



RUN FOR THE WALL

Quarterly Newsletter

“We Ride For Those Who Can’t”

April 2012

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THE EDITOR’S NOTES



I met a most extraordinary man last month.

While surfing the Internet I came across mention of a new flag to honor veterans. It is called the “Veterans Remembered Flag.” The flag was created by a group of veterans in Sonoma, CA, and the man who is deeply involved with the new flag and other amazing ventures is Navy veteran Jim Parks, now 93.

The idea of a flag dedicated to honoring all veterans intrigued me. We have service flags to honor veterans in each branch of service, and we have the POW flag to honor those who were captured by the enemy during war, but there has never been a flag to honor ALL veterans. I went to the group’s website to read more about the new flag.

It’s a beautiful flag, with a lot of symbolism. I ordered a flag and a Veterans Remembered pin. But the order form had no way to take payment info, so I called the phone number provided for more information.

A firm male voice answered—it turned out to be Jim Parks. Seems that this 93-year-old is almost single-handedly running the website and flag sales. We talked for easily an hour, and although Parks talked of his service and his accomplishments on behalf of all veterans, none of it was directed at himself. He is a very humble man and does what he does only for others. Parks is indeed an extraordinary man. The flag is not his first act of service for veterans. Besides the flag, Parks was the force behind the creation of a veterans cemetery as well as a memorial in his hometown. He is truly a veteran serving veterans. He personally called governors of many states and told me 19 states have already adopted the flag.

After my talk with Parks, I went to have a talk with the mayor of my town about adopting the Veterans Remembered flag. He will be discussing the flag with our two “sister” cities nearby. I then called my state senator to ask about Arizona adopting the flag. I learned that the flag adoption is already going through the process of being passed by the state of Arizona.

Please read more about the Veterans Remembered Flag under “Our Stories” in this issue, and see what this beautiful flag looks like. And please do what you can to get your city or state to adopt the flag that will honor the service of ALL of our veterans.

Note: On March 26 the AZ Senate, on a unanimous vote, made Arizona the 20th state to adopt the Veterans Remembered Flag.

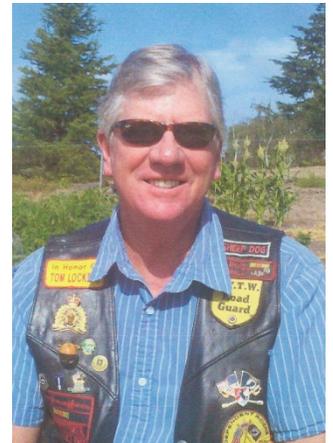
Judy “Velcro” Lacey

*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.*

► PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Only 42 days until Run For The Wall XXIV. I am very excited! Preparations are coming together well and the folks in Rancho are preparing to welcome us.

I could go on at great length about all the people, organizations, and entire towns that are planning for our arrival. It’s humbling when you stop and think about how many people across this country plan and work to support our mission. I am sure the number is in the thousands. It is important that as participants of RFTW we thank these folks and make them know their efforts are appreciated. I have said it before: to carry out these rides with an all-volunteer organization is not only amazing, it’s a statement about patriotism and compassion in this country. For you FNGs (which is 30 to 40% of riders annually) you are about to be welcomed home and to be thanked for your service. You are about to embark on 12 days of healing with folks that “get it.”



Some riders will wonder “what am I doing here?” Run For The Wall is hard work! Especially the first few days crossing the desert. It takes a couple of days to settle in and get the rhythm of the Run. FNGs—please seek out advise (or just complain to someone) and you’ll feel better soon! It is important that all of you read our mission statement, our history, and check out our frequently asked questions. Everyone must understand that Run For The Wall is a mission. We ride for many personal reasons, but the Run itself exists to make a statement and to honor our POW/MIAs from all wars. This is the reason behind riding in parade formation during certain

segments of the Run. Note that your equipment and riding ability is crucial to your success and enjoyment during these 12 days.

Every year the Run is made of many interesting groups and individuals and this year, our 24th year, is no different. You will see American Legion riders, Patriot Guards riders, and lots of local and regional club members. The Run itself has groups that get together on the way to the Run, such as those renegades out of Texas☺...and don't forget F-Troop on Central Route—these guys are a quiet institution willing to help anyone, and they are dedicated to keeping the Run real.

One note of news, there has been a change this year on the Run. The Veterans Administration Mobile Support Vehicle will not be able to make the journey this year. I thank them sincerely for their previous support and to Mr. Milo Garcia for his hard work. We will miss him.

I am so proud of the hundreds of people who work so hard to put this event together. Please be sure to thank the volunteers each day.

Ok, see you in Rancho Cucamonga! I will post again the first of May. If you have any questions please ask—board members and route coordinators are there to help you.

Till The Day,
Ross Currie
President

► RFTW 2012 NEWS

MESSAGE FROM SR COORDINATOR

For those of you I haven't had the pleasure to meet, my name is Laurie "Airborne" Clay and I am the 2012 Route Coordinator for the RFTW Southern Route. I served in the US Army December 85-June 91 with my last duty assignment with the 82d Airborne Division, Office of the Staff Judge Advocate, both at Bragg and in the sandbox. As you can guess – that's how I received my "road name."



I want to Welcome Home all those that have served our great Nation – our Vietnam Veterans and those Veterans that came before and after. No matter what era or branch, you went where our Country asked you to go and did what was asked of you and for that I Thank you.

And to the families: thank you for standing by and holding down the home front. I have been on both sides and understand that it's just as hard to watch your spouse walk towards that flight line or ship as it is being the one having to look back – praying that your family remains safe while you are away.

