



RUN FOR THE WALL

Quarterly Newsletter

“We Ride For Those Who Can’t”

April 2011

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THE EDITOR’S NOTES



On February 27 the last American ‘doughboy’ passed away. Frank Buckles, 110, was one of only two remaining World War I veterans in the world. With his death, only Claude Stanley Choules, 110 remains as the last confirmed World War I veteran in the world. Rest in peace, Corporal Frank Buckles—you served well. Read more about Buckles in TAPS.

Be sure to read the remarks of Vice Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Peter Chiarelli in this issue. Chiarelli was the speaker at the Philadelphia Union League’s Blue Star Mothers dinner and panel discussion. He spoke about today’s soldiers returning wounded and/or with PTSD or traumatic brain injuries.

The subject of our wounded soldiers is a very important issue, especially PTSD. For years PTSD was swept under the rug, something to be ashamed of. Although the military for years has offered treatment, many

servicemembers refuse to accept help because of the stigma. They fear that getting help will come back to bite them, especially when seeking a job.

One Vietnam veteran has chosen to fight the stigma in a unique way. Ron Zaleski set off from Concord, Mass. in June 2010 to walk across America—barefooted—to raise awareness of our soldiers who are committing suicide. He knows the only way our soldiers will get the help they need is by making PTSD counselling mandatory for ALL soldiers, thereby removing the stigma. He has addressed Congress on the subject and is collecting signatures on his petition to make counselling mandatory

I interviewed Ron for a local newspaper when he walked through Arizona in February. He reached his destination, Santa Monica Pier, ahead of schedule and is now on the return trip. He stops wherever cities, churches, and veterans' organizations want him to speak. Ron has agreed to speak to the RFTW Central Route on Friday, May 20. He will meet riders at the lunch stop at Camel Rock Casino in Albuquerque. Be sure to sign his petition to help our warriors with PTSD.

Ron will continue collecting signatures in every state until he goes back to Congress on November 11 to present the petitions. Please go to Ron's website, www.thelongwalkhome.org, to see if he is in your area, and also to sign his petition. And please read more about Ron in this issue. He needs our help to get something done about helping our soldiers with PTSD.

April 18 is In Memory Day, the day we pause to honor the memory of our veterans who have died as a result of the Vietnam War. Although these warriors' names are not on the Vietnam Wall, their sacrifices must never be forgotten. A movement is in place to build a second Wall for the names of these heroes.

Judy "Velcro" Lacey

*Freedom is never free. It is paid for with the blood of the brave.
It is paid for with the tears of their loved ones. It is up to us to
preserve and defend that which they have paid so dearly for.*

► RFTW CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

READY TO STRETCH YOUR HEART?

When our first grandson was three he found out he was getting a baby brother, so he confided in me. Because I often told him, "I love you with all my heart," he was worried my heart wouldn't be big enough for a second grandson. I quickly responded, "Oh, Chase, I do love you with all my heart, but when there's another grandson coming, God makes a heart bigger." Another three years go by, Chase came to me and said, "God is going to have to stretch your heart again, there's 'anudder brudder' on the way."

The heart of Run For The Wall is being stretched, preparing our hearts for our 2011 FNGs.

All the preparation of Route Leadership, financial and business details, paperwork, supplies, forms, web page updates, etc., yet, the Board of Directors and your Route Coordinators and their Teams, remain focused on the FNGs who will be joining us next month. We challenge each experienced RFTW rider to adopt an FNG, watch for those anxious moments, and be supportive.

A Few Unsung Heroes!!



Whether it is a community, an organization, a local or national business, a veteran or veterans group, a biker club, school children, or an over the top individual—no matter who the people are who wave a flag, salute us as we slow for a parade, or serve us when we stop for fuel and/or meals.

More Than 90 Communities Host Run For The Wall

Please remember to thank the individuals you meet along your route

Yes I counted them! There are more than 90 host cities/towns. They host and serve the two Routes, not to mention the number of volunteers at each stop along the way. So, when you see one of our State Coordinators, give them a big hug and a huge "Thank You." Every state that Run For The Wall goes through has a Coordinator behind the scenes, planning your stops, working with local groups to cover the cost of meals, arranging fuel stops, hotels, pre-riding the highways, setting up port-a-potties . . . so many fine details.

Your Route Coordinator is in touch with each of these individuals throughout the year, so that your Itinerary booklet is as correct as possible before it goes to press.

Harry "Attitude" Steelman and Richard "Preacher" Moore have worked hard all this year. They each have leadership teams in place and as time draws closer they will be leaning more and more on the Team Leaders to take the reins for their area of responsibility. The Board has supported them as they have made decisions about this year's Run. The Board serves as a resource to your Route Leadership Team, giving them continuity from one year to the next and equipping them for a successful Run.

At the end of June, I will be stepping down as Chairman of the Board. It has been an incredible honor to serve each of you over the last few years. It has stretched my heart!

P.S. A huge thank you to Judy "Velcro" Lacey (we've been confused more than once!!) Judy L. I appreciate you and all you do for RFTW. Judy C.

Judy "Sugarbear" Cockrum, Chairman
Run For The Wall XXIII, Board of Directors

► RFTW 2011 NEWS

RFTW XXIII California Master Schedule

Rancho Cucamonga, CA - Hilton Garden Inn

MONDAY

May 16, 2011

Time: Meeting: Location: Presentors:

8:00 - 8:30 AM BOD & Route Leadership Briefing Hilton Garden Inn Board, RC's, *Martha Steelman*

9:00 - 10:00 AM Merchandise/Supplies Distribution Merchandise Trailers *Riedel, McDowell*

10:00 - 11:00 AM Finance Orientation Hilton Garden Inn Barker, *Riedel, McDowell*

(RC/ARCs, Registration Teams, Merchandise Teams, Route Finance and Chase Teams)

12:00 - 1:00 PM LUNCH

1:00 - 7:00 PM Registration Open Courtyard – Lobby *McDowell, Cockrum*

1:00 - 5:00 PM Merchandise Open Parking Lot *Riedel*

3:00 - 5:00 PM CR Coordination Meeting Hilton Garden Inn *Steelman*, CR Leadership Team

5:30 - 7:30 PM SR Coordination Meeting Hilton Garden Inn *Moore*, SR Leadership Team

Tuesday

May 17, 2011

8:00 - 8:30 AM BOD & Route Leadership Briefing Hilton Garden Inn Board, RC's, *Martha Steelman*

8:30 – 9:30 AM CR/SR Road Guard Orientation Hilton Garden Inn *Currie, Guidry, Rager*

9:30 - NOON RG Route Specific Meetings Hilton Garden Inn CR *Rager/SR Guidry*

9:00 -4:30 PM Merchandise Open Parking Lot *Riedel*

9:00 -8:00PM Registration Open Courtyard Lobby *McDowell*

10:00 - 11:00 AM SR Platoon Leader Orientation Courtyard – Small Room *Moore*

11:00 -Noon SR Advance Team Orientation Courtyard – Small Room *Moore*

12:00 - 1:00 PM LUNCH

2:00 - 3:00 PM SR FNG Orientation Hilton Garden Inn *Moore*

3:00 - 4:00 PM CR FNG Orientation Hilton Garden Inn *Steelman*

5:00 PM Blessing of the Bikes Driveway *Maxey*, Chaplains

5:30 - 7:30 PM RFTW Barbecue Hilton Garden Inn M. *Steelman, Olmstead/Scott*

(Board Members Serve Dinner)

5:30 - 6:30 PM Registration closed for Dinner – Reopens 6:30-8:00 PM

7:30 PM Interdenominational Prayer Time Hilton Garden Inn, N. Side *Swift, Chaplains*

8:00 PM Registration Closes

Wednesday

May 18, 2011

5:45 AM Registration Opens

6:45 AM Registration Closes

Riders with clipboard “in hand” at 0645 may complete registration.

7:00 AM Riders Meeting chaired by Ron “Hammer” Young, President, BOD

CR – Central Route; **SR**-Southern Route; **RC**-Route Coordinator; **ARC**- Assistant RC; **RG**-Road Guard; **FNG**-Riders New to RFTW

WASHINGTON, D.C. SCHEDULE:

FRIDAY, MAY 27

6:00 p.m. **NEW!** Run For The Wall Recognition Ceremony/free refreshments – Marymount University parking lot across from Holiday Inn

SATURDAY MAY 28, 2011

8:45 a.m. Arlington National Cemetery - Stage in Marymount University parking lot across from the Holiday Inn

9:45 a.m. Depart for Arlington National Cemetery

11:15 a.m. Arlington National Cemetery RFTW XXIII Wreath Laying 12:30 PM - RFTW XXIII Group Photo
Lincoln Memorial - begin to assemble at Lincoln Memorial

1:00 p.m. RFTW XXIII Group Photo: please follow photographer's instructions

1:30 p.m. RFTW XXIII Mission Accomplished Plaque presentation at the Vietnam Memorial Wall

SUNDAY MAY 29, 2011

- 6:00 a.m. Rolling Thunder Participants stage in the Marymount University parking lot. Bring cameras, lots of water, and snacks.
- 6:30 a.m. Rolling Thunder Participants depart for the Pentagon North Parking Lot (staging for Rolling Thunder Parade). Volunteers may be needed to assist with directing traffic, parking, and keeping fire lanes open.
- NOON Rolling Thunder Parade

NOTE 1: Although not an official RFTW activity, on Friday evening, May 27, a group will be going to the Evening Parade at the 8th & I Marine Barracks. For tickets and details, contact Doug Lyvere at Doug@Lyvere.com.

NOTE 2: The schedule is subject to change - check schedule on line or upon arrival.

EVENING PARADE AT MARINE BARRACKS

Evening Parade, Marine Barracks, 8th and I Streets, Friday, May 28, 7:45 p.m. (1945)—Marine Band, Marine Drum and Bugle Corps, Marine Silent Drill Team. Specific times still being finalized, but Doug Lyvere has tickets for the event. There will be a flyer and info at all registration locations starting with Rancho Cucamonga along with a signup sheet. Tickets will be distributed at the Host Hotel in DC (Arlington) at 6 p.m. (1800). Email Doug with any additional questions: Doug@Lyvere.com.

Doug has 400 tickets, but they are going fast. To request tickets for the Evening Parade, contact one of the following: Richard "Preacher" Moore at richard.c.moore@hotmail.com; Harry "Attitude" Steelman at hsteelman@aol.com; or Gene "Flyboy" Adee at ecadee@mac.com. Rich "Yankee" Martin's list is already full.

The tentative plan is for the groups to ride over individually to the parking area on the corner from 8th and I. If riders go over individually or by cage, they still need to come to that parking area to be met by their Marine escort (the parking area is ONLY for motorcycles). We will leave from the hotel at 6:30 (1830).

The Friday Evening Parade is fantastic –it consists of the Silent Drill Team, the Drum and Bugle Corps, and The Presidents Own Marine Band. They play rain or shine, and are always fantastic. This is an amateur video but it's pretty good - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yyed-rHQ5Oo>

REGISTRATION FOR 2011 RFTW

Online pre-registration is available on the RFTW website. Cost is \$20. If you pay through PayPal, be sure to bring your receipt with you to Rancho Cucamonga. Also bring your driver's license and proof of insurance and registration. You will sign the form in front of the registration team.

Thanks to James "Biker Gunny" Gregory, Founder RFTW, for sending the following info on traveling the road with big trucks. There's a lot of good advice here for us, since RFTW shares the road with a lot of big trucks. Let's improve RFTW's image among truckers and follow this advice.

BIG WHEELS ROLLING

By John Del Santo

Sharing the road with big trucks can be an advantage because most truckers are better trained and more experienced than the other drivers around us. A large percentage of truckers are also motorcycle riders, and are

more conscious and considerate of bikes around them in traffic. To keep from becoming a hood ornament on a Peterbilt, though, we need to show the proper respect for the vehicles length, width, and weight.

A semi, bus, or RV traveling at any speed is creating big changes in the air around it—the vehicle is pushing a wave of pressurized air out in front of it, like a bow-wave in front of a boat. There is accelerated air lifting along the sides (the same effect that causes lift on an airplane wing), and there is a vacuum swirling and filling behind it. When you pass a semi going in the opposite direction at highway speeds, there will be a big rush of tumbling air following the truck about two seconds behind it. If there are heavy crosswinds blowing, the crosswind will be blocked by a passing truck and will hit you again at the other end . . . be ready for it.

Size creates an optical illusion that distorts sense of speed and distance. Expect that truck coming at you to be moving faster than it appears, and expect the one you are approaching from the rear to be going slower. Don't attempt sharing a lane with a vehicle that already fills the whole lane.

Construction trucks drive off the paved road and can pick up rocks in their tires. When they get back up to speed on the highway, those rocks can shoot loose and zero in on you like a duck in a shooting gallery. Don't hang out behind open-topped rigs—full or empty, the high speed airflow will sweep almost anything out in your direction. If you're following a truck and a small piece of tire tread seems to fly out from the wheels. . . .back off ! There are more, and bigger, pieces on the way !

Keep an eye on their turn signals. Tractor trailers need a lot of room to make a turn; The back of the truck will cut in closer to the curb, and the driver cannot see the area by the back wheels in the mirror. There are many blind spots around a semi. The worst are a blind spot a hundred feet long behind the truck, and another big one just off the right-front side. If I can't see the drivers face in the mirror, the driver can't see me!

The massive weight and velocity of a truck creates the need for the driver to keep a HUGE following distance. If the driver loses his or her following distance, and is forced to lock up the brakes, the rig can jackknife across four lanes of traffic. So if I cut in front of a truck and steal their following distance, I am digging my own grave and probably putting other drivers in serious jeopardy.

So let's share the road properly with the Big Rigs. The old (*and incorrect*) saying is “those airbrakes can stop on a dime.” We need to Ride Smart so the dime they stop on is *NOT* the one in the pocket of our jeans

SOUTHERN ROUTE NOTES:

Wytheville, TX May22 -- Wytheville Harley is staying open late again this year to service bikes. Appointments the day we arrive 276-228-9000. Also, Bristol and Black Wolfe Harley isn't scheduling any maintenance so they can take care of any emergency maintenance required while we are there for lunch. (From Bob “Zoom” Atwell)

Registration Changes:

Registration in Terrell Texas will be by ONLINE registration only, which will close May 1, 2011. So if you want to join in Terrell Texas, you MUST REGISTER before coming to Terrell as there will be NO on-site registration.

