citizenship, (all of which must be completed before turning 18 years old,) the rank of Eagle Scout also requires that each Scout plan, lead and complete a service project which provides a real benefit to the community.

For his service project, Kyle wanted to serve the riders and mission of Run For The Wall by providing lunch for the entire Central Route when the Run stopped in his home town of Colorado Springs.

Kyle's proposal was approved, and he spent the following year planning all the logistics associated with feeding lunch

to over 500 hungry bikers on a tight time schedule. He solicited donations of food and money, coordinated his efforts with other Run supporters and the media, and provided leadership to a team of fellow Boy Scouts who worked together to make sure that the food was ready and everything was ready to go when RFTW rolled into town. Lunch was served without a hitch, and everyone raved at how well organized - and delicious - the meal was. It was a true achievement.

In addition to school, Scouting and many other activities, Kyle is also an off-road motorcycle enthusiast, and he's now working on rebuilding a street-legal motorcycle so that as soon as he has his license, he can ride along with RFTW. I'd be proud to have Kyle along with us, as his service to his Brothers and Sisters in Run For The Wall, and his devotion to the RFTW Mission make him an example of loyalty and commitment, and maturity beyond his years.

Biscuit Boy and his family plan to have their annual visit with RFTW as we ride through Colorado this year. If you're riding with the Central Route, please keep an eye out for this handsome young man. If you haven't yet met Biscuit Boy, introduce yourself. Thank him for his support, and congratulate him on his impressive achievement of earning Eagle Scout.

What a FINE YOUNG MAN you are KYLE!!!!!!

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[top of page](#)

## **AID FOR IRAQ WAR VETERAN AND HIS FAMILY**

The Silvestre Herrera Veteran's Council, #1087 invites you to a Benefit Dinner and Dance for Erik Castillo and his family. Erik is an Iraq War Veteran and was severely wounded. He is currently at Walter Reed Hospital, DC for the first of many reconstructive surgeries to his skull (65% repair required) plus his eye and ear. A benefit fund has been set up for Erik and his family. To learn more about this or to contribute, please contact Bobby Biers for more information: [bobbybiersusmc@cox.net](mailto:bobbybiersusmc@cox.net).



The event will be held Saturday, May 14, 2005 at the American Legion Post 41, 715 S. 2nd Ave Phoenix, AZ (2nd Ave. & Grant) from 6:00pm to Midnight. Dinner will be served at 6:30pm. Raffles held Thru-Out The Evening. The dancing beings at 8:00pm. Cost is \$20.00 per person.

For Tickets Call: Maria 602-279-9777, Andy 602-269-5877, Alberto 602-252-1310, Bobby 480-348-1890 or Les 602-331-3236.

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[top of page](#)

## **WHAT TO PACK FOR THE RUN**

If you were to pack everything that is listed below, you would look like the Beverly Hillbillies on a motorcycle. But FNG's always want to know what they should bring on the Run, so some "seasoned guys" put together this list of items you might want to include in your packing. You will likely delete some of these and you will invariably see something you need that we missed on the list. But with this good starting point, we like to help you prepare each year. Just remember that there is many a "Wally World" along the path of each Route.

Motorcycle

· American & POW/MIA Flags for the bike

· Underwear & Socks (at least 6 pair)

· Thermal Underwear

· Jammies (or shorts or sweat pants)

- T-bag and/or saddle bags
- Water Bottle (sport bottle or Camelback)
- Bungee Cords (lots of them)
- Duct Tape
- Tool Kit
- Regular and Allen Wrenches
- Screwdrivers
- Spark Plugs and Wrench
- Wire Ties, Zip Ties
- Shop rags
- WD 40
- Clamps
- Rope
- Jumper Cables
- Funnel
- Can of Fix-a-flat
- Tire repair kit
- Replacement Light Bulbs
- Fuses
- Super Glue
- 6' of 1/4" plastic hose or turkey baster (to siphon gas)
- Motorcycle oil (however much your bike needs)
- Helmet (DOT legal)
- Helmet (not so legal)
- Bandanna or do-rag
- Warm knit cap for under helmet and/or sleeping
- Ski mask
- Heavy Jacket
- Light weight jacket
- Chaps
- Warm Gloves
- Summer Gloves
- Rain Gear (Jacket, pants and galoshes)
- Padlock
- Trash Bags for covering T-Bag in Rain, laundry, etc.
- Zip-Lock bags (all sizes) organizes & keeps stuff dry
- Extra pair of boots
- Jeans (2-3 pair)
- T-shirts (at least 5)
- Long-sleeved T-shirt (for Mojave desert)
- Warm Sweat-Shirt

- Hankies
- Shower Shoes
- Bath Towel
- Wash Cloth (in zip-lock bag)
- Toilet Kit
- Toothbrush
- Toothpaste
- Soap
- Deodorant
- Shampoo
- Comb and/or brush
- Roll of TP in zip-lock bag (be prepared)
- Sun Block (don't leave home without it!)
- Chapstick
- Personal first aid kit
- Medications in marked containers
- Prescription glasses
- Sun glasses or goggles (2 pair)
- Ear Plugs
- Laundry detergent (in heavy zip-lock bag)
- Small sewing kit
- Money
- Credit Cards/Traveler's Checks
- Driver's License
- Insurance information
- Dog tags for emergency identification
- Emergency info: Next of kin, home and work phone numbers, doctors' phone numbers. List of prescription medications, glasses prescription, bank information
- Cell phone and/or pager
- Road Maps and Run Schedule
- Business cards (to exchange with new friends)
- Note Pad & Pencil
- Camera & Film
- Items you want to leave at The Wall
- List of names you want to locate on The Wall
- YOUR OWN STUFF:

#### CAMPERS

- Tent with pegs
- Waterproof Ground Cloth/Tarp
- Sleeping Bag
- Sleeping Mat or Cot
- Folding chair or camp stool
- Flashlight with extra batteries

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[top of page](#)

## CARRY YOUR EMERGENCY MEDICAL INFORMATION

How many times do we take off on a motorcycle ride with only our Driver's License in our wallet for identification. Often times we are participating in a group ride, but in order to clear out the cobwebs, we might take that solitary ride

a long ways away from civilization and our known community. Please, please print this form and complete the information requested. It could save your life in the event of an accident; not only during your private rides, but also during Run For The Wall.

These forms will also be available at registration during RFTW. We will provide you with a plastic pocket to protect the document. There will also be RFTW Lanyards for sale at the merchandise trailer that you can purchase for \$2.00. You can hook the plastic pocket to the lanyard and wear it around your neck for easy access. Ride Smart! Place one form in your bike and keep one form on your person.

[Click here for online printable form of  
PERSONAL / MEDICAL / EMERGENCY INFORMATION](#)

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[top of page](#)

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