I was first introduced to Run for the Wall while living in Colorado Springs in 1996 when my husband, LT, and I were invited by Joe Dragon (the old timers will remember him) to participate. At that time we were only able to participate from New Mexico through Kansas. I recall how difficult it was to watch the Mission and our new family continue on when we had to turn back to the Springs. In 1999, I rode all the way and it was that year that both LT and I were asked to take on road guard responsibilities. What an honor to be selected to serve in that position – I look at a photo of all the road guards standing in the back of a pickup truck at the hotel in northern VA and still get chills thinking what an honor it was to serve my fellow Veterans, family, and friends.

After moving to Virginia, the BOD asked me to help establish the Southern Route. Initially I was the State Coordinator for Tennessee, West Virginia, Virginia, and DC. Each year other great Americans stepped up and took over the SC responsibly in Tennessee and West Virginia. I maintained Virginia/Arlington until my position with the Department of Veterans Affairs required more of my time and attention. Each year since 2000, I have participated and rode out as far as my job would allow, no matter where I lived—Roanoke, Winston-Salem, Manhattan, and now Kentucky.

Although Run For The Wall has two Routes – Central and Southern – we have ONE Mission and we all ride to support that ONE Mission and each other.

Run For The Wall's Mission is simple: to promote healing among ALL Veterans and their families and friends, to call for an accounting of all Prisoners of War and those Missing in Action (POW/MIA), to honor the memory of those Killed in Action (KIA) from all wars, and to support our Military personnel all over the World.

By riding in formation, whether it is side-by-side or staggered, we are bringing the Mission to the public for all to see, to wonder, and to begin to ask questions of those around them. When we visit schools across our Nation, not only are our children learning from us, but I know that we have learned a lot from them as well. Visiting our brothers and sisters at the VA Medical Centers and Care Centers is a highlight for everyone involved. The history we all learn from each other is amazing.

Run For The Wall's philosophy is that we strive to maintain a safe, supportive, and private atmosphere in which all participants can reflect and heal on their journey to the Vietnam Memorial in Washington DC in the hope that they can return home to a new beginning. This is important as each of us is different – please try to assist each other when you see the need arise. Additionally, the Chaplains Corps is always there to help with any emotional needs.

For me, Run For The Wall provides the camaraderie I once knew while in the military. I know someone is there whatever is needed – we are a family that understands what it's like to be away from home and possibly placed in harm's way. We are here to support one another and ensure we all successfully complete the Mission – together.

Since I was unable to complete a video, I will try to give some insight to some of the things everyone needs to think about prior to and during the Mission.

First and foremost – this is a mission. This is not a motorcycle ride or run. Both you and your bike need to be in good shape in order to make the 2800+ miles and return home. An average day ride is between 300 and 400 miles, with stops for events, fuel, and meals. At these stops, various organizations and companies have donated water, Gatorade, and snacks – please ensure that you take advantage of this goodwill. As we travel through many different types of weather, you will need to stay hydrated.

Although RFTW has a lot of community support that provides meals, you must ensure that you have the funds to make the round trip. If you camp, your lodging fees will be less. This year the Southern Route has a Camping Coordinator, Tom "Sidewalk" Cameron (tomcameron@cox.net). Feel free to contact him if you are interested in camping.

We ride in three types of formations – Missing Man Formation, side-by-side formation, and staggered formation. The first two (2) platoons are side-by-side with the remaining platoons riding staggered. Southern Route's last three platoons, 7 – 9, are for the bikes with trailers, trikes, and trikes with trailers (not necessarily in that order). Southern Route will have four (4) Chase Vehicles with one (1) riding with the Advance Team. No bike or rider will be left behind. Additionally, Southern Route will be traveling with cages (4-wheel vehicles). Steve "Hawgwash" Hill will be leading the cages across country and will try to ensure that all cages are

involved in all events (hawgwash@bigplanet.com). However, this is a motorcycle journey and for the safety of all motorcyclists, cages cannot be mixed in with the platoons.

If you've pre-registered, please ensure that you bring along the necessary paperwork—license, current vehicle and health insurance, contact info, etc.—with you as these must be verified when you arrive in order to obtain your Route Packet from Shirley “Top Sarge” at the Registration Trailer. Those who will have children riding along must ensure that both parents sign the release. Helmets are required for everyone!

The support we receive across the country for both Routes is amazing and can include meals, hydration, fuel, free camping, spiritual, welcoming committees, flag wavers, bike washes, and/or Veterans Benefits/Health representatives – just to name a few. Please ensure that you say “**Thank You**” as you come across our supporters. They too believe in our Mission and want to help us be successful.

Last but not least – Road Guards, Platoon Leaders, and the Advance/Staging Teams have been selected to assist us across country. Please work with them and pay attention to any instructions you receive from them – most if not all have been volunteering for years and have the experience to assist us across the country.

I recently viewed this video on RFTW by Anne Perry on YouTube – www.youtube.com/watch?v=VgoocpYdY4E It says a lot for our Mission.

Check out the SR leadership team at www.rftwsr-2012.us Additionally, family and friends can follow the Mission at that site once the Mission begins by reading the daily Sitreps.

I am here for you, so please contact me before, during, or after the Mission at rftwsrac2012@hotmail.com or find me on FaceBook: Laurie “Airborne” Clay

I look forward to 2012 and the only thing I ask is that we all remember why we all participate in RFTW – the Mission is more important than any “one” of us. Our Veterans and Military Members deserve all the support we can give them – after all, they offered up everything for us.