Registration in Tallulah, MS. There will be NO registration at the Love's Truck Stop. If you want to ride to Jackson you have to register in Monroe, LA the morning of May 24 at the Sam's Club parking lot exit #120. Registration Opens at 6:00 am.

Missing Man Formation for 2011

If you are interested in riding in the Missing Man Formation, contact Della "Pocket" Morris at Pocket2004@gmail.com. The priorities are as follows: First Priority—FNGs (first-year riders). Second Priority—those who have ridden RFTW previously but have not ridden in the MMF. Third priority—those who have ridden MMF before. The third priority will not be assigned but put on a waiting list. Please let us know where you will be joining us. If "All The Way," then indicate that. If you have a favorite segment, please include that in your email. We cannot guarantee anything, but will do our best. Assignments will go out the middle of March. If anything changes and you cannot make the ride, please let me know before May.

Leadership List for the Southern Route 2011:

Route Coordinator	Richard (Preacher) Moore
Asst.Route Coordinator	Gene (FlyBoy) Adee

RFTW Ambassadors	Ray (TooTall) McDowell
	Kay (TooSmall) McDowell
	Roger (Cowboy) Mead
	Carl (Mustang) Hinkle
	Diann (Mojo) McKee
	Bob (Zoom) Atwell
	Greg (PiedPiper) Smith

Platoon Leaders:

1. Phil (FirstGear) Sloan
2. Jenniffer (Flame) Connors
3. Billy (Tumbleweed) Smith
4. J.C. (JC) White
5. John (Hardcharger) Barker
6. Holly (Shooter) Thomas
7. Joe (ChickenJoe) Connors

Asst.Platoon Leaders:

1. Edwin (Wookie) Craft
2. Gary (Boogieman) Baird
3. Jim (Hump) Humphrey
4. James (TinMan) Gibbs
5. Ken (Wish) Hargrove
6. Lisa (Chrome) Russell
7. Frank (WideLoad) Hidlebaugh
7. Brian (DeerSlayer) Brehm

Tail Gunners

1. Doug (Krash) Winn
1. Home Base for Asst. RC
2. Richard (Agitator) Gonzales
2. Art (ShortRound) Pine
3. Jim Stockdale
3. Claude (Sapper) Norman
4. Dennis (Casper) Joynt
4. Walt (Skyman) Thrasher
5. Dave (Spyder) Debarge
5. Dennis (Okie D) Freie

- 6. Dannica (Little Bit) Henzel
- 6. Tim (Six Shooter) Gerdes
- 7. Rick (Geepers) McDowell
- 7. Jerry (Le Chauffeur) Brice

Road Guard Captain	Dwayne (Cajun) Guidry
Advance Team Leader	David (Wahoo) Hampton
Route Treasurer	Jean (MoneyMama) Winn
Asst Route Treasurer	Donna (Pooh) Witmer
Merchandise	Carol Olmstead
Asst. Merchandise	Chella (Stonewall) Phelan
Lead I CO	Wes (Hailstone) Alvarez
Registration	Shirley (TopSarge) Scott
Asst. Registration	Val McClymonds
Missing Man Coordinator	Della (Pockets) Morris
Senior Chaplain	Gary (Shepherd) Burd

CENTRAL ROUTE NOTES:

Campers in Rancho Cucamonga—RFTW has a group campsite reserved at Prado Park campground located at 16700 Euclid, Chino, CA. This campsite holds 20 campers and will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis.

Hurricane WV, May 25—The Hurricane Wave Pool located at the Hurricane stop will be open and free to all RFTW participants (weather permitting and no unforeseen circumstances) on Wednesday evening, May 25. (From Duane "Roadthing" Maxey)

Motels in **Angel Fire** and Eagle Nest (May 20) fill up fast. If you're having trouble finding a room, call Discover Angel Fire
 3400 Hwy 434, PO Box 161, Angel Fire, NM 87710
 575-377-6062
reserve@discoverangelfire.com
www.discoverangelfire.com
 Central source for lodging reservations in Angel Fire & Eagle Nest.

Angel Fire campers—Judy Montague at Zella's Kitchen Shoppe in Eagle Nest is donating eight RV spaces to RFTW on the night of May 20. Call Judy at 575-377-1664 for reservations.

From Harry Steelman, Central Route Coordinator: The route will remain pretty much the same as it was last year. We will be changing the plan at Santa Fe this year, which should disappoint no-one. I want to thank Ray for his efforts in past years to try to get us into town for lunch, but it never worked out quite like he had hoped. We'll bypass the town this year and head out to one of the casinos for lunch and fuel. Another change will be in Virginia. We'll not be stopping in Tom's Brook, much to the chagrin of those who so much enjoyed the "about face" we did there last year. We will press on to Front Royal this year. Tom Atwell assures me that we can get in and out of there in a much more orderly fashion. This is assuming, of course, that the Southern Route is not late and that we are not early. As we travel across this country, please take time to thank the State Coordinators for the effort that they put forth to get us routed on a safe and efficient route.

Platoon Leader Position Open—We have one platoon leader position open, for a Platoon Leader for the trikes. With the concurrence of our RG Captain, Rocket, we will be disengaging the trikes from the Bikes with trailers

this year; if not on leaving Rancho, definitely before we cross the Mississippi river and perhaps before we get into our annual “cross-wind extravaganza” across Colorado. Therefore, whoever may be interested, let me know at rftwattitude@gmail.com and I will put you on the list. Qualifications include the commitment to go “All The Way,” having the appropriate leadership skills, having gone all the way at least once before, and having a trike equipped with a fully operational CB radio.

Missing Man—Tom “Bones” Pogue is the Missing Man Coordinator again this year. If you had an opportunity to work with him last year, you will recall that his guidance and understanding went a long way to help riders along this very personal and emotional portion of their journey. Those chosen to ride the Missing man Position will ride in the Headquarters Element, riding five riders in a six-man formation. The Missing man rider rides behind the Route Coordinator next to an “empty” position representing a passed brother or sister of his/her choosing. It’s difficult to describe this in words; however, it is an honor to be selected to take this position. Bones can be reached at TomWPogue@comcast.net.

Friends of Bill Rep—I have asked Ed “Fingers” Gohn to serve again this year as our Friends of Bill representative. Fingers has done this a number of times in the past and we welcome him back to the Run and to this position. I do want to thank him for accepting my invitation. If anyone cares to contact him prior to the Run, he can be reached at Fingers13@aol.com. I will also make sure that his location is known every morning for those who wish to connect with him prior to taking on the day’s challenges.

Registration in Rancho: We will be requiring a valid driver’s license, vehicle registration, and proof of insurance at the registration tables once again this year. Even if you are pre-registered, you must produce current documents in order to obtain your wristband and ribbons for your vehicle, without which you will be denied participation. Passengers must produce a valid government or school ID and minors must have with them a properly executed waiver. Needless to say all participants must check in at the registration table prior to joining the run.

Road Guards—There are many, many people who work to make this a most successful event. At the risk of leaving someone out, I do need to make mention of the Road Guards who ensure our safety along the way (this is definitely the TOUGHEST job of all when we are rolling), the Fuel Crew that makes short work of getting us fueled and back on our way, and the Staging Crew that keeps us pointed in the right direction (usually) when we have a hundred other things on our minds.

Helmets Required This Year—This one will spark some controversy and will be found objectionable by some; however, it needs to be done. Helmets will be required on all legs of the Central Route this year regardless of the laws of the state we are riding through. We are required to carry the helmets for those states that do demand them, so just put it on every time we start. Even if you intend to join us for a ride only in a non-helmet law state we will require you to have it and wear it. Coming from the railroad industry as I do, I am extremely safety conscious. It is proven that the wearing of a helmet significantly reduces the potential for a serious head injury in the event of an accident.

CR Leadership Roster Update:

Central Route Coordinator	Harry “Attitude” Steelman – rftwattitude@gmail.com
Assistant Route Coordinator	Dave “Trunks” Gladwill – Gladwills@sbcglobal.net
Road Guard Captain	Bill “Rocket” Rager – bill4241@msn.com
Platoon Leaders (in no particular order)	
	Mike “Tanker” McDole – rftwtanker@gmail.com
	Roger “Pops” Hageman – roger.hageman@yahoo.com
	Jim Hickey – h7truckinginc@verizon.net
	Eamon Tansey – EKT1916@cox.net
	Tom Schultz – tntsch01@hotmail.com
	Paula “Hugger” Taylor – paula-taylor@austin.rr.com

Terri "Grumpy" Slyder (bikes with trailers) -- grumpy1129@gmail.com

Platoon Leader for trikes -- OPEN

Fuel Crew Leader	Bob "Bo" Hatcher – usmccapgrunt@sbcglobal.net
Staging Crew Leader	Harlan Olson – holson@oldspooksandspies.org
Lead Chaplin	Duane "Roadthing" Maxey – bfcmaxey@gmail.com
Missing Man Coordinator	Tom "Bones" Pogue – tomwpogue@comcast.net
Friends of Bill Representative	Ed "Fingers" Gohn – Fingers13@aol.com
Registration Team	Sharon Ingram – rlisdi@sbcglobal.net
Platoon Coordinator	Kevin Riley
Treasurer	Dick "Hardtack" Dahl – pddahl0873@aol.com
Last Man Vehicle	Judy "Velcro" Lacey – judylacey@aol.com
Sound Trailer	Cliff "Stoney" Crossen
Chase 1	Jim "Sleeper" Sloan
Chase 2	Captain Ron Covey
Mobile Water Point	VVA Chapter 785 – Bill "Monsoon" Mimiaga – gunnymims@aol.com

FLAG PROTOCOL FOR BIKES AND CARS

By Steve "Hawgwash" Hill

As we get closer and closer to RFTW I thought I'd share a little protocol for those desiring to display the American Flag, POWMIA Flag, Service Flags, or even your own State Flags. I hope that all riders will display flags on their bikes in addition to those driving support vehicles and other 4wheelers.

Let's start with the American Flag. It is always displayed to the Flag's own right in the direction of movement. In other words, if displayed on the back of a M/C it will be on the right side as the M/C is moving. On a 4-wheeler, it will be on the right side of the vehicle. When displayed with multiple flags, the order of precedence is American Flag, POWMIA Flag (a position of honor directly adjacent to the American Flag), followed by State Flags and finally Service Flags in the following order: Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard.

In the event multiple flags are flown, the American Flag may be in the center position provided it is on a higher staff than the other flags. If the flag is displayed on a flat surface, the blue field is to the viewer's upper left (whether vertical or horizontal).

Remember, we are on a mission and part of that mission is to proudly display the flags that so many of us have fought hard to protect.

CHASE VEHICLE POLICY

Please note that the term "motorcycle" applies to any Run vehicles that can be safely loaded and transported on a chase trailer.

1. Chase trailers are provided only as outlined below. They are not to be used to transport personal property including functional motorcycles, motorcycle trailers or luggage.
2. RFTW will make reasonable attempts to assist riders with incapacitated bikes, but there are no guarantees this service will always be available. (There may be times when the trailers are full and the rider will either have to wait or make their own arrangements.)
3. Chase vehicles will provide free service for motorcycles broken down or incapacitated in case of an accident.
4. Oversized trikes or other vehicles exceeding the capacity of our trailers WILL NOT be transported. Capacity decisions rest with the chase truck driver.

5. Where a motorcycle is incapacitated due to an accident, the bike will be loaded on the trailer with approval from authorities and owner/rider release as appropriate.
6. If the motorcycle needs transported and has a trailer attached, the trailer can be loaded onto the chase trailer with the bike.
7. Assuming the rider is not injured, he/she is responsible for ensuring the bike is tied down safely and appropriately. The chase crews will assist, but ultimately the responsibility for securing bikes rests with the rider. The chase crews will not be responsible for bike damage.
8. In addition to item (7) above, the rider shall secure luggage so that it will not become separated from the bike. Should it be prudent to remove the luggage, it shall be secured to the trailer floor or placed in the truck bed prior to chase truck departure.
9. The chase crews will transport the motorcycle forward along the daily route to the next available dealership where it will be unloaded. The chase vehicle will then depart to catch the Run.
10. The Route Coordinator is the final authority on any questions concerning this matter.

FUEL STOP REMINDER

Arnie Swift (2010)

One thing that is unique to RFTW and particularly stressful to FNGs, is our fuel stops. The Central Route will be pumping one grade of fuel, high octane. Pumps will be turned on prior to the arrival of the main pack, by members of our Fuel Team. You will pull up to the pumps two at a time side by side. Shut off your bike and have \$1's and \$5's in a pocket or tankbag, easily accessible.

The amount of fuel put in your tank will be rounded up to the nearest dollar, for example: if your bike takes \$6.37 of fuel, the fueler will ask you for \$7; please have the exact amount of bills ready. The excess amount goes to fuel our Chase Vehicles, which you will appreciate if you need them along the way. Do not ask for change, and do not argue with the fueler. If you feel a mistake has been made, after staging your bike, take it up with your Platoon Leader; he will follow up for you.

I know some of you need to use Credit Cards; if at all possible get cash advances on your card so you can fuel with the pack. If charge cards are absolutely necessary, stay in line until a fueler directs you to the credit pumps. There will be pumps left open for you to use, but you will fuel on your own and then stage.

All bikes must fuel first, then stage, then take any restroom or refreshment breaks. This is a process that has evolved over 20 years and is the safest and most efficient way to fuel this many bikes in a timely manner. Please respect the members of the fuel crew; they have volunteered their time to help make your RFTW experience the best possible.

WHAT TO PACK FOR THE RUN

Lots of FNGs have asked for suggestions on what to bring on Run for the Wall. When we thought about it, we decided that a lot of RFTW “old timers” might also find this information helpful. We went through our email and RFTW Bulletin Board posts from the past several years and brainstormed to compile this list. Tailor your checklist to your own personal needs—you may want to bring additional items, you may want to leave some things at home. Thanks to Mark “Straight Arrow” Rittermeyer, Pup, Ghost, Iron Mike, Doorgunner, Sizzmo, Duct Tape, Deekin, Nuguyabe, Spook, Shadow, Suzanne S., Little Mac, Dragonrider, and others who contributed to this list.

Motorcycles	Dog tags for emergency identification
American & POWMIA Flags for bike	Emergency info: Next of kin, home and work phone
T-bag and/or saddle bags	numbers, doctors' phone numbers, list of prescriptions

Water bottle ("sport" bottle or "Camelback") Bungee Cords (lots of 'em) Duct Tape Tool kit Regular & allen wrenches Screwdrivers Spark plugs & wrench Wire ties, zip ties Shop rags WD 40 Clamps Rope Jumper cables Funnel Can of Fixaflat 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) Bandanna or "do-rag" Jammies (or shorts or sweat pants) Hankies Shower shoes Bath towel Wash cloth (in ziplock bag!) Toilet Kit Toothbrush Toothpaste Soap Deodorant Shampoo Comb and/or brush Roll of TP in Ziploc bag (be prepared!) Sun block (Don't leave home without it!) Chapstick (With Sun Block added) Personal first aid kit Medications in marked containers Prescription glasses	Warm knit cap for under helmet and/or sleeping Heavy jacket Light weight jacket Chaps Warm gloves Summer gloves Rain Gear (jacket, pants and galoshes) Laundry detergent (in heavy ziplock bag) Small sewing kit Money Credit Cards/Traveler's Checks Driver's License Insurance information Padlock Trash Bags for covering T-Bag in rain, laundry, etc. Ziplock bags (all sizes) organizes & keeps stuff dry Extra pair of boots Jeans (2or 3 pairs) T-shirts (at least 6) Long-sleeved T-shirt (for the Mojave desert) Ear plugs Warm sweat shirt Underwear & Socks (at least 6 pair) Thermal underwear Sun glasses or goggles (2 pair) 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 and film Items you want to leave at The Wall List of names you want to locate on The Wall 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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HOW WE RIDE

By Colin Campbell (2009)

Run For The Wall follows a very regimented set of rules developed over the years to provide for the safe travel of this large contingency on its way to Washington DC and *The Vietnam Veterans Memorial*. Foremost in our desire for safety is that every rider become adept and comfortable riding in accordance with these rules. If for any reason you are not comfortable riding in this manner, please discontinue your ride with the column. If you are not capable *and* comfortable riding "like we ride", you could pose a danger to yourself and your companions by attempting to ride in a tight formation. Above all, if a maneuver looks too dangerous or awkward for a rider (particularly a new rider) to complete safely, he or she should do what needs to be done to protect himself or herself to avoid an accident.

The rules are outlined as follows:

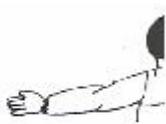
Signals:

Right turn: Left arm out and elbow bent up. *Hand making a fist.*

Left turn: Left arm straight out from body. Hand straight out in a fist.



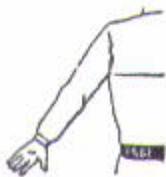
Right turn



Left turn

Slow: Left arm down to side. Press flat palm up and down parallel to the ground imitating a braking motion.

Speed up: Pump left fist up and down.



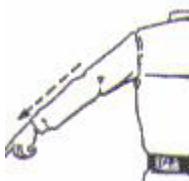
**STOP or
Slow down**



Speed UP

Hazard: Point at the area on the road with your hand and index finger (left or right side).

Close Ranks: Left hand overhead, *open and close fist.*



**Hazard in the
Road**



**Close the Ranks
open and close fist**

Staggered Formation: Left arm raised overhead, index finger extended.

Side-by-Side Formation: Left arm raised overhead, index and little finger extended.



Single File



Double File

Blinker: Left arm out and elbow bent up, thumb and forefinger contacting each other to indicate blinker on.

Distance Interval: 2 seconds. Visual marker for distance interval is one empty center stripe between cycles at 50 to 60 mph and two empty center stripes between cycles above 60. When in a *side by side* formation, the left side rider is responsible for maintaining the correct interval. The right side rider is responsible for aligning

himself with the left side rider. Riders' shoulders should be directly across from each other in the proper configuration. Every rider is responsible for maintaining the correct interval in a *staggered formation*.

Deceleration: Unless a complete stop or an emergency stop is anticipated, riders should decelerate by rolling off the throttle and down shifting rather than braking. The appearance of brake lights in the formation increases the incidence of dangerous "rubber banding". Rubber banding (excessive acceleration and deceleration) increases accidents, wear and tear on equipment and increases rider fatigue. Increasing and decreasing speed should be accomplished utilizing small, incremental throttle rollon and rolloff. Maintaining interval and position requires VERY slight throttle adjustments on an almost constant basis. Rapid acceleration and deceleration is very undesirable and should be avoided.

Riding the Zipper: The centerline and the fog line are lovingly called the *zipper*. It's simple: do not have any part of your cycle or body beyond the zipper. If you do, road guards will hate you and semis will kill you. **Just Say No** to hanging foot pegs, handlebars, or anything else over the zipper.

Sky popping: Whales stick their head out of the sea just to the level of their eye to "take a look around". This is called "Sky Popping." Sticking out of your lane to see what's ahead is a great way to shorten your trip. Road guards travel much faster than the columns both in the left hand lane and on the right shoulder. Pulling out in front of one is a disaster for both riders. **Just Say No** to "sky popping".

Road Guard Courtesy: You may receive signals/directions from road guards during your trip. Please comply immediately with these requests. Please do not take anything personally. Road guards are doing a very difficult job and are protecting our safety: Your cooperation is paramount to their success. At times, road guards need to pull into a column or pass through a column. When a road guard signals he needs in, immediately slow and give them the right of way. If you collide with a road guard, it is your fault—no questions asked.

Divebombing: Pulling in too close after passing a vehicle is called "dive bombing." This is a "no-no." Trucks that are passed by the column should be given at least *one truck length* before riders pull back into their lane. Pulling in too quickly causes the truck driver to hit his brakes and makes them angry with us rather than being our fans. **No divebombing.** The same situation is true when the column moves into the left lane to pass slower moving traffic. At times there may be vehicles traveling in the left lane preventing the entire column from gaining access to the left lane as a unit. Do not speed around one of these vehicles and divebomb in front of them just to maintain your position within the column. Slow, pull in behind such a vehicle and rejoin the column after you have successfully passed the slower traffic in the right lane.

Passing signals back. Please pass signals from the platoon leaders all the way back down the column. When you receive a signal, check your rearview mirror to make sure it was passed back.

CB Radio etiquette: There will be a designated communication channel. Please do not talk on this channel unless you are performing an official function. All riders are welcome and encouraged to monitor the communication channel, but please maintain radio discipline.

Fueling: During fuel stops on the Southern Route, fueling personnel wear an orange arm band and cap which indicates lines for premium grade fuel or a green arm band and cap which indicates the regular grade fuel line. On the Central Route, all fueling personnel will be wearing green vests and caps. File in side by side, two riders to a pump. Pay to the nearest dollar rounded up. Any excess monies collected will go toward future free fuel stops and fuel for chase vehicles.

Misc. Reminders:

Cash: Take extra \$1 and \$5 bills for gas. When we fill up, total is rounded up; the extra money helps gas up the support vehicles.

Throttle rockers will add some comfort to your ride (available at HD dealers).

Morning meetings are mandatory.

Take showers at night so you won't be late for the morning meetings.

If you get sleepy while riding, give a headsup to the riders around you and pull off where safe. You can catch up at the next stop. RIDE SAFE!!!

RUN Q&A

By Ron "Hammer" Young (2009)

Q. How fast does the pack ride?

A. A general guideline: the pack will ride at about five miles an hour below the posted speed limit. There will be times when the speeds will be less.

Q. How does the pack enter the highway?

A. We work with local and state authorities to aid our entrance onto the highways. The lead element will slowly enter the highway and maintain a slow speed as the pack follows. There is no reason to ride fast to "catch up" with the pack. The lead element continues a slow speed until the last man vehicle reports he/she is on the highway. At that point the Route Coordinator will slowly increase speed in five mile per hour increments at the rate of about 23 mph increase per minute. This increase is given to the Assistant Route Coordinator who is leading the 1st Platoon, who will then slowly bring the pack to the assigned speed. The Platoon Leaders will follow suit, and are responsible for maintaining the proper distance. As you can see, there is no reason to ride faster than the speed limit follow these guidelines and the platoons will bring you up to speed properly and reduce "rubber banding."

Q. When will itineraries be available?

A. Daily itineraries will be finalized and posted a few weeks prior to departure. Please understand the incredible amount of work that must be finalized before this information is locked down. The notices and itineraries will be posted to the website.

Q. How do I reserve my spot in the pack?

A. There are no reservations of riding spots in the pack. We ride two columns, side by side as conditions allow, and positions in the pack likely adjust as we do fuel stops. If you want to ride near someone ride in front or behind them, not to their side as those positions will adjust if riders fall out of formation.

Q. How much does it cost to go All the Way?

A. Cost of lodging, meals and gas to ride All the Way is largely a matter of personal preference. If you camp, some sites are free or reduced prices. Hotels will be indicated on our Route Schedule (see 1 above) and we often get a modest group discount from the standard rack rate. Gas is sometimes provided by supporters, but given the current state of gas prices, the level of future support cannot be certain. Most meals are provided free by local volunteers. Also, allow enough funds for emergency repairs and maintenance of your vehicle.

Q. Can I ride with the Run in my car?

A. Our number one goal is safety of the Run participants and the public. Personal vehicles can travel a few miles ahead or behind the pack, but cannot intermingle with the pack at any time. Due to limited space at most of our gas stops we ask you proceed to another station or skip a gas stop. Our gas stops range are spaced from 70 to 114 miles apart so "cages" will not need gas as often as the pack.

Q. Do I have to ride a certain brand of bike?

A. No, all bikes are welcome as long as they are safe, licensed and insured in accordance with your state's laws. If you go All the Way you will likely ride more than 5,800 miles depending on your hometown. Be sure your bike is up to a ride of this length, and allow for routine maintenance during the trip. Plan for tire and oil changes as appropriate.

Q. What special skills are needed to ride with the pack?

A. Riding with the pack requires good motorcycle handling skills, and you must be a competent, safe rider. Courses such as the Motorcycle Safety Foundation's Experienced (Advanced) Rider's Course will help you sharpen your existing skills.

GET YOUR BIKE READY TO GO

By John "Shooter" McCabe (2009)

- If your tires need changing, change them now. If tires are good, check inflation just before we leave; have a tire pressure gage on hand.
- Change the oil just before leaving.
- Check all lights and have extra bulbs on hand.
- Check suspension air lines (for air shocks).
- Check operation of all switches; make sure things that should work do.
- If you have spoke wheels, get them checked at the dealer for spoke tension!
- Change air and fuel filters.
- Check brake and hydraulic clutch fluid levels.
- Check clutch and brake cables.
- Check every bolt, nut, screw you can get to, make sure things are tight.
- Check your luggage, make sure straps are not rotted or torn. (I have dodged sleeping bags, small luggage bags and other things falling off bikes...not fun for Road Guards at 90+mph)
- Make sure your bike is ready. If nothing else, take it to a dealer and have them go over it for you. The money you spend there will not compare to the funds it will cost you if things go wrong and you are 3500 miles from home.
- Make SURE you are ready, get the bike out and practice speed control at 65 mph by easy throttle movements NOT brakes. Practice slow maneuvering; we all know how to ride at highway speeds but it's those slow maneuvers we will be needing that may need to be honed a bit. Remember, we will be maneuvering in close proximity to other bikes (68 inches between bikes at times)—be ready for it.
- If you plan on riding two up, take a few rides two up and practice rider and driver communications. If you are a rider, your eyes are just as important as the driver's in a close formation ride. You are NOT a sightseer—you are part of the overall bike safety team. Our Road Guards' job starts the morning you all get to the parking lot at the truck stop. When you come into the lot there at Rancho Cucamonga, please go SLOW, and tell the Road Guards which route you will be taking so we can get you to the proper lines. Have your gas tank FULL. Recheck your luggage one last time—make sure it's tight and secured on your bike. There will be a bunch of riders, bikes, media, and normal traffic in that parking lot so be careful and keep your head up.

ARE YOU READY TO RIDE?

By Bill Rager

Hotel reservations made, check. Route for Run-to-the-Run decided, check, Decided what to bring, Riding Gear, Clothing, Bike Tools, Medications, check, check, check, and check. Physically ready to ride for 2 weeks straight, check. Decided on a routine for each day, WHAT?

Fuel up the bike before you get to the hotel, because finding an open gas station at O’Dark 30 in the morning can be a challenge. Do a final walk around the room before you leave; having to buy a new cell phone charger because you left it in the hotel room is a hassle that you don’t need.

Practice tying the pack on your bike in the dark; having it fall off your bike in the pack is something the bike behind you does not want to see. What about your bike? Do you know what to check—tires, controls, lights, fluids, chain tension, nothing dragging, loose straps around wheels, loose bolts or parts, and brakes. Use the time from the hotel to breakfast and the morning meeting to ride check your bike and double-check the bike when you get off it. Once the 5 minute warning is given, take the time to get yourself and the bike ready; recheck that everything is secured and closed. The most common things dropped from the bike while moving is water bottles, flags, and layers of clothing that were taken off at the last stop. Get into a routine that takes care of the little things—then the only thing you need to worry about is riding your ride.

HOTEL ITEMS FOR THE TROOPS

Both routes collect hotel items to send to the troops. Before you leave each hotel, please take the complimentary items—shampoo, soaps, etc.—from your room and drop them in the jug your route has for them. They will be sent to our troops, as they are much appreciated.