PRE-RUN ACTIVITIES

RFTW XXIV

**Hilton Garden Inn
Rancho Cucamonga, CA**

**Monday
May 14, 2012**

| | | | |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|--|
| 8:00 - 8:30 AM | BOD & Route Leadership Briefing | Hilton Garden Inn | Board, RC's |
| 8:30 - 9:00 AM | State Coordinator's Meeting | Hilton Garden Inn | Steelman, Clay, State Coord. |
| 9:00 - 10:00 AM | Merchandise/Supplies Distribution | Merchandise Trailers | Hampton, McDowell |
| 10:00 - 11:00 AM | Finance Orientation | Hilton Garden Inn | Barker, Hampton, McDowell RC/ARCs, Registration/ICO Teams, Route Finance Teams, Chase Drivers |
| 12:00 - 1:00 PM | Lunch | | |
| 1:00 - 7:00 PM | Registration Open | Courtyard – Lobby | McDowell, Steelman |
| 1:00 - 5:00 PM | Merchandise Open | Parking Lot | Hampton, Merchandise Teams |
| 3:00 - 5:00 PM | CR Coordination Meeting | Hilton Garden Inn | Gladwill, CR Leadership Team |

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

**Tuesday
May 15, 2012**

7:45 – 8:45 AM Limited Registration Courtyard – Small Room McDowell, Steelman
8:00 - 8:30 AM BOD & Route Leadership Briefing Hilton Garden Inn Board, RC's
8:30 - Noon Road Guard Orientation Hilton Garden Inn Currie, Steelman, Guidry,
Ingram
Hampton

9:00 -4:30 PM Merchandise Open Parking Lot
9:00 AM Riverside National Cemetery (See details below)
9:00 -8:00PM Registration Open Courtyard Lobby McDowell, Steelman
10:00 - 11:00 AM SR Platoon Leader Orientation Courtyard – Small Room Clay
11:00 -Noon SR Advance Team Orientation Courtyard – Small Room Clay

12:00 - 1:00 PM Lunch

2:00 - 3:00 PM SR FNG Orientation Hilton Garden Inn Clay
3:00 - 4:00 PM CR FNG Orientation Hilton Garden Inn Gladwill, McDole
5:00 PM Blessing of the Bikes Driveway Chaplain Corps
5:00 - 7:00 PM RFTW Barbecue Hilton Garden Inn Olmstead/Scott

5:00 - 6:30 PM Registration closed for Dinner – REOPENS at 6:30

7:30 PM Interdenominational Prayer Hilton Garden Inn, N. Side Chaplain Corps
8:00 PM Registration Closes

**Wednesday
May 16, 2012**

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 Ross “Compass” Currie, President, BOD

- Opening Prayer
- Presentation of Colors by Rancho Cucamonga F.D. Honor Guard
- Pledge of Allegiance
- National Anthem
- Why We Ride:
 - “We Ride for Those Who Can’t”
 - “Honoring All of America’s Warriors”
 - Remembering the KIA/POW/MIA from Vietnam
 - Remembering the KIA/POW/MIA from Iraq/Afghanistan
- Taps
- Welcome to RFTW 2011 by President Ross “Compass” Currie
- Recognition of:
 - FNGs
 - Active Duty Military
 - Medal of Honor Recipients
- Introduction of RFTW Board of Directors
- Recognition of Volunteer Leadership and presentation of plaques
- Introduction of SR & CR Route Coordinators
- Rider Orientation
- Closing Prayer
- Riders Dismissed – **“5 MINUTES!”**

7:45 AM Southern Route Departs
8:00 AM Central Route Departs

ENTERTAINMENT AT RANCHO

The singing group "A New Direction" will once again perform for us at Rancho. They are a group of homeless veterans who brought the house down last year when they sang for us. Be sure not to miss them this year.

RANCHO FUNDRAISER AT BJ'S

BJ's Brewhouse and Restaurant is again doing a fundraiser for us the entire month of May in Rancho Cucamonga, CA. RFTW will get 15% on all food and non-alcohol drinks, such as coffee, soda etc.

For RFTW to receive the proceeds from the fundraiser a flyer must be presented to BJ's at the RC location before ordering. Copies of the flyer will be available in Rancho.

BJ's also gives all veterans a discount 24/7. All they have to do is present their Veteran's ID. In RC they can also show their room key and/or RFTW wristband for the discount.

RIVERSIDE NATIONAL CEMETERY

By Jim "The Mayor" Frost

A ride to RNC will take place on Tuesday morning, May 15, from the host hotel area in Rancho Cucamonga. Rider's meeting at 0900, and KSU at 0930 for the half-hour ride. Any changes will be posted on the website Forum.

Riverside National cemetery is home of the Medal of Honor Memorial and one of four sites recognized as a National Medal of Honor Memorial Site. Its walls feature the names of all MoH recipients. It was dedicated in 1999. The Fallen Soldier/Veterans' Memorial, erected in 2000, is dedicated to all service members who gave the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

The Prisoner of War/Missing in Action National Memorial was dedicated in September 2005. Vietnam veteran Lewis Lee Millett, Jr., son of MoH Recipient Lew Millett, sculpted the bronze statue which depicts an American serviceman on his knees with hands bound by his captors. The statue is surrounded by black marble pillars that evoke imprisonment. In past years, Lee Millett has also been available to describe his sculpture to our riders.