► OUR STORIES

(Editor’s Note: Thanks to Anne Perry for sending this on to me. The Mayor of Wytheville, VA, sent her a letter about Spiller Primary School (on RFTW Southern Route). Anne said it’s nice to know RFTW has a continuing impact.)

RFTW MAKES AN IMPRESSION ON STUDENTS

From: **Trent Crewe**

Some weeks ago the President of the DAR shared with me the fact that so many of the Spiller students’ essays mentioned the importance of RFTW to them. She was very impressed that so many had taken your message and involvement to heart. This is an article from our local newspaper that explains a bit more. I thought you should see the evidence of RFTW being a part of this community year round. You are indeed making a difference in the lives of our students and their families. It’s nice to know someone notices! Thank you!

Patriotism Is Alive and Well at Spiller Primary School

By STAFF. February 14, 2011

Fourth-grade students at Spiller Primary School participated in the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution 2010-2011 U.S. flag essay contest. The local contest was sponsored by Stuart Chapter DAR. The purpose of the contest is to encourage patriotism along with instilling the correct care and usage of the flag.

The topic for the essays was “How I Respect the Flag of the United States of America.” Students from the classes of Mrs. Soprano, Mrs. Jones, and Mrs. Terry wrote inspiring thoughts concerning their feelings about the American Flag.

References were frequently made as to how the students have been affected by the local “Run For The Wall” and the personal interactions they have had with veterans from all over the nation. As one student wrote, “Run for the Wall is a day that honors our country and veterans. We get to high five and ask questions to the veterans.

Sometimes they give us stuff like little flags, pins, stickers, and beads. Finally we get to watch the veterans ride off on their motorcycles with us singing the National Anthem.”

Winners of the local contest were first place, Holden Reeves Robinson; second place, Charlie Russell Jones; third place-tie, Sara Beth Davidson and Angelica Lynn Henderson. Earning Honorable Mention were Perry Claude Burrell, Nytara Jayd Crockett, Austin Nicholas Deibert, Vanessa H. Lopez, and Lanie Elizabeth Williams.

The two top essays have been entered in the Virginia DAR state contest. All participants were presented with Stuart Chapter certificates and small United States Flags. Members of Stuart Chapter appreciated each student's participation in the contest.

RIDING IN HONOR OF . . .

The Central Route website (hosted by “Shoreparty”) is featuring a section of tributes to those we are riding for. There are many poignant stories to be read there. Here are a few. To read all of the Tributes, go to http://rftwcr.us/2011_tributes_9.htm

My Squad Leader

Posted by: Bluemax

I am riding to pay tribute to a number of folks for number of reasons.

From my first tour in RVN with 1st bn. 9th Marines for CPL Kenneth L. Remmers, my squad leader who KIA 12 July 1965.

From my second tour with the 101st, my good friend and flight school classmate who was KIA in Laos in March 1971, WO1 Gregory S. Crandall.

I flew Dustoff in Vietnam and picked up many body bags along with the wounded, when we could, even though that was not our primary mission. I often wonder just how many are on the wall that made their last helicopter flight with me.

Then in Iraq in 2005-6 my primary job was flying VIPs. But each day after we were released we were often given "hero" missions. That meant we had lost somebody again and we were given the mission to go to FOB and bring him back to the mortuary in Baghdad. But this time our hero was given all the honors he/she deserved. We would shut down our Blackhawks and join the unit to honor their fallen comrade as we loaded the remains, again in a body bag, not yet in a casket. Never in my life would I have imagined that I would be flying this mission again at 60 years of age—the same thing I did at 25.

These two friends, and all of our fallen heroes from Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghan are the reasons I am riding on this mission.

Riding in Memory of SSGT Vance Scott Sr.

Posted by Top Sarge

This year I will do RFTW in Memory of SSGT Vance Scott, Sr. who battled cancer and other side effects from Agent Orange for 15 years before losing the battle, and in honor of all of those whose battle with Agent Orange is still raging on.

Riding for My Dad

Posted by Gypsy

I ride for my Dad, Cpl. George P. Newman, 91, who just passed three weeks ago. WW11 Vet who served his country with pride and honor. He never told anyone but me, in his last weeks, that he was wounded in Bristol, England. I told him I would get him his Purple Heart. He was so thrilled about me going on RFTW. He'll be one of my angels riding along with me. I love and miss you, Daddy. Forever on my mind and in my heart.

In Memory of John Marcikese

Posted by Judy "Velcro" Lacey

I will be riding for a dear friend, SSGT John Marcikese, who died Oct. 16, 2010 after a short bout with cancer. John had a Silver Star, Bronze Star, and 2 Purple Hearts. He was wounded on Hamburger Hill. He served with the Army 23 years. He was involved in many vets organizations, working to help other vets.

John always wanted to go back to The Wall, but never made it. His widow, Pat, will be on RFTW this year, carrying his ashes to Arlington for burial. She invites anyone who would like to attend the burial to join us. The burial is at 2 p.m. on Friday, May 27. We will be leaving the pack at 8 a.m. from Lewisburg and going straight to Arlington.

"THE SALUTE"

Info from Harry "Attitude" Steelman

Tim Chambers is the USMC SSgt. who honors Rolling Thunder and its veterans with a three- to four-hour long salute as they enter D.C. from Arlington. You've probably seen it on YouTube. He also, at least from year to year, welcomes RFTW "home" into Arlington at the Holiday Inn. I met him there last year. I have asked if he will be honoring our arrival this year and he has responded that he will attempt to do so. My intent is to present him with a plaque as a "Thank You" for his service to our veterans. (Saluting Rolling Thunder is not his only veteran-related activity.)

In his response, Tim has indicated that he is putting together a book on "The Salute" and is soliciting any pictures of it that we may have as well as any comments that we feel could be included. Perhaps we could get the word out and maybe get this posted in order that our friends and "family" could provide him with any content that we feel appropriate. His email is tim4america@aol.com.

RFTW SUBJECT OF SPEECH

(Editor's note: There are many great stories to be found on the RFTW Forum. If you haven't been participating in the Forum, you should be. It's THE place to meet new RFTW riders, get the latest info, and the best place for FNGs to learn about RFTW.)

An FNG going this year for the first time is Shae "Short Circuit" Gray. She's a veteran, and her husband Tim is currently serving. They live in El Paso, TX. Tim went on RFTW partway last year, and they are both excited about going all the way this year. Following is what Shae wrote on the forum)

Hello all, I hope this message find you good! I am a student in college in El Paso Texas. Today I had to give a speech; I had chosen The Run For The Wall as my subject, to inform my classmates what it is that you all do.

After my research and self-experiences, I received a 100. I just wanted to thank each and every one of you for the motivation to write this speech. My professor was crying over my paper, as she wrote my grade on it. I love that YOU touch so many! I will post it for you all to read ASAP. Cowboy has urged me to do so! Thank you again for what you do.

The Run for the Wall is an organization that promotes healing and closure in soldiers of every era with a focus on Vietnam soldiers, in friendly protest to the United States government to account for all Missing in Action and Killed in Action soldiers that remain unnamed for closure for their families.

I would like to share three things, looking back on the treatment of soldiers in Vietnam returning from war, what we can do in order to promote healing for the veterans, participating in run for the wall what you can do lend a hand.

Looking back on the treatment of soldier returning from war past and present:

During 1965's Vietnam War there were many men and women who were drafted into the U.S military services. Of many of these brave men and women drafted there are many that are still unaccounted for. SFC Craig V. Morgan was a Special Forces soldier who returned home to his family after his tour with gunshot wounds. He was awarded the Purple Heart for saving another soldiers life. I heard many stories from this man you see he was my Great Uncle and the reason for my joining the military. Many of the soldiers who fought in the Vietnam war where not as lucky. Have you ever seen the Wall in Arlington cemetery? According to The Wall USA there is an astonishing 58,267 names on the wall. Many brothers, fathers, and sons are on the wall. There are son and fathers who died together their names are honored on the wall as well. The wall memorial was founded by Jan Scruggs who was in Vietnam. Mr. Scruggs not only a soldier wanted to memorialize the loss of lives for this great nation. The wall took three years to complete. The funds to build this memorial where are donated by private contributor raising an amazing amount of 9,000,000 to complete this site.

I would like to share a few names with you. All of these names are just from El Paso alone. Take some time to do some research on the names and you just might find how close to home The Wall memorial really is. The Run for the wall is compiled of Veterans, Loved ones, and supporters of those who served in the military services.

The route for the Run for the Wall is a grueling 3,000-mile trek across the United States. With 300 mile legs each day it is not a party. All the men and women who partake of this run are very dedicated. The Southern Route runs from LA to DC. Along the way many people have donated food, fuel and are at each stop to lend a helping hand to say welcome home. Welcome home is something that will be said whether you are veteran or not. It is a term of endearment shared with friends on the run to let you know that you are welcome with us. The Run for the Wall visits many VA hospitals, memorials, and outreach facilities. These stops as they are called are to insure veterans that there is a Group of American's willing to push the envelope in order to "welcome them home"

The Run is not a free ride; we all have to pay our own way. For the average rider to do the Run For The Wall, it will cost on average around 2,000 each. This includes gas, hotel, and food for the trip there. This does not include the trip back. Not every rider will go the entire trip; the cost for a person to ride for one day is only a 10.00 registration fee.

Every dime that you spend is worthwhile. You will travel the United States with a first-class ticket to meet amazing people who soon after starting this trip will be your brother and sister. What can you to help with the run? Participation would be ideal; if you have a motorcycle, car, van, or horse, and would like to participate, please do. The only thing you have to do is fill out the registration information and pay a ten dollar fee. Everyone in the Run For The Wall organization will be waiting with open arms.

There are many overpasses where people stand waving flags for support. Sometimes the flags are provided and will be available to anyone who would like to help. I have a list of bridges that will be set up for the riders to see you proudly waving the American flag in their Honor.

The final thing that you can do to help is to support local churches and business when the Run comes through El Paso. The full gang of riders will be stopping in Van Horn TX. to eat and to refuel. Come on over and shake a hand or two. Enjoy the company of a veteran who is riding for others and who has fought for our freedoms.

Now to close, we as Americans have so much to be thankful for. The Memorial Wall holds history of all those who gave us reason to be thankful. The Run for the wall is an opportunity for those veterans to express feelings of gratitude and to memorialize those names. You have an opportunity to come as you are and thank a veteran for your freedom. Maybe you will be the one saying “welcome Home”

THE LONG WALK HOME

By Judy Lacey, AZ-Independent Staff Writer

He was walking along Route 66 several miles south of Oatman—a lonely figure out in the middle of nowhere, looking tired but doggedly determined. As I drove closer I saw that he was wearing a sandwich board with writing on it. I couldn't read it until I was almost upon him. I read it as I passed him: “18 veterans commit suicide every day.” I also saw that he was barefooted.

I said “wow” to my friend. Just “wow”—nothing more—because the message hits you right in the gut. I had to know more. A person who is willing to do something so drastic must have a good reason. And a person making this kind of sacrifice deserves to be listened to.

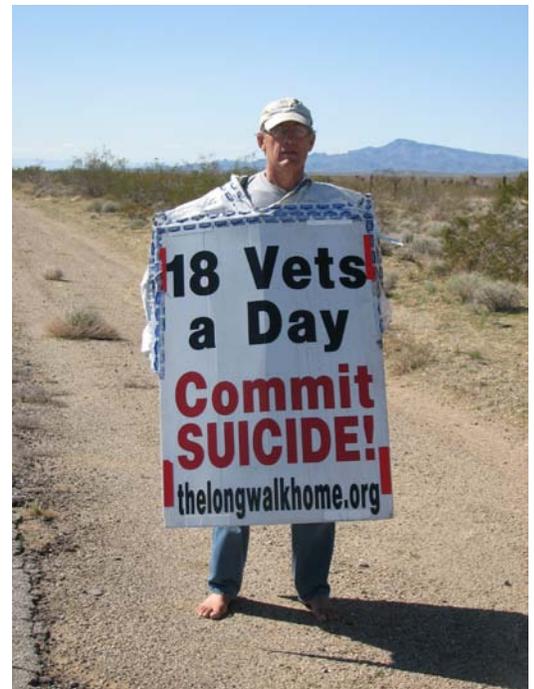
A quarter-mile down the road I turned around and went back.

I stood on the roadside for about 30 minutes talking to him—or rather, listening to him. His name is Ron Zaleski, and he has a powerful message he's taking across America.

This is his message: our veterans are indeed committing suicide at the rate of 18 a day—and we have to do something to stop it.

Zaleski is a veteran himself. He served during the Vietnam War 1970-72. He said he was called up to go to Vietnam, but his orders were changed. Years later he ran into one of the men in his platoon, who was limping. When he asked what happened, his buddy told him when they got to Vietnam the platoon was ambushed and every man was shot; two were killed.

The vision of that ambush never left Zaleski's consciousness. Even though he did not serve in-country, he was already tormented by the things he had learned from other soldiers. When he returned from service, he stopped wearing shoes. He can't even explain why; it was just what he chose as his way to rebel. He was bitter for years and didn't know why. He snapped at people who asked him why he didn't wear shoes. He often answered, “Because I feel like it. Do you have a problem with that?” When a 10-year-old girl asked him in 2005 why he didn't wear shoes, he started to snap at her, but something made him stop. He finally realized that he couldn't continue the way he had. He realized being angry and non-communicative would accomplish nothing to change the reason for his anger—the things that were happening with our military. He had begun to see soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan with PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder), anger, depression, and the inability to adjust back into civilian life. He was frustrated because he felt helpless to do anything about it.



He decided he COULD do something about it, but if he was to be able to help veterans he would need a plan. He came up with a three-point plan, and in 2006 he formed a non-profit called “The Long Walk Home.” He decided that he had to convince Congress to provide three things for veterans: (1) grief counseling as part of boot camp; (2) civilian re-entry group counseling prior to discharge; and (3) a 12-step support group programs for discharged vets.

“We have to make counseling mandatory for veterans before they are discharged,” Zaleski said. “As it is now, few veterans are willing to ask for help because of the stigma of having had counseling. They are turned down for federal jobs—and other jobs as well—when employers learn they had counseling. They’re afraid they’ll have a loose cannon on their hands.”

“We have to make counseling mandatory, so that the stigma is removed,” Zaleski continued. “If ALL veterans have to have counseling, then it can’t be held against them.”

He started planning his walk across America to carry his message to the people: we must do more to help our veterans returning from war. The walk is entirely self-funded. Zaleski sold most of his belongings and he and his girlfriend, Valeria Moran, bought a motorhome. Zaleski walks four to five hours a day, with Valeria following him or going ahead and meeting him at the end of each day’s walk. He hopes to reach the end of his walk, Santa Monica, California, in June of this year.

“Valeria is my support,” said Zaleski. “My seven men behind me.”

He began his walk June 1 in Concord, Massachusetts, “Where the first shot was fired in the Revolutionary War,” Zaleski added.

This is not Ron’s first long walk. He previously walked the 2,174 miles of the Appalachian Trail—barefooted.

I looked down at his feet, bare except for bright green elastic bandaging wrapped around them, and duct tape on the bottoms of his feet. Why barefooted?

“If our soldiers can fight in the desert in 130- degree heat, I can do this much to help them. They’re not a machine; we have to treat them physically and emotionally.”

Zaleski is heartened in his mission by the interest and generosity of the people he meets and asks to sign his petition that calls for the Department of Veterans Affairs to implement his three-point plan to help veterans. Each night he and Valeria look for a place to park the motorhome. Sometimes they are invited to the homes of people Zaleski meets as he walks.

He said he’s had very few negative experiences on his walk. “Local police have been great. Sometimes someone will yell at me about the injustices of the military, but I understand their anger and denial.” His eyes often tear up when he talks about our soldiers coming home with wounds, both visible and not. “If the American people aren’t behind this, we’re sunk.”

Zaleski, who used to own a gym and scuba school, told me that he’s willing to speak to any group, anywhere, about his mission. He is invited to speak at churches, parks, and organizations in cities he walks through. He has appeared on TV shows and testified at senate hearings.

He has little love for politicians; few of them have the guts to stand up and be counted, he said. But he calls Phillip Roe, U.S. Representative of Tennessee's. 1st Congressional District, his hero. When he was turned down by every representative he approached to sign his petition because it's "too political," Roe called him and told him to bring the petition to him—he would be proud to sign it.

"He's the first real patriot I've met," said Zaleski, a New York native who lives in Florida.

Only recently have military and medical professionals officially recognized the spreading problem of veteran suicides. Suicides among United States military veterans ballooned by 26 percent from 2005 to 2007, according to new statistics released by the Veterans Affairs (VA) department in Washington.

Speaking at a VA-sponsored suicide prevention conference in December 2010, VA Secretary Eric Shinseki said that of the more than 30,000 suicides in the U.S. each year, 20 percent of them are by veterans. That means on average, 18 veterans commit suicide each day as a result of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. Five of those 18 veterans are under VA's care.

Analyzing this phenomenon, researcher Eli Clifton said that the spike in the suicide rate can most clearly be attributed to the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the high number of veterans returning to the U.S. with PTSD.

Aaron Glantz, an editor at New America Media editor and author of "The War Comes Home" is reported saying that there are now nearly two million vets of Iraq and Afghanistan and they still haven't seen the type of mobilization of resources necessary to handle an epidemic of veteran suicides.

When his walk ends in June, Zaleski and Valeria will return to Massachusetts via the northern states, stopping in as many states as possible to continue spreading his message and getting signatures on his petition.

Besides the people along his walk that sign his petition, Zaleski continues to attempt to get as many congresspersons and senators to sign as he can. He hopes to hand-deliver petitions signed by one million people to President Obama by November 11, 2011, which is his 61st birthday. It is also Veterans Day.

To learn more about how you can help, and to sign the petition, visit www.thelongwalkhome.org

Watch a video explaining statistics of veterans suffering from PTSD:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6VmUulPab4M&feature=player_embedded

If you know a veteran suffering from depression and considering suicide, help him by urging him to call the Department of Veterans Affairs confidential veterans suicide hotline 1-800-273-8255, and press 1.

RUN FOR THE WALL

By The Shadow, March 15, 2011

The sun is hot upon their backs,
these many all dressed in black.
They come from far and wide
to ride to the Wall, the many miles side by side.

They are on a mission you see,
to share these words from sea to shining sea.

Twenty-three years of honor they all cry,
"We ride in freedom for those who can't," with a gleam in their eye.

They are vets, young and old,
Supporters and wives too, I am told.
Their resolve is strong and clear
As they make this ride each and every year.

To honor those who gave their all,
And to each and every one that answered the call.
To carry the torch and teach our young,
That this mission is not yet done.

And bring them home no matter what,
Tellin the politicians with swift boot to their butt.
They are the RFTW family strong and true,
Members of the biker nation through and through.

As they pass the line is long,
And suddenly I understand and want to join along.
Yes—these who ride under the Red ,White and Blue,
Do so for each and every one of you.

These—the many that ride as one,
And will ensure this work will get done.
As the children stand waving in awe,
We all wonder: will they recall?

Will they understand the words we speak,
And learn of the miles we have yet to meet?
Their smiles tell us of hope and cheer,
And we realize it's all worth it as we draw near.

For Rainelle is our last stop at this mountain station,
As we pick up more from across the nation.
Now on to D.C. they head,
To honor our vets both living and dead.

In the distance they see the reason,
They have anxiously waited for all season.
The Wall and all the names,
We didn't do this for personal fame.

And this doesn't mean our work is done.,
In fact—it has only just begun.
Not until all the answers are in,
And each and every one is brought home again.

Maybe then there will be no need
For the RFTW family to mount their iron steed.
But until that day comes through,
They will continue to ride honor bound and true.

For this event is full of tradition,
And for each who rides it's a conscious decision.
To make a difference and carry the word
Across this great land our voice will be heard.
And as they ride off into the sunset,
Again you can hear them cry--NEVER FORGET!!

► OTHER STORIES

On March 30, Ft. Irwin hosted its second annual Welcome Home ceremony for Vietnam-era veterans. Hundreds of veterans and guests attended the ceremony, which included a motorcycle parade.

FORT IRWIN WELCOMES VIETNAM-ERA VETS HOME

By Caroline Keyset (Ft. Irwin USAG)

On March 30, several hundred Vietnam-era veterans heard two words they had been awaiting for decades: Thank You.

The veterans were part of Fort Irwin's second annual Vietnam-era veterans welcome home ceremony honoring those who served from 1960 to 1975. The veterans received the same type of welcome ceremony given to returning troops today, but which most of the veterans never received.

Retired Lt. Gen. Randall Rigby, who earned two bronze stars for his service in Vietnam, served as the ceremony's guest speaker. Addressing the veterans, he asked how many had deployed to and returned from Vietnam alone. At least a dozen in the audience raised their hands.

"A lot of (Vietnam) veterans feel they spent their time and made their sacrifice for nothing," Rigby said. "I disagree. What you see around you today is a product of your sacrifice. To our Vietnam vets, I would say to you, 'Thank you.' Thank you to your families and to your kids. Through your efforts, our forces are better trained, better prepared, and better led."

Before the ceremony began, the day's festivities kicked off with a motorcycle parade. A group of approximately 300 riders that included veterans, Fort Irwin Soldiers, and community members set off from Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow and rode nearly 40 miles to Fort Irwin. Along the way, passing motorists, who weren't necessarily aware of the ceremony, stopped to salute and applaud the veterans. Once the riders arrived on post, they were welcomed by Fort Irwin school children, who turned out en masse along the roadsides with American flags and homemade signs.

The veterans received a standing ovation as they marched into the ceremony tent together and walked past lines of Fort Irwin Soldiers who shook their hands and thanked them for their service.

"I can't believe the support we're getting here," said Robert "Scoop" Spaniol, a Vietnam-era veteran of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, which is now housed at Fort Irwin. "It's awesome."



Spaniol and his fellow 11th ACR veterans were full of praise for the men and women currently serving in the regiment.

"These kids are just fantastic, and their leadership, too," said Dana Holmgren, an 11th ACR veteran. "They volunteered to do this."

Brig. Gen. Terry Ferrell, commanding general of the National Training Center and Fort Irwin, thanked the veterans and their families for coming to the ceremony. Many of the veterans and guests traveled 45 miles or more to attend, including Mac Hawkins, a 91-year-old survivor of the Dec. 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Hawkins ended his military service before 1960, but said he wanted to support the Vietnam-era veterans.

"It's never too late to recognize those who have served our nation," Ferrell said. "Thank you for allowing us to do this for you."

While the welcome home ceremony focused on veterans who served in an era when the military was largely unpopular with the American public, the day was not about politics or pointing fingers, said Capt. Richard Barker, the master of ceremonies.

"It is not about the war, it is not about the blame," he said to widespread applause. "It is about giving them the welcome they deserve."

Rebecca Tennison, field representative from the office of California state assemblyman Steve Knight, presented Ferrell and Fort Irwin with a proclamation.

"It is a privilege and honor to be here today and to say a few words - and those words are, 'Welcome home, Soldiers, welcome home,'" Tennison said. "I call myself free because of each and every one of you."

The ceremony culminated with Fort Irwin leaders presenting the veterans with commemorative pins. Many guests said they were moved by the day's events.

"It was very overwhelming," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Michael Blain, Eagle Team, Operations Group. Blain, a casualty assistance officer, said the welcome home ceremony struck a chord with him because he has worked to help repatriate the remains of a Soldier killed in action in Vietnam. "There were a lot of real tears. Vietnam vets come up to me and thank me all the time, but it's not me that deserves the thanks—it's them."

The following email was sent by Monica Murphey to her dad, Vince Cedola on Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day. Cedola served as a DUSTOFF pilot in the Vietnam War. In fact he organized and commanded one of the first DUSTOFF units. His name is in the Hall of Fame.

WELCOME HOME, DAD

Dad,

It is a great milestone that this day has been designated Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day. 40 years is truly too late only for those who are not alive to receive this honor.

You know, there are many more people in the world today than back in 1973. Many whom back then were only children without a voice, children who in their innocence were not affected by the politics of the situation. They have since grown up. Many have raised children of their own and even have grand children and great grand children.

These are **new generations** of kind, compassionate people, many have been personally touched by the wars that took place after Vietnam. With the advances in the information highway, we receive more information now than we did in 1973 and we all are more in touch. Now more than ever, I think the current generations have more knowledge of the Vietnam war and can **relate** to the sacrifices each Vietnam Vet has made. **They want to say to the Vietnam veterans, "we get it we thank you, welcome home!"**

So in your words, 40 years too late!!? It definitely is, but what was done is done. We can't take away the past but this generation can try to make up for our ancestors' actions or in this case lack of actions. We can choose to move forward, acknowledge the past and say "Thank you, here is the welcome home you should have had." **We** are proud of our military for the bravery they displayed and the honor in which they served their country and **we** will make sure they know it.

Welcome home, dad! xoxo

Thanks to Jim Gregory for sending the following article:

“DON'T SHOOT, WE'RE REPUBLICANS!”

From November 1943, until her demise in June 1945, the American destroyer 'William Porter' was often hailed—whenever she entered port or joined other Naval ships—with the greeting: “Don't shoot, we're Republicans!” For half a century, the US Navy kept a lid on the details of the incident that prompted this salutation. A Miami news reporter made the first public disclosure in 1958 after he stumbled upon the truth while covering a reunion of the destroyer's crew. The Pentagon reluctantly and tersely confirmed his story, but only a smattering of newspapers took notice.

In 1943, the Willie D, as the Porter was nicknamed, accidentally fired a live torpedo at the battleship Iowa during a practice exercise. As if this weren't bad enough, the Iowa was carrying President Franklin D. Roosevelt at the time, along with Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, and all of the country's W.W.II military brass. They were headed for the Big Three Conference in Tehran, where Roosevelt was to meet Stalin and Churchill. Had the Porter's torpedo struck the Iowa at the aiming point, the last 60 years of world history might have been quite different.

The USS William D Porter (DD-579) was one of hundreds of assembly line destroyers built during the war. They mounted several heavy and light guns, but their main armament consisted of 10 fast-running and accurate torpedoes that carried 500-pound warheads. This destroyer was placed in commission on July 1943 under the command of Wilfred Walker, a man on the Navy's fast career track. In the months before she was detailed to accompany the Iowa across the Atlantic in November 1943, the Porter and her crew learned their trade, experiencing the normal problems that always beset a new ship and a novice crew. The mishaps grew more serious when she became an escort for the pride of the fleet, the big new battleship Iowa.

The night before they left Norfolk, bound for North Africa, the Porter accidentally damaged a nearby sister ship when she backed down along the other ship's side and her anchor tore down her railings, life rafts, ship's boat and various other formerly valuable pieces of equipment. The Willie D merely had a scraped anchor, but her career of mayhem and mishaps had begun.

Just twenty four hours later, the four-ship convoy consisting of Iowa and her secret passengers and two other destroyers was under strict instructions to maintain complete radio silence. As they were going through a known U-boat feeding ground, speed and silence were the best defense. Suddenly, a tremendous explosion rocked the convoy. All of the ships commenced anti-submarine maneuvers. This continued until the Porter sheepishly admitted that one of her depth charges had fallen off her stern and exploded. The 'safety' had not been set as

instructed. Captain Walker was watching his fast track career become side-tracked. Shortly thereafter, a freak wave inundated the ship, stripping away everything that wasn't lashed down. A man was washed overboard and never found. Next, the fire room lost power in one of its boilers. The Captain, by this point, was making reports almost hourly to the Iowa on the Willie D's difficulties. It would have been merciful if the force commander had detached the hard luck ship and sent her back to Norfolk. But, no, she sailed on.