WOUNDED WARRIORS TO ACCOMPANY RFTW

(Editor's note: Doug Lyvere is the person responsible for getting tickets for years for RFTW to visit the Marine Barracks for the Evening Parade in DC. Doug also arranges other great stuff for RFTW. This year he is arranging for Wounded Warriors to join us in Rancho. Doug, thank you so much for all you have done for RFTW.)

I've invited Wounded Warriors from the Wounded Warrior Battalion at Camp Pendleton to come up on the 15th. They may come up early and go with us to RNC or they may just come in the afternoon. They may come in cages or a bus. The idea was to get these youngsters around people that appreciate their sacrifices. They can socialize, look at the bikes, join us for the BBQ (again, I will cover cost if there is any). I may set up a MC escort from Camp Pendleton for them.

We may have a few USMC join us for the first day of RFTW. They know they have to register, etc. More importantly, the 1stSgt I'm dealing with is more than interested in getting USMC riders for the 2013 RFTW because it will be the 10-year anniversary of the statue of Saddam Hussein being pulled down in Iraq.

REGISTRATION REMINDERS

Online registration is only the first half of registration! You must still visit your route's registration table in Rancho to show ID, drivers' license, proof of insurance, etc.

See Rancho Schedule for hours of registration in RC on Monday. We will open at 0730 on Tuesday May, 15 for those going to Riverside National Cemetery. Please, if you are not going to RNC allow that time for those who are.

After Rancho Cucamonga, registration will take place at the morning staging area (**closing 10 minutes prior** to the start of Daily Riders meeting) and at the evening dinner stop or host hotel if no evening activities.

Required documentation:

Everyone must bring driver's license with MC endorsement, insurance, and registration.

All passengers must have a **photo ID** and register separately – even those riding in car.

If registering online please bring copy of paid receipt.

If the bike is borrowed, you need a notarized letter giving permission to take it on RFTW.

If riding a rental bike, bring the rental agreement.

Minors (under 18) need **both parents'** permission in a notarized letter stating they have permission to be taken on RFTW.

Helmets are mandatory on RFTW regardless of state law.

Medical form to be worn around the neck at all times when on bike.

If you have not registered on line you may do so at any morning or evening site. Fee is \$20.00; please try to have correct change, no checks or credit cards.

If you can have all documents opened, it will speed up the process and those behind you will appreciate it.

It is our wish to make this a pleasant experience for all; we do have our rules from AMA that we must follow. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

Shirley and Candy
RFTW Registration Coordinators

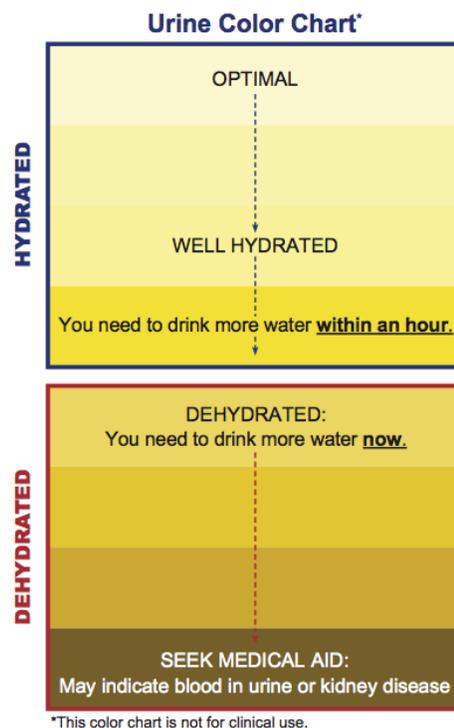
FUEL TEAM (Central Route)
By Bog "Tripwire" Hatcher

A reminder: the fuel team is ready to serve the Central Route members in a professional and friendly manner. Secondly, the Central Route will only accept cash at the fuel stops. That means those wanting to use credit or debit cards must find their own fuel locations. By only accepting cash we can facilitate the fueling process in a more timely manner. Another reminder, Foot Pegs Up when approaching the pumps.

STAYING HYDRATED

RFTW always stresses staying hydrated, and each route provides plenty of bottled water, so there's no excuse for you not to stay well hydrated!

Doug Lyvere sent the following chart from the Boy Scouts of America as a reminder of how important it is to stay hydrated while we're on our ride this year. Learn to judge how hydrated you are by this color chart:



WASHINGTON D.C. ACTIVITIES

FRIDAY, MAY 25

- 6:00 p.m. Run For The Wall Recognition Ceremony/free refreshments – Marymount University parking lot across from Holiday Inn
- 7:45 p.m. Evening Parade at 8th & I Marine Barracks (see details below)
- 9 p.m. Rolling Thunder Candlelight Vigil at The Wall

SATURDAY MAY 26, 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 XXIV Wreath Laying 12:30 PM - RFTW XXIV Group Photo
Lincoln Memorial - begin to assemble at Lincoln Memorial
1:00 p.m. RFTW XXIV Group Photo: please follow photographer's instructions
1:30 p.m. RFTW XXVI Mission Accomplished Plaque presentation at the Vietnam Memorial Wall

SUNDAY MAY 27, 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 Demonstration

NOTE: This schedule is subject to change - check schedule on line or upon arrival in D.C.

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.

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. Tailor your checklist to your own personal needs—you may want to bring additional items, you may want to leave some things at home.

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

| | |
|---|---|
| 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 | 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.



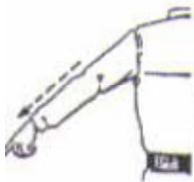
**STOP or
Slow down**



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 heads up 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.