The morning of 14 November 1943 dawned with a moderate sea and pleasant weather. The Iowa and her escorts were just east of Bermuda, and the president and his guests wanted to see how the big ship could defend herself against an air attack. So, Iowa launched a number of weather balloons to use as anti-aircraft targets. It was exciting to see more than 100 guns shooting at the balloons, and the President was proud of his Navy. Just as proud was Admiral Ernest J King, the Chief of Naval Operations; large in size and by demeanor, a true monarch of the sea. Disagreeing with him meant the end of a naval career. Up to this time, no one knew what firing a torpedo at him would mean. Over on the Willie D, Captain Walker watched the fireworks display with admiration and envy. Thinking about career redemption and breaking the hard luck spell, the Captain sent his impatient crew to battle stations. They began to shoot down the balloons the Iowa had missed as they drifted into the Porter's vicinity.

Down on the torpedo mounts, the crew watched, waiting to take some practice shots of their own on the big battleship, which, even though 6,000 yards away, seemed to blot out the horizon. Lawton Dawson and Tony Fazio were among those responsible for the torpedoes.. Part of their job involved ensuring that the primers were installed during actual combat and removed during practice. Once a primer was installed, on a command to fire, it would explode shooting the torpedo out of its tube.

Dawson, on this particular morning, unfortunately had forgotten to remove the primer from torpedo tube #3. Up on the bridge, a new torpedo officer, unaware of the danger, ordered a simulated firing. "Fire 1, Fire 2," and finally, "Fire 3." There was no fire 4 as the sequence was interrupted by an unmistakable whooooooshhhing sound made by a successfully launched and armed torpedo. Lt H. Steward Lewis, who witnessed the entire event, later described the next few minutes as what hell would look like if it ever broke loose.

Just after he saw the torpedo hit water on its way to the Iowa and some of the most prominent figures in world history, Lewis innocently asked the Captain, "Did you give permission to fire a torpedo?" Captain Walker's reply will not ring down through naval history . . . although words to the effect of Farragut's immortal "Damn the torpedoes" figured centrally within. Initially there was some reluctance to admit what had happened, or even to warn the Iowa. As the awful reality sunk in, people began racing around, shouting conflicting instructions and attempting to warn the flagship of imminent danger. First, there was a flashing light warning about the torpedo which unfortunately indicated it was headed in another direction. Next, the Porter signaled that it was going reverse at full speed! Finally, they decided to break the strictly enforced radio silence. The radio operator on the destroyer transmitted "'Lion (code for the Iowa), Lion, come right." The Iowa operator, more concerned about radio procedure, requested that the offending station identify itself first. Finally, the message was received and the Iowa began turning to avoid the speeding torpedo.

Meanwhile, on the Iowa's bridge, word of the torpedo firing had reached FDR, who asked that his wheelchair be moved to the railing so he could see better what was coming his way. His loyal Secret Service guard immediately drew his pistol as if he was going to shoot the torpedo. As the Iowa began evasive maneuvers, all of her guns were trained on the William D Porter. There was now some thought that the Porter was part of an assassination plot. Within moments of the warning, there was a tremendous explosion just behind the battleship. The torpedo had been detonated by the wash kicked up by the battleship's increased speed.

The crisis was over and so was Captain Walker's career. His final utterance to the Iowa, in response to a question about the origin of the torpedo, was a weak, "We did it." Shortly thereafter, the brand new destroyer, her Captain, and the entire crew were placed under arrest and sent to Bermuda for trial. It was the first time that a complete ship's company had been arrested in the history of the US Navy. The ship was surrounded by

Marines when it docked in Bermuda, and held there several days as the closed session inquiry attempted to determine what had happened. Torpedoman Dawson eventually confessed to having inadvertently left the primer in the torpedo tube, which caused the launching. Dawson had thrown the used primer over the side to conceal his mistake.

The whole incident was chalked up to an unfortunate set of circumstances and placed under a cloak of secrecy. Someone had to be punished. Captain Walker and several other Porter officers and sailors eventually found themselves in obscure shore assignments. Dawson was sentenced to 14 years hard labor. President Roosevelt intervened; however, asking that no punishment be meted out for what was clearly an accident. The destroyer was banished to the upper Aleutians. It was probably thought this was as safe a place as any for the ship and anyone who came near her. She remained in the frozen north for almost a year, until late 1944, when she was re-assigned to the Western Pacific.

Before leaving the Aleutians, she accidentally left her calling card in the form of a five-inch shell fired into the front yard of the American base commandant, thus rearranging his flower garden. In December, 1944, she joined the Philippine invasion forces and acquitted herself quite well. She distinguished herself by shooting down a number of attacking Japanese aircraft. Regrettably, after the war, it was reported that she also shot down three American planes. This was a common event on ships, as many gunners, fearful of kamikazes, had nervous trigger fingers.

In April 1945, the destroyer was assigned to support the invasion of Okinawa. By this time, the greeting "Don't Shoot, We're Republicans" was commonplace and the crew of the Willie D had become used to the ribbing. But the crew of her sister ship, the USS Luce, was not so polite in its salutations after the Porter accidentally riddled her side and superstructure with gunfire.

On 10 June, 1945, the Porter's hard luck finally ran out. She was sunk by a plane which had (unintentionally) attacked underwater. A Japanese bomber made almost entirely of wood and canvas slipped through the Navy's defense. Having little in the way of metal surfaces, the plane didn't register on radar. A fully loaded kamikaze, it was headed for a ship near the Porter, but just at the last moment veered away and crashed alongside the unlucky destroyer. There was a sigh of relief as the plane sunk out of sight, but then it blew up underneath the Porter, opening her hull in the worst possible location.

Three hours later, after the last man was off board, the Captain jumped to the safety of a rescue vessel and the ship that almost changed world history slipped astern into 2,400 feet of water. Not a single soul was lost in the sinking. After everything else that happened, it was almost as if the ship decided to let her crew off at the end.
Kit Bonner, Naval Historian

“SIGNATURE WOUNDS” OF TODAY’S WARS

On January 13, 2011, Vice Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Peter Chiarelli was the speaker at the Philadelphia Union League's Blue Star Mothers dinner and panel discussion. Following are some of his remarks on today's soldiers returning wounded and/or with PTSD or traumatic brain injuries.

Today, our military members are doing an outstanding job in the crowded cities and outposts of Iraq, and across the rugged, mountainous terrain of Afghanistan. They have made remarkable progress over the past nine-plus years; and, many of the most important achievements have been towards improving the lives of the people living and working in both theaters. However, the truth is—they are tired. Our Nation has been at war for nearly a decade. Most have deployed multiple times. The collective months spent in high-stress combat environments, away from loved ones has taken a definite toll on them and on their families. Unfortunately, many are struggling with behavioral health issues, to include post-traumatic stress, traumatic brain injury, depression, anxiety and other debilitating conditions. These "invisible" injuries—in my opinion—represent the "signature

wounds" of this war. And we must ensure leaders, soldiers, family members—everyone—understands they are real, 'no-kidding' injuries. Individuals struggling with them should never be allowed to suffer in silence.

Unfortunately, eliminating the long-standing stigma associated with seeking and receiving help for these kinds of injuries isn't easy. One of my favorite movies is "Patton" with George C. Scott. In one of the scenes, Patton is visiting wounded Soldiers at a field hospital. He comes up to a young man sitting on a stool, suffering from symptoms of "battle fatigue," or what is now known as post-traumatic stress. The Soldier tells Patton, "I guess I just can't take it, Sir. I just can't stand the shelling anymore." Patton looked down at him incredulously... "Shut up! I won't have a yellow bastard crying in front of these brave, wounded men. I won't have cowards in my Army!"

As great as General Patton was, and he was undoubtedly one of the greatest ever to serve in our Army, this was the mindset for many—if not most—in the military. And, unfortunately, the same negative mindset and stigma associated with behavioral health issues and "invisible injuries" like post traumatic stress and traumatic brain injury persists still today. We all immediately recognize a soldier who is shot or loses a limb as needing medical treatment. No one begrudges him or her the time needed to rest, heal, and recover. But too often the young man or woman who experiences a traumatic event . . . and walks away with no visible injuries . . . their 'real-no-kidding' injuries, such as post-traumatic stress, are overlooked and in many cases left untreated. Meanwhile, the potential for long-term or permanent damage can be quite significant.

The Army is working very, very hard to raise awareness among leaders and soldiers about these injuries and the risks involved. And we've been extremely fortunate to have help from some of our nation's greatest heroes, Medal of Honor recipients like my good friend, Buddy Bucha . . . the end result was a series of public service announcements. . . .

A big part of eliminating the stigma is getting people to talk about these injuries and understand them better. Back in November, HBO debuted a new documentary about the challenge of post-traumatic stress and its impact on soldiers and families through most of America's wars. "Wartorn 1861-2010" includes interviews with veterans of World War II, the Vietnam War, and the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. It is an amazing, amazing film. If you've not yet seen it, I would highly encourage all of you to do so. It really puts into context the legitimacy and complexity of these types of injuries. The fact is they can be particularly difficult to diagnose correctly due to the co-morbidity of symptoms. And, again, because the individual can appear and behave "perfectly fine," his buddies—and, in some cases, superiors—are often much less accepting and attentive. This presents a significant challenge; especially considering the high incidence of these types of injuries—on today's battlefield. When I took the job as Vice in August 2008, the number of soldiers in our Wounded Warrior program with a service-disqualifying injury of 30 percent or greater suffering from post-traumatic stress or traumatic brain injury was 38 percent. In just two years, that number has grown to 63 percent—47 percent for PTS and 16 percent for TBI.

The only issue I had with the HBO documentary was that it didn't cover what we're doing as an Army and as a nation to address these injuries and conditions. And I think that's very important. The reality is there's a great deal of promising research currently under way, to include the 5-year, \$50 million partnership between the Army and the National Institute of Mental Health. The Army Study to Assess Risk and Resilience in Servicemembers (Army STARRS) is the largest study of mental health risk and resilience ever conducted among military personnel. Within the Army we've also taken significant steps to expand our mental fitness and resiliency training through the Army Chief of Staff's Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program . . . the Global Assessment Tool . . . and, Master Resiliency Trainers.

We are making progress; however, the truth is there is much work still to be done. And we owe it to our men and women in uniform to ensure the very best care, treatment, and support is provided to them while they're serving on active duty, as a member of our reserve component, and also after they've separated or retired from military service.

By working together, the military, DoD, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and organizations like this one with caring individuals who want and are willing to do what it takes to make a difference—I am confident we will continue to accomplish great things in the days ahead.

AUTHOR TO MEET RFTW IN D.C.

RFTW Waterpoint leader Bill “Monsoon” Mimiaga sent the following information on a book recently written by the widow of a military consultant who was murdered in Iraq.

VVA Chapter 785 has supported many of our veterans and their families in need and one of those special families is Barbara Allen, a Snowball Express widow with four beautiful sons. Barbara's husband, Lt. Lou Allen, was a high school science teacher in New York, who upon request, flew to Iraq in 2005 to help out his Company Commander, Captain Esposito, by inventorying the unit's supply warehouse. Captain Esposito suspected that his supply chief was involved with government misappropriations. Five days after Lt. Allen's arrival, he and his CO were "fraggged" by a claymore and killed. SSgt Alberto Martinez pleaded guilty in a pre-trial agreement to avoid the death penalty but the plea was not allowed to be admitted into evidence at the court-martial proceedings and he was acquitted three and one-half years later.



Barbara has written a book entitled "*Front Toward Enemy*" www.unconventionalenemy.com, a truly compelling story. She has been authorized by the General Manager of the Holiday Inn (RFTW Headquarters D.C.) to sign and sell her books on our weekend arrival, and Pastor Rich will have a special place for her book signing at the Saturday Banquet at his Church. Once again we can be proud taking care of one of our own. in

Following is Medal of Honor recipient John Baca's book endorsement.

"We regret to inform you that your husband was killed" . . . words that bring instant and uncontrollable pain and rips apart the very heart and soul of whom you once were and will never be again. When a soldier dies in battle a nation mourns . . . when a soldier is killed by one of our own, "fraggged," his service and sacrifice are all but forgotten.

Front Toward Enemy is an emotional and compelling story by Barbara Allen about the murder of her husband Lt. Lou Allen along with his Company Commander, Captain Phil Esposito, by a claymore mine in Iraq in 2005. The disgruntled American soldier pleaded out his guilt but through judicial missteps and bad judgment calls his case went to trial. Three years of lawyer maneuvering and courtroom antics by defense attorneys and questionable calls and rules imposed by the Judge led to this admitted murderer's acquittal by a tainted jury of his peers. He walked free of two admissions of premeditated cold blooded killings and the US Army that Lt Allen and Captain Esposito so proudly loved and served have all but turned their back on the families they left behind.

Whatever happened to generals like George Washington, Jackson, and Lee who endured the pain, the suffering, and the sacrifice of their own men. They fought with them, ate with them, prayed with them and most importantly, took care of them in their hour of need. In the end our Creator will hear the cry of the innocent, Lieutenant Allen and Captain Esposito, who served and sacrificed and their cries will be justly answered before the true judge and creator of the earth and its inhabitants.

A must read for those that truly want to advocate for our servicemen and women who have lost their voice through their personal sacrifice.

► VA NEWS

AGENT ORANGE

I received the following notice March 16 from Sue Crego, the AVVA AZ State Rep:

“It has finally become official! Sailors or Marines serving aboard some vessels in Vietnam are now officially eligible to submit claims for any disabilities related to exposure to Agent Orange. This includes some Coast Guard. Please pass on to other vets organizations.

PRESUMPTIVE FINDING FOR VETS IN KOREAN DMZ

Due to a final regulation issued in January, VA officials will now presume herbicide exposure for any veteran who served between April 1, 1968, and August 31, 1971, in a unit determined by VA and Department of Defense officials to have operated in an area in or near the Korean DMZ in which herbicides were applied. Veterans with covered service in Korea who have medical conditions that may be related to Agent Orange are encouraged to submit their applications for access to VA health care and compensation as soon as possible. To learn about Veterans' diseases associated with Agent Orange exposure http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/birth_defects.asp

For more information on filing a claim, visit the VA's Filing Claims for Presumptive Conditions Based on Herbicide Exposure website <http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/AO/claimherbicide.htm>

WARNING ABOUT “VAS”

The National Guard Bureau (NGB) sent out the following warning to veterans about a group called “Veterans Affairs Services.” Do not confuse them with the VA.

“An organization called Veterans Affairs Services (VAS) is providing benefit and general information on VA and gathering personal information on veterans. This organization is not affiliated with VA in any way. Websites with the name ‘VA services’ immediately after the ‘www’ ARE NOT part of the Department of Veterans Affairs; the real VA website ends in ‘.gov.’ If you are approached or called, do not offer them any information concerning yourself or data on other veterans. The Department of Veterans Affairs does not randomly call veterans, nor does it ask veterans for information which it does not already have. If you have not dealt with the VA previously and in person, then you receive a call from someone saying they are with the VA or something similar sounding, hand up the phone. Do not respond to emails which suggest that they are from the VA. The VA never conducts official business or asks for personal information by email.

“VAS may be gaining access to military personnel through their close resemblance to the VA name and seal. NGB Legal Counsel has requested that the NGB Provost Marshal Office coordinate with DoD to inform military installations, particularly mobilization sites, of this group and their lack of affiliation or endorsement by VA to provide any services.”

VA AND HUD ISSUE FIRST REPORT ON HOMELESS VETERANS

For the first time, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) published the most authoritative analysis of the extent and nature of homelessness among veterans. According to HUD and VA's assessment, nearly 76,000 veterans were homeless on a given night in 2009, while roughly 136,000 veterans spent at least one night in a shelter during that year.

This unprecedented assessment is based on an annual report HUD provides to Congress and explores in greater depth the demographics of veterans who are homeless, how the number of veterans compare to others who are homeless, and how veterans access and use the nation's homeless response system. HUD's report, [Veteran Homelessness: A Supplement to the 2009 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress](#), examines the data in the department's annual report to Congress in-depth.

"With our federal, state and community partners working together, more veterans are moving into safe housing," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "But we're not done yet. Providing assistance in mental health, substance abuse treatment, education and employment goes hand-in-hand with preventive steps and permanent supportive housing. We continue to work towards our goal of finding every veteran safe housing and access to needed services."

Last June, President Obama announced the nation's first comprehensive strategy to prevent and end homelessness, including a focus on homeless veterans. The report, *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*, puts the country on a path to end veterans and chronic homelessness by 2015; and to ending homelessness among children, family, and youth by 2020.

Key Findings of Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness

More than 3,000 cities and counties reported 75,609 homeless veterans on a single night in January of 2009; 57 percent were staying in an emergency shelter or transitional housing program while the remaining 43 percent were unsheltered. Veterans represent approximately 12 percent of all homeless persons counted nationwide during the 2009 'point-in-time' snapshot.

During a 12-month period in 2009, an estimated 136,000 veterans—or about 1 in every 168 veterans—spent at least one night in an emergency shelter or transitional housing program. The vast majority of sheltered homeless veterans (96 percent) experienced homelessness alone while a much smaller share (four percent) was part of a family. Sheltered homeless veterans are most often individual white men between the ages of 31 and 50 and living with a disability.

Low-income veterans are twice as likely to become homeless compared to all low-income adults. HUD and VA also examined the likelihood of becoming homeless among American veterans with particular demographic characteristics. In 2009, twice as many poor Hispanic veterans used a shelter at some point during the year compared with poor non-Hispanic veterans. African American veterans in poverty had similar rates of homelessness.

Most veterans who used emergency shelter stayed for only brief periods. One-third stayed in shelters for less than one week; 61 % used a shelter for less than one month; and 84% stayed for less than three months. The report also concluded that veterans remained in shelters longer than did non-veterans. In 2009, the median length of stay for veterans who were alone was 21 days in an emergency shelter and 117 days in transitional housing. By contrast, non-veteran individuals stayed in an emergency shelter for 17 days and 106 days in transitional housing.

Nearly half of homeless veterans were located in California, Texas, New York, and Florida, while only 28 % of all veterans were located in those same four States.

The report studied the path homeless veterans take into the shelter system and found most veterans come from another homeless location and few entered the shelter system from their own housing or from housing provided by family or friends.

Sheltered homeless veterans are far more likely to be alone rather than part of a family household; 96 % of veterans are individuals compared to 63 % in the overall homeless population.

For more information on VA's efforts to end homelessness among veterans, visit VA's Web page at www.va.gov/homelessness

► OTHER NEWS

NEW MAYOR: JACKIE MC KINNEY!

On March 8, Gallup, New Mexico held their elections for mayor—and our own Jackie McKinney won!

Jackie and his wife Sandra are long-time RFTW supporters and much loved by everyone. Obviously he's much-loved by the people of Gallup also, because he won by a landslide. Here's the scoop from the Gallup Herald:

GALLUP – The soft spoken and articulate Jackie McKinney, mayor-elect, sailed to an easy win last night in a landslide victory, capturing 1,268 votes. Yogash Kumar came in second with 576 votes, and Emmett Bryan Wall third with 550 votes.

Incumbent Mayor Harry Mendoza garnered 495 votes.

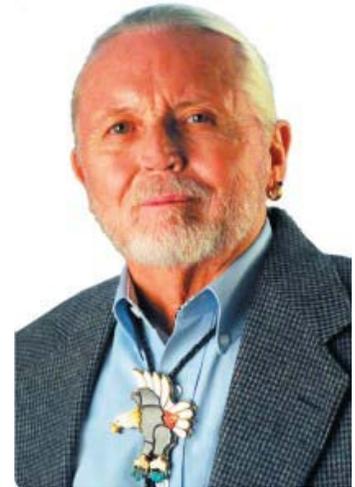
About 43 people lined the movie theater style seats in the City Hall Council chambers to await the election results when the polls closed at 7 p.m., and it was just a couple hour later when the final tally of votes came in.

"I am absolutely overwhelmed, McKinney said, as the crowd broke into an applause. "This wouldn't have happened without the support of some great people that gave me the guidance that I needed and the strong commitment to do the right things for our community."

McKinney said he will spend the first week in office gaining familiarity with the issues facing the city, with the ultimate goal of sending out an advertisement to hire a new city manager. City Attorney David Pederson has filled the void of acting county manager for about one year, and McKinney encourages him to throw his hat into to ring if he's interested in the position.

Today, March 9, is Mendoza's last day in office. He expressed disappointment about coming in fourth place, but was happy for McKinney. "Jackie will be good," he said.

As the lone contender for the District 2 council seat, it was obvious that incumbent Councilor Allan Landavazo was a shoe-in for another four years. He lauded McKinney for running a well-organized campaign. "I think the council will work well with Jackie," he said. "He brings no baggage and has the needs of the city at heart."



McKinney was one of the most active candidates during the campaign, and used Facebook and local media as a platform to reach out to supporters with his daily statements and positioning statements on improving Gallup in the areas of: Setting Higher Standards, Economic Development, Infrastructure and Water.

CONGRATULATIONS, JACKIE! We know you will be good for the city of Gallup.

VIETNAM WAR 50TH ANNIVERSARY

The Department of Defense announced earlier this year its program to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War. The program will:

- Thank and honor veterans of the Vietnam War, including personnel who were held as prisoners of war or listed as missing in action, for their service and sacrifice on behalf of the United States and to thank and honor the families of these veterans.
- Highlight the service of the armed forces during the Vietnam War and the contributions of federal agencies and governmental and non-governmental organizations that served with, or in support of, the armed forces.
- Pay tribute to the contributions made on the home front by the people of the United States during the Vietnam War.
- Highlight the advances in technology, science, and medicine related to the military research conducted during the Vietnam War.
- Recognize the contributions and sacrifices made by the allies of the United States during the Vietnam War.
- DoD representatives will coordinate with other federal agencies, veteran groups, state, local government and non-government organizations for their input in Vietnam War commemoration activities.

For more information call 877-387-9951 or visit the official website at <http://www.vietnamwar50th.com/>.

► BRINGING THEM HOME

Since late 1973, the remains of 938 Americans killed in the Vietnam War have been accounted for and returned to their families with 1,708 service members still missing

REMAINS OF 11 AIRMEN IDENTIFIED

The U.S. Department of Defense on February 10 identified remains discovered in the South Pacific seven years ago as those of 11 airmen who had been missing since World War II.

The remains of Army Air Force Tech. Sgt. Charles A. Bode of Baltimore were buried at Arlington National Cemetery. Bode was 23 when he was declared missing. A second burial service for the remaining 10 servicemen took place at Arlington March 24.

The 11 servicemen had been missing since November 20, 1943, after the crew's B-24D Liberator left an airbase in Port Moresby, New Guinea. The crew was 20 miles north of the airfield when ground control lost contact with the plane. Searches for the craft and its crew were unsuccessful, and in 1949, the missing servicemen were declared unrecoverable.

In 1984, U.S. officials were notified of the discovery of a World War II crash site in a ravine in the Morobe Province of Papua New Guinea. However, the threat of landslides prevented the recovery of the craft and remains. Twenty years later, search teams obtained human remains collected by local villagers.

The other crew members whose remains have been identified are: 1st Lt. Richard T. Heuss, 23, of Berkley, Michigan; 2nd Lt. Robert A. Miller, 22, of Memphis, Tennessee; 2nd Lt. Edward R. French, 23, of Erie, Pennsylvania; 2nd Lt. Robert R. Streckenbach Jr., 21, of Green Bay, Wisconsin; Tech. Sgt. Lucian I. Oliver, Jr., 23, of Memphis; Staff Sgt. Ivan O. Kirkpatrick, 36, of Whittier, California; Staff Sgt. William K. Musgrave, 24, of Hutsonville, Illinois; Staff Sgt. James T. Moran, 21, of Sloatsburg, New York; Staff Sgt. James B. Moore, 21, of Woburn, Massachusetts; and Staff Sgt. Roy Surabian, 24, of Medford, Massachusetts.

JPAC SEARCHING FOR MIA'S FROM WWII AND VIETNAM

JPAC announced on March 4, 2011 that several archeological recovery teams and investigation teams from the U.S. Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) recently deployed to the Independent State of Papua New Guinea, Lao People's Democratic Republic, and Socialist Republic of Vietnam searching for MIAs from World War II and the Vietnam War.

Recovery teams will search for human remains, life support items, and other material evidence (personal and military issued items) that may further the identification of Americans missing from past U.S. conflicts. Investigation teams will authenticate leads from eyewitnesses, conduct field research, and gather information to determine whether or not there will be a return visit for excavation at a later date.

In Papua New Guinea, more than 25 JPAC team members will investigate and excavate multiple sites associated with World War II losses. An investigation team will authenticate eyewitness leads and conduct field research for seven aircraft losses in the Wewak, East Sepik, Morobe, Central and Northern provinces.

Two recovery teams will search aircraft crash sites in the Morobe province where 11 Americans may have perished. The remote sites, which are significantly elevated and exceed 3,000 meters, pose several unique challenges for the teams. A mountaineering specialist from the U.S. Army's Northern Warfare Training Center, Alaska, will advise the team on risk management procedures which are unique to navigating the extreme mountainous terrain and preparing for the effects of the mountain environment on recovery operations.

In Lao People's Democratic Republic, approximately 40 JPAC team members will investigate and excavate multiple sites associated with Vietnam War losses. Two JPAC recovery teams will excavate aircraft crash sites in search of eight missing Americans at sites in the Khammouan and Savannakhet provinces. In addition to recovery operations, a JPAC team will investigate 19 unsolved cases located throughout five provinces. The 16-member investigation team will gather information on 26 missing individuals to further qualify cases for future excavation. The approximately 30-day deployment marks the 117th Joint Field Activity in Laos.

In the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, approximately 70 JPAC team members will investigate and excavate multiple sites associated with Vietnam War losses. Four recovery teams will search the Kon Tum, Binh Dinh, Khanh Hoa, and Tay Ninh provinces at burial and aircraft crash sites where five Americans may have perished. Two investigation teams will research 26 unsolved cases. The teams will authenticate eyewitness leads and conduct field research, searching for information on 41 missing individuals. The approximately 40-day long undertaking marks the 102nd Joint Field Activity in Vietnam.

JPAC SEARCHING IN GERMANY AND NETHERLANDS

JPAC announced on March 17 that an investigation team was recently deployed to Europe searching for MIAs from World War II.

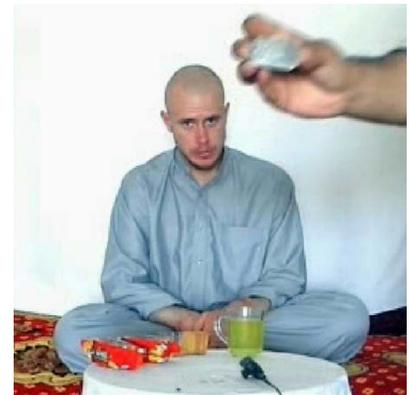
The seven-member team will investigate 10 cases in the Federal Republic of Germany and Netherlands, searching for information associated with 17 servicemen unaccounted-for from World War II. The team will authenticate leads from witnesses, conduct field research, and gather information to determine whether or not there will be a return visit for excavation at a later date.

POW STILL HELD IN AFGHANISTAN



Pfc. Bowe R. Bergdahl, age 23, from Ketchum, Idaho, 1st Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, was captured in Pakitka province in southeastern Afghanistan, on June 30, 2009. The Pentagon declared him Duty Status Whereabouts Unknown on July 1, 2009, and his status was changed to Missing-Captured on July 3, 2009.

Something happened early in the morning of June 30, 2009 after standing his watch that led SPC Bergdahl to leave his body armor and weapons behind and walk out of his compound with an Afghan soldier. The soldier who accompanied him was shot and killed by the Taliban.



The Taliban released videos of Bergdahl on July 18, 2009, December 25, 2009, April 2010, and December 8, 2010. In the last video Bergdahl appeared thin and with an abrasion on his face.

The following was sent by Danny "Greasy" Belcher, Executive Director of Task Force Omega of KY:

We need help from RFTW with whoever is in charge of the POW/MIA issue. As you know we will be leaving Afghanistan in the near future. We do not want to see a repeat of our past history of leaving live American POWs behind. Would you all ask someone to please pass out copies of this information as you cross the country from California to the Wall? If we can get enough people calling their senators and congressman we can help bring POW Bowe Bergdahl home alive. You can remove Task Force Omega of KY and my contact information and put RFTW in those areas if you like. I do not care who gets credit but we must do all we can to bring him home alive. If you cannot afford to make the copies I will spend my check from my 100% service connected disability from Vietnam to make copies and send to any address you ask me to send to.