VIETNAM WAR 50TH COMMEMORATION

This Memorial Day, the "kick-off" event for the Vietnam War 50th Anniversary Commemoration will be held at the National Vietnam Veterans Memorial ("The Wall"). The ceremony will have many high-level participants, and the list of invited dignitaries is both national and international. While the Commemoration begins this year, it will run through 2025, with the most significant events taking place between 2015 and 2017.

CANDLELIGHT VIGIL AT WALL

Rolling Thunder will hold their Candlelight Vigil at The Wall at 9 p.m. Friday, May 25.

GARY SINISE TO PERFORM

During Rolling Thunder on Saturday, May 26, 2012 in Washington D.C. Gary Sinise and The Lt. Dan Band will give a public concert.

Gary Sinise and his Lt. Dan Band will kick off the entertainment portion of the Center for American Military Music Opportunities' (C*A*M*M*O) tribute to Rolling Thunder's 25th anniversary, on Saturday, May 26, at a special stage set up at the intersection of Henry Bacon Drive and Constitution Avenue in Washington, D.C. The tribute provides a fitting salute to Rolling Thunder's annual Demonstration Run on May 27 for Prisoners of War/Missing in Action (POW/MIAs) and to show patriotism and respect for service members and veterans from all wars.

Sinise's band is one of several musical acts, including nationally recognized military artists who have signed on to support the tribute, which begins at 11:45 a.m. and continues through 8 p.m. A series of guest speakers will include prominent POW/MIA, military and veterans affairs leaders and activists.

A highlight of the tribute will be the unveiling of five custom-made "tribute" motorcycles—one for each branch of military service—built especially to commemorate the Rolling Thunder XXV anniversary. After the speakers and bike presentations, music will continue well into the evening as many talented entertainers continue to pay tribute to Rolling Thunder

EVENING PARADE IN D.C.

Evening Parade, Marine Barracks, 8th and I Streets, Friday, May 25, 7:45 p.m. (1945)—Marine Band, Marine Drum and Bugle Corps, Marine Silent Drill Team. Doug Lyvere has 400 free tickets for the event. There will be a flyer and signup sheet at all registration locations starting with Rancho Cucamonga. To request tickets or ask questions, contact Doug at Doug@Lyvere.com.

Doug has also arranged tentatively for us to get a tour of the CMC House at the Barracks. He has a limited number of tickets for that tour. This is a great opportunity to see the inside of the Commandant's home.

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>

Staging will be on the corner of 8th St SE & I St SE, near the park, at 7 p.m. Regardless of how you get there, or where you park, staging is MANDATORY as we are signed up as a group and are going in as a group. Parking of *motorcycles* will be at the same location. Getting permission to bring in a group this large is not easy - please conform to the request.

Rainy weather is not an automatic cancellation, but lightening is a definite cancellation due to the many antennas and metal in the area.

Please watch the RFTW Forum for any changes in this schedule.

OTHER RFTW 2012 NEWS

MISPRINT ON RFTW T-SHIRTS

The blue pocket T shirt we are selling has a misprint on it. The "M" of MIA in the front pocket was left out. We have suspended all sales of this blue shirt until replacements are received. All riders who have a shirt with a misprint (they would have been purchased prior to March 8, 2012) please bring them with you to Rancho or wherever you are joining the Run, and they will be traded/replaced at the merchandise trailer on that particular route.

I apologize for this inconvenience.

Also, online sales will be closed on April 14 to prepare for departure to California.

Dave "Wahoo" Hampton
RFTW Merchandise Director

FREE PARKING AT HOLIDAY INN, ARLINGTON

The Holiday Inn, Arlington has generously offered to comp parking for RFTW guests. Thanks to The Holiday Inn and Bob Alwell, our coordinator in DC, for this gift.

FREE PARKING AT LINCOLN MEMORIAL

Big news: we have secured parking on Saturday in DC near the Lincoln Memorial during the time we will have our group photo taken and when we go to the Wall. Our DC coordinator, Bob Alwell, met with Mr. Solano and his staff for three hours in DC and they found us a place to park and waived our fees! The road guard captains will work out the details. It's been a long time coming. Thanks to Mr. Solano.

MISSING MAN FORMATION

The Missing Man Formation consists of five bikes at the head of the pack. The two riders at the front are the Route Coordinator and Asst. Route Coordinator. The rider on the left in the second row is the Missing Man rider; the open space on his right, behind the Route Coordinator, represents the Missing Man. In the third row are the MMF Coordinator and the Head Chaplain.

The Missing Man Formation (MMF) Coordinator for the Southern Route is Della "Pocket" Morris (Pocket2004@gmail.com), and for the Central Route is Tom "Bones" Pogue (tomwpogue@comcast.net). If you would like to ride the MMF, contact your route's MMF coordinator to see if any positions are still open.

First priority for MMF is FNGs (first-time riders) or anyone that has not ridden MMF in the past.

MINOR CHILDREN

If you are traveling with a minor child, you must have a notarized letter of consent stating that child has permission to participate in RFTW signed by **both** parents and or legal guardians. RFTW will keep that letter, so you should have two letters so you will have a letter for after the run.

MISC. REMINDERS

Here's an excellent list of reminders that were posted on the RFTW website Forum.

Make sure your gear is secure—the riders behind you will be very grateful. Double-check at every stop.

If you'll put together packets of one \$10 bill, one \$5 bill, and four \$1 bills you'll be able to get through any gas stop without the hassle of digging out the right bills. Just put a packet of money in an easy to reach place after you stage so it'll be ready for the next gas stop. Remember, we don't give change, (we round up to the next \$) so don't hand us a \$20 bill at look for change. We use all "overages" to help buy gas for the chase trucks.