You all can bring the message across America like you have in the past. Thank you all for any help on this."

A rare Blue Star Banner with an inverted blue star surrounded by a red ring, symbolizing a soldier's capture. The flag variation dates back to a 1918 measure passed by the Massachusetts House of Representatives. Keith and Carolyn Maupin displayed the flag when their son, Keith Maupin, was captured.

► EVENTS

RUN FOR THE WALL FUNDRAISER

April 23, 2011 – 8 a.m. to Closing

PC's Bar & Grill

4250 Los Angeles Ave, Simi Valley, CA

805-579-9079

PCsBar@aol.com/www.PCsBar.com

DARTS-KARAOKE-GOOD FOOD

Raffles/Silent Auction

50/50 Drawing

10% OF ALL PROCEEDS GO TO RUN FOR THE WALL

OFFICIAL REUNION – TULSA, OK

August 4, 2011

RUN FOR THE WALL'S 1ST Annual Official Reunion for both Central and Southern Routes

Friday, August 5th - Sunday, August 7th, 2011, In TULSA, OKLAHOMA

This is your chance to get acquainted with those you don't get to see on the "RUN". Also, attend the "Rider's Meeting" and *put your two cents worth in!* Ride some new roads, and have some great fun!

The Radisson Hotel (\$89) Host Hotel - 10918 East 41st Street, Tulsa, OK, 74146 (918) 627-5000
(Includes Breakfast Buffet; Rooms available Thursday when the BOD will be arriving)

La Quinta, (\$60) 10829 East 41st Street, Tulsa, OK, 74146 (918) 665-0220

Camping: Mingo RV Park 801 North Mingo Road, Tulsa, OK, 74116 (918) 832-8824

Friday the BOD meeting 8-5.

- A planned lunch ride around the lake.
- This evening is free

Saturday morning /afternoon –

- Morning group ride
- Riders meeting in the afternoon, FNGs PLEASE PARTICIPATE.

Saturday evening –

- A dinner (included in registration cost) is being served in a private room for the group.

Sunday morning-

- Time to head home.

PLEASE FILL OUT AND RETURN TO ADDRESS BELOW, PRINT CLEARLY

REGISTRATION COST: Pre-Registration - \$40, Day of Arrival Sign-Up - \$50

(No Guarantee That You Will Be Fed Without Prepayment)

Name(s) _____

Phone _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Refer to RFTW website (rftw.org) for complete details on rides, meetings, dinner, etc.

Mail registration and payment to: David Hampton, PO Box 3899, Muskogee, OK 74402

► SICK CALL

Bill Hanlon

Bill had a heart attack on March 28, but is recovering nicely.

Bruce Duck Tape

Duck Tape recently had a serious motorcycle accident. He has lost around 30 pounds, but has been working out with weights and hopes to get back into it soon. His doctors call him a walking miracle. He has sent on his duck tape so that it can be used on the Run. He and Sweetness plan to meet Southern Route in Arkansas as we pass through. They want to make sure everyone knows how much they appreciate all of the cards and emails.

► TAPS

THE LAST DOUGHBOY HAS DIED

Frank Woodruff Buckles, who lied about his age to enlist in the Army in 1917 and became the last known U.S. veteran of World War I, died on February 27, 2011 at the age of 110.

"We have lost a living link to an important era in our nation's history," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "But we have also lost a man of quiet dignity, who dedicated his final years to ensuring the sacrifices of his fellow 'Doughboys' are appropriately commemorated."

Burial with full military honors was held March 15 at Arlington National Cemetery.

A long-time resident of Charles Town, West Virginia, where he had a farm, Buckles was born in Bethany, Missouri. He enlisted shortly after his 16th birthday and served in France and Germany.

At the start of World War II, he was a civilian working with a steamship company in the Philippines. He was imprisoned in a Japanese prisoner of war camp for three and a half years.

In his later years, Buckles became an advocate for the expansion of a little-known memorial to World War I Veterans from the District of Columbia into a national memorial.



More than 4,700,000 Americans served in the military during World War I. About 53,000 died of combat-related causes, while another 63,000 deaths were listed as non-combat.

With the death of Frank Buckles, Claude Stanley Choules, 110, born March 3, 1901, is now the last confirmed World War I veteran in the world, and is the last living witness to the scuttling of the German fleet in Scapa Flow. He is also the last living veteran to have served in both world wars, and the last seaman from the first. Choules is also the only remaining British male World War I veteran (the last female veteran being Florence Green), and the last World War I veteran living in Australia. He is also the oldest military veteran in the world.

Joe Silversmith – Code Talker

Marine Corporal Joe Silversmith passed away February 28, 2011 at his home in Coolidge, New Mexico at the age of 86. Tribal President Ben Shelly ordered flags on the Navajo Nation to be flown at half-staff from March 2-5 to honor Silversmith.

Silversmith was a Navajo Code Talker during World War II. He joined the 297 Marine Platoon at age 18 and served in the South Pacific from 1943 to 1946. He was in the second group of Marines to be trained as Navajo Code Talkers.

Silversmith is survived by his wife Ramona, two daughters, Raedean Silversmith-Yazzie and her husband Navajo Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie, and Candace F. Silversmith and six grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents Antonia and Yahatah Silversmith; brothers Andy Newman and John Antonio; sisters Ada Henio, Agnus Henio and Dorothy Percy; and a third daughter Karen Silversmith.

Mrs. Silversmith remembers her husband as a committed minister and loved animals, "After he returned from the war, he worked at Gallup Sand and Gravel then moved on to become a full-time minister at Whitewater Bible Church and the Thoreau Community Bible Church. He loved working with the community, horses, herding sheep and playing the harmonica." He was also an active member of the Navajo Nation Code Talkers Association.

Council Delegate Yazzie and wife Raedean both stated he will be greatly missed, "Joe was a man with strong courage, a role model of what a Navajo man should be like, and he's one of our heroes. He was always telling us to believe in our goals and in ourselves, and be proud of who we are, where we come from, and to take great care of our Navajo land."



Lloyd Oliver – Original Code Talker

Lloyd Oliver wasn't much of a talker, but it was clear that he was proud to have his native language serve as a key weapon during World War II. As part of an elite group of Marines, he helped develop and implement a code based on the Navajo language that helped win the war. The Code Talkers took part in every assault the Marines conducted in the Pacific.

Years later, his hearing remained impaired because of gun blasts and other explosives during the war. He rarely brought up his time as a Code Talker, but his eyes gleamed when holding a picture of himself in his uniform. He kept a Marine cap and a U.S. flag displayed on his bedroom walls in the home he shared with his wife on the Yavapai Apache Reservation.

Oliver passed away on March 16 at a hospice center in Avondale, where he had been staying for about three weeks. He was born in Shiprock, N.M. and would have turned 88 April 23. Navajo President Ben Shelly called Oliver a "national treasure" and ordered flags lowered across the reservation in his honor.



Yvonne Murphy, recording secretary for Navajo Code Talkers Association, said the loss of Oliver is "a sad day in Navajo history."

"He was one of the ones who laid the foundation for the design of the language that the Code Talkers used," Murphy said.

Oliver's death is a reminder to honor the work of the original Code Talkers and the wave of hundreds of other Code Talkers who followed, Murphy said.

In 1942 at age 19, he left the reservation to help in the war. After training as a Code Talker, he served on the islands of Guadalcanal, New Britain, Saipan, and Peleliu. He was a corporal when the Marines cut him loose in 1945.

Over the years, his memory of the war faded but some never vanished, including the night when he was in a foxhole on Guadalcanal and "the bombs rained" down, knocking him unconscious. When he awoke, bodies of his fellow Marines and of Japanese soldiers were scattered around him.

When asked by an *Arizona Republic* reporter in 2001 about his legacy, Oliver was hesitant. "Am I a hero? I don't know," Oliver said after some thought. "Yeah. I'll be a hero," he finally said. "I'll go for that. Yeah."

Lloyd's brother Willard Varnell Oliver, who died in 2009, was also a Code Talker. The death of Lloyd Oliver this week means that only one member of the original 29 Navajo Code Talkers survives: Chester Nez.

There were a total of about 420 Navajo Code Talkers; fewer than 50 are still alive.

Pegleg's Father

Our condolences to Roland "Pegleg" Marchand on the passing of his father on March 29 Pegleg said he is now with the crew he served with on the B-17 in WW II. "He always missed his Brothers and now he can soar with them forever and rest in peace."

► CLOSING THOUGHTS

The following prose is well-known, but should be read from time to time—so that we never forget. Thanks to Joe "Dragon" Lozano for sending it in.

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WALL

At first there was no place for us to go until someone put up that BLACK GRANITE WALL.

Now, every day and night, my Brothers and my Sisters wait to see the many people from places afar file in front of this Wall.

Many stopping briefly and many for hours, and some come on a regular basis. It was hard at first, not that it's gotten any easier, but it seems that many of the attitudes towards that war that we were involved in have changed.

I can only pray that the ones on the other side have learned something and more Walls as this one needn't be built. Several members of my unit and many that I did not recognize have called me to the Wall by touching my name that is engraved upon it.

The tears aren't necessary but are hard even for me to hold back.

Don't feel guilty for not being with me, my Brothers. This was my destiny as it is yours, to be on that side of the Wall.

Touch the Wall my Brothers, so that we can share in the memories that we had. I have learned to put the bad memories aside and remember only the pleasant times that we had together.

Tell our other Brothers out there to come and visit me, not to say good-bye but to say Hello and be together again, even for a short time and to ease that pain of loss that we all share. Today, an irresistible and loving call comes from the Wall.

As I approach I can see an elderly lady and as I get closer I recognize her. It's Momma!!!

As much as I have looked forward to this day, I have also regretted it because I didn't know what reaction I would have. Next to her, I suddenly see my wife and immediately think how hard it must have been for her to come to this place and my mind floods with the pleasant memories of 30 years past.

There's a young man in a military uniform standing with his arm around her.....

My God!.....

It's...it has to be my son. Look at him trying to be the man without a tear in his eye. I yearn to tell him how proud I am, seeing him standing tall, straight and proud in his uniform. Momma comes closer and touches the Wall and I feel the soft and gentle touch I had not felt in so many years. Dad has crossed to this side of the Wall and through our touch, I try to convey to her that Dad is doing fine and is no longer suffering or feeling pain. I see my wife's courage building as she sees Momma touch the Wall and she approaches and lays her hand on my waiting hand. All the emotions, feelings and memories of three decades past flash between our touch and I tell her that it's all right. Carry on with your life and don't worry about me.....

I can see as I look into her eyes that she hears and understands me and a big burden has been lifted from her. I watch as they lay flowers and other memories of my past.

My lucky charm that was taken from me and sent to her by my CO, a tattered and worn teddy bear that I can barely remember having as I grew up as a child.

Also several medals that I had earned and were presented to my wife.

One of them is the Combat Infantry Badge that I am very proud of and I notice that my son is also wearing this medal.

I had earned mine in the jungles of Vietnam and he had probably earned his in the Deserts of Iraq. I can tell that they are preparing to leave and I try to take a mental picture of them together, because I don't know when I will see them again. I wouldn't blame them if they were not to return and can only thank them that I was not forgotten.

My wife and Momma near the Wall for one final touch and so many years of indecision, fear and sorrow are let go. As they turn to leave I feel my tears that had not flowed for so many years, form as if dew drops on the other side of the Wall.

They slowly move away with only a glance over their shoulder.

My son suddenly stops and slowly returns.

He stands straight and proud in front of me and snaps a salute.

Something makes him move to the Wall and he puts his hand upon the Wall and touches my tears that had formed on the face of the Wall and I can tell that he senses my presence there and the pride and the LOVE that I have for him.

He falls to his knees and the tears flow from his eyes and I try my best to reassure him that it's all right and the tears do not make him any less of a man.

As he moves back wiping the tears from his eyes, he silently mouths, God Bless you, Dad....

God Bless YOU, Son

We WILL meet someday but in the meanwhile, go on your way

There is no hurry ... There is no hurry at all.

As I see them walk off in the distance, I yell out to THEM and EVERYONE there today, as loud as I can

“THANKS FOR REMEMBERING”!!!

As others on this side of the Wall join in, I notice that the US Flag that so proudly flies in front of us every day is flapping and standing proudly straight out in the wind today.

THANK YOU ALL FOR REMEMBERING.....

VIDEOS WORTHY OF VIEWING:

The True Meaning Of Memorial Day:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wK0T4pVHP28>

For those who have never seen it, this is a video of Evening Parade in Washington D.C.

The Silent Drill Platoon:

http://www.marines.com/main/index/making_marines/culture/traditions/silent_drill_platoon

You Are Not Forgotten



TO SUBSCRIBE TO A MAILED COPY OF THE NEWSLETTER:

APPLICATION FOR NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTION

The RFTW newsletter is published in January, April, July, and October. If you would like to have printed copies of the newsletter mailed to you, a one-year subscription is \$10, which covers the cost of printing and mailing. If you subscribe or renew by October 31 you will receive all four issues for that year. If you renew between October 31 and January 1, your subscription will begin with the January issue of the next year.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____ 2011

ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \$ _____ FOR 1 YEAR _____ 2 YEARS _____

Please mail this form with your check or money order (made payable to Run For The Wall) to Judy Lacey, 4249 Comstock Drive, Lake Havasu City, AZ 86406.

*RFTW Newsletter Editor
4249 Comstock Dr.
Lake Havasu City, AZ 86406*

FIRST CLASS MAIL

RUN FOR THE WALL



WE RIDE FOR THOSE WHO CAN'T

**To promote healing among Vietnam veterans and their families and friends
To call for an accounting of all Prisoners of War and those Missing in Action (POW/MIA)
To honor the memory of those Killed in Action (KIA)**