If you have patches with bad words, be prepared to cover them up when going into the schools. SR has 3 schools. I've covered most of mine with smaller patches. Don't need profanity to express my feelings. Guess I've grown a little wiser in my old age.

If there is an accident, unless you are involved in it **do not stop**—proceed around it and continue on; RG, Chaplain corps, and chase will attend to it. If you stop on freeway, you can cause a bigger accident.

They do not stop to put on rain gear if it starts to rain. If you think that it might rain, put it on now. The weather changes fast; have changes of clothes handy—you can add or remove clothes at gas stops.

It's a good practice to call your credit card company before you leave for the Run and alert them that there may be an unusual volume of activity during the dates you will be on the Run. If you're like me and don't use your card regularly, your Run expenses can look exactly like a card thief on a spending binge. The card companies' computers look for unusual spending patterns and will shut your account down in a New York minute, which, needless to say, could be very inconvenient and embarrassing. The other good thing is if you tell them when you will be back home and someone where you were tries to use the card (like a hotel clerk, etc.) after you arrive home it will be blocked.

Gators - Tire thread on the road

Zipper - That line that separates the lanes

Snakes - Those nasty asphalt lines on the lanes (slippery when wet)

Fog Line - That line near the shoulder

If you are passing a 18 wheeler and hear thump thump, it means he's running on a flat and soon that thread will start coming off. Trust me it hurts like heck to get hit by it, be watchful.

If you see a RG (Road Guard) come up, tap the top of his helmet and point down—this means he/she wants to get in the lane of travel in front of you, let them in!

Practice down-shifting to slow down instead of hitting the brakes.

Don't overpack your bike; you will be tired at the end of the day and have to cart that heavy bag in the hotel. Pack light. You will soon learn this is not a fashion show, it is a mission. Take clothing that dries fast and washes out.

Remember to bring 5's 10's and 20's for fuel; no change is given at pumps. Not a bad thing, because all overage will help chase team on fuel.

Morning meetings are MANDATORY! There's nothing worse than missing an exit because you weren't at the meeting to hear about the route change due to construction.

The one thing that all FNGs have a hard time learning is to SNAKE around a vehicle. It is a simple maneuver but opposite of the way most riders do all of the rest of the time, so old habits are hard to break. To snake around a vehicle, the platoon leader will give a signal, then pull out to the number one lane. Each rider behind will then pull up to the same location behind the vehicle being passed and then pull out into the number one

lane, one at a time. Just start thinking of it now. Done right the platoon looks like a great snake going around a fixed object.

While under way, do not leave your Platoon, unless it is an emergency. Road Guards are moving past the Pack and if you pop out in front of them, an accident will happen. In case of a need to exit the pack, signal your intentions, make sure it's clear and move out. Give a thumbs up as you exit so the rest of the pack knows that you are OK. If you need a Chase Truck to pick you up, after you have stopped, wave your hands above your head until you see a Chase Truck. Do not attempt to re-enter the Pack while it is moving, go on to the next stop and join it there.

DO NOT DIVE BOMB ANYONE, especially the Road Guards or an Big Truck (Editor's note: dive bombing a semi is a huge no-no. Some truckers are severely inconvenienced by our long line of bikes; add to that the insult of cutting them off, and RFTW will have blown the good will we have been trying to establish with truckers for years now. Some will honk when we pass – a thumbs-up will go a long way in gaining their cooperation.) ! If you make sharp, almost 60 degree turns in front of trucks or other vehicles, you are actually slowing down a little bit and you can see the results by noticing that the rider behind you is now beside you, to your left! And the vehicle you just passed is now right on your tail. You also have caused the driver to tap his brakes, which may cause some concern by the motorcycles still behind him. And the Road Guards to take great notice of your actions. Please extend your return to the right lane over a longer period and keep your speed up.

If you pre-registered that is only part of the registration process, You still must check in with registration where ever it is that you are joining RFTW, show current proof of License with MC endorsement, current Insurance for the bike you are on and current registration. Passengers **MUST have photo ID.** and register separately.

I would encourage anyone to come to the FNG meetings, it's not like signing into a class and presenting paperwork. It's a big circle of strangers listening to how they are going to be transformed into a ribbon of motorcycle harmony going across the country. And they won't be strangers to each other for very long!

SOME THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

By Roger "Cowboy" Mead

Run For The Wall is NOT a party, picnic, or 5-star 10-day cruise. It is a trek than can have various hardships associated with it. Mother natural has in the past throw lots of her tricks at us, with snow, hail, searing heat, freezing cold, rain, sand storms, severe thunderstorms and flooding. But the Run has endured all these years.

The State Coordinators (mostly unseen) do an awesome job planning our route though their areas. They are responsible for, among other things, fuel stops to include a minimum number of pumps to make fueling easy, parking for staging, and rest room facilities. They arrange hotels, not based on 5-star ratings, but on four walls, a roof, clean sheets and a bed that doesn't move unless you insert quarters. Some arrange and plan wreath laying ceremonies and visits to local Veterans Memorials, VA Hospitals, and schools. They also contact local communities and groups for fuel and meal donations.

Now with all that said, where am I going? Well, in the past we have had complaints of the hotels not being up to some folks' standards, (you don't have to use the host hotels); memorials dropped/by passed due to complaints by some of a lack of local population attending our visit. Well, the local population built these memorials for the veterans; thus we have an obligation to take these veterans to their memorials whether the local population comes out or not. Some have been dropped because of a few complaining there is no cover/shade and it's too hot or too cold or it's too far to walk. Humans by nature complain, regardless of the situation, as we always feel it can/should be different/better....BUT.....

I am reminded of a conversation I had after RFTW I and RT II. I met a lady, Patty Hopper, and her husband Earl Hopper SR from Task Force Omega. While discussing the POW/MIA issue I was asked why I wasn't wearing a POW/MIA bracelet as involved in the issue as I was. I replied that I had worn one from 1972 until just recently (this was 1989) when I stopped as the nickel plating had worn off and the bracelet had a tendency to turn my wrist green from the copper. Her reply made me feel two feet tall and has stayed with me all these years.

“What do you think a POW or MIA would give to wear a bracelet that turned their wrist green?”

So while riding on Run For The Wall and you're hot, cold, wet, unhappy with the walk to a service, your room, food, or bathroom facilities ... think:

“What do you think a POW or MIA would give to be in your shoes?”

ANGEL FIRE MEMORIAL (Central Route)

Thanks to the David Westphall Veterans Foundation, the Memorial has four new tower display cases. These will allow us to get more of our collection out to be viewed. Two will be located in the rotating exhibit area. The theme for the new exhibit is yet to be determined. We hope to announce the theme soon and begin preparing for its Memorial Day Weekend debut. The other two will be located in the Auditorium and filled with objects honoring the women who served in Vietnam. Many of these women were civilians who volunteered to go and provide our troops with a taste of home.

Our newest exhibit features objects that were brought back by our troops from Vietnam. The items on display include a Vietnamese zip gun and land mine made out of bamboo, stick grenades and pieces of shrapnel. There is also Vietnamese money, propaganda, and a pith helmet.

Be sure find this collection in the main exhibit hall on your next visit.

HOTEL CHANGE IN GALLUP (Central Route)

There is no longer a Best Western in Gallup. It is now Days Inn & Suites (Red Rock Inn). If you had a reservation for Best Western, you'd better call and verify (505-722-7600). Their price is \$79 +tax for a dbl queen. They still have rooms available (as of 4/5/12).

HOTELS IN ANGEL FIRE/EAGLE NEST (Central Route)

Because it's hard to find motels in the Angel Fire area, here's a list in case you haven't made a reservation for May 18 yet. Many of these are already full, but you may luck out and find a cancellation.

Host Hotel: Laguna Vista Lodge—800-821-2093 or 575-377-6522

Room with 2 queen beds \$76.49

Room with king bed \$76.49

Cabin (2 units share porch \$76.49 (each has 1 queen bed & full-size futon, frig.)

King Cabin (king bed) \$76.49

Sportsman Cabin (sleeps 4) \$112.49 (Queen bed & full-size futon, frig, range, oven)

2-Bedroom Apartment \$112.49 (queen bed in ea. room & queen sleeper sofa; kitchenette)

2-Room Suite (sleeps 6) \$94.49 (3 queen beds, frig)

Historic Residence (sleeps 8) \$179.99 & up for 4 people; \$20 ea. additional person. (2 bdrms w/queen beds & 2 full-size futons; full kitchen, washer & dryer)

Angel Fire Resort

One North Angel Fire Road, Angel Fire, NM

575-377-6401 or 800-633-7463

Standard Room: \$82.00 per night plus tax

King Room: \$82.00 per night plus tax

Deluxe: \$99.00 per night plus tax

Condo: 20% off rack rate with a 2 night minimum

RFTW rooms are gone, but there are still rooms available for \$102/night.

Cottonwood Lodge

124 East Therma, Eagle Nest, NM (Downtown Eagle Nest)

575-377-3382

www.cottonwoodlodges.com

Room #1 Ranch Lodge, sleeps 6 in 3 rooms with a fully self-contained apartment with a full kitchen, refrigerator, microwave, coffee maker, Direct TV with Showtime and Cinemax movie channels, \$115.00 + tax/ night

Room #2 Farm Lodge , sleeps 4 in two bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, with a fully self-contained apartment with a full kitchen, refrigerator, microwave, coffee maker, Direct TV with Showtime and Cinemax movie \$105.00 + tax/night

Room #3 Bunk Lodge sleeps 4 in two bedrooms, 1 bathroom, with a fully self-contained apartment with a full kitchen, refrigerator, microwave, coffee maker, Direct TV with Showtime and Cinemax movie \$95.00+tax/tax

Room #5 sleep 2 in 1 bedroom, 1 bathroom, with refrigerator, coffee maker, Direct TV with Showtime and Cinemax movie \$75.00 + tax/nigh

D & D Motel and Country Kitchen

116 West Therma Drive, Eagle Nest, NM

575-377-2408; 575-377-2408

28 Rooms Ranging from Double to Kitchenette + Sofa (Total 76 Beds)

\$45 + Tax - \$130 + Tax

Dining open 7 days a week 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Econo Lodge, Eagle Nest \$69.99 plus tax

715 Hwy 64 East - 575-377-6813, 575-376-2035

21 Double Rooms - \$69.99 plus tax

9 Single Rooms - \$69.99 plus tax

www.choicehotels.com

Rooms with a view of the lake. Game and conference rooms

Elk Horn Lodge

3377 Mountain View Blvd., Angel Fire

575-377-2811

10 Queen Doubles - \$89

2 Kings - \$89

1 Suite Sleeps 8 - \$159

Golden Eagle RV Park and Country Store

540 Therma Drive, Eagle Nest, NM

575-377-6188; 575-377-6188

goldeneaglernv@msn.com

www.goldeneaglernv.com

60 Camp Sites

1 Cabin Sleeps 4

1 Mobile Home Sleeps 8

Discounts for Veterans

Gold Pan Motel

50 Therma Drive, Eagle Nest, NM

575-377-2286

4 Singles (Queen) \$50 plus tax

3 Doubles \$75

1 Double + Kitchenette \$80

1 Double + Full Kitchen & Dining Room \$85

Great Escape

575-377-0586

Horse Shoe Cabins

350 E. Therma Drive, Eagle Nest, NM

575-377-6961; 575-377-6961 Fax: 575-377-6964

Dahl874@aol.com; www.horseshoe-eaglenest.net

Motel and cabin rentals. Restaurant on site.

Log Cabin On Willow Creek Road; 169 Willow Creek Road, Eagle Nest

580-688-2362; 580-688-2362 or 580-381-0444; 580-381-0444

cabinonwillowcreek@live.com www.vbro.com/261504

Rustic log cabin with the comforts of home. Heated by propane/wood burning stove. Furnished with linens, towels, and dishes.

Lost Eagle RV Park 1

55 E. Therma Drive, Eagle Nest, NM

575-377-2374; 575-377-2374 Fax: 575-377-2566 tsangster@hughes.net

43 sites, full hook-ups, center of town location. Walk to restaurants and shops. Games, cookouts, pot luck dinners.

Mountain View Cabins and RV Park

28386 Hwy 64, Eagle Nest, NM

575-377-6941 575-377-6941 Fax: 575-377-3543

snow@afweb.com www.cti-excursions.com

Cabins and RV park.

Cabins 1 thru 5 sleep 2 people w/kitchenette and only a shower \$75.00 + tax

Cabin 6 newer \$135+ tax sleeps 6, porch, wood stove, 2 full bath/shower, queen & full bed in each room Cabins

7, 8, 9 \$85.00 + tax sleeps 5, kitchen equipped \$5.00 each additional person

Cabin 10 \$115.00 + tax sleeps 4 people each additional person \$10.00 2 queens and a couch

Cabin 11 \$115.00 + tax per night, sleeps 6 each additional person \$10.00, fireplace

Cabin 12 \$160.00 + tax per night HUGE kitchen, Living room, fireplace, 2 full baths, queen & twin

Also available are RV hookups @\$28.00 + tax per night or weekly rate of \$100.00

Pepper Sauce Camp

28358 Highway 64, Eagle Nest, NM

575-377-2567 575-377-2567

emily@embler.net

www.peppersaucecamp.com

4 Cabins

\$70 for 2; \$80 for 4

Weathers' RV Park

1200 E. Therma Drive (Hwy 64), Eagle Nest, NM

575-377-2276; 575-377-2276

weathersrvpark@qwestoffice.net www.weathersrvpark.qwestoffice.net

Full service park, 30 and 50 amp hookups, indoor and outdoor facilities, laundry, planned activities

West Lake RV Park

Hwy 64 at Fisherman's Lane,

Eagle Nest, NM

575-377-7275; 575-377-7275 or 870-782-4760;870-782-4760 (winter)

Gplenz2@yahoo.com

RV park with group pavilion and covered tables

► **OUR STORIES**

VETERANS REMEMBERED FLAG

By Judy Lacey

There is a move afoot to adopt a national flag for remembering Veterans. We have the POW/MIA flag to remember those who were captured and never returned home, but this flag will honor ALL veterans.

The Assembly Joint Resolution from the State of California, passed on June 05, 2006, recognizes the "Veterans Remembered flag" as a National Symbol of the service provided by all the members of our Military, both living and deceased.

The idea of a national flag to honor all veterans was conceived by the Sonoma Veterans Memorial Park Association to the California legislature. Assembly Joint Resolution 48 was passed on June 5, 2006 in the California legislature recognizing the "Veterans Remembered flag" as a national symbol of the service provided by all members of our Military, both living and deceased. Since then, the following states have also recognized the Veterans Remembered Flag: Alabama, Connecticut, Idaho, Illinois, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, Oregon, South Carolina. Utah, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin. The U.S. Navy Memorial Foundation and The American Legion at Four California State Conventions have also recognized the Veterans Remembered Flag.



The Sonoma Veterans designed the flag and provide the meaning of the design:

- (a) The flag depicts the founding of our nation by the thirteen stars that emanate from the hoist to the large red star that represents our Nation and the five branches of our country's military that defend her.
- (b) The white star indicates the Veteran's dedication to service.
- (c) The blue star honors all who serve in the military in the past, present, and future.
- (d) The gold star memorializes those who fall defending our Nation.
- (e) The green field represents the hallowed ground where all rest eternally.

The Veterans Remembered flag will especially be flown at the entrances of cemeteries to alert visitors to the fact that veterans are buried there so respects can be paid to them.

Sen. Adam Driggs, R-Dist. 11, has sponsored SCM 1007, which, if passed, would recognize the Veterans Remembered flag nationally. The bill had its first reading on Jan. 30 and was assigned to the Senate Veterans, Military Affairs and Government Committee and Senate Rules Committee. On Feb. 16, 2012, the Committee gave it a "Do Pass" recommendation by a 5-0-2 (absent) vote.

If your city or state has not yet adopted a resolution recognizing the Veterans Remembered flag, please ask your mayor and state representatives to take steps toward recognition. I will be glad to email anyone a sample Resolution that can be adopted for recognizing the flag.

The Veterans Remembered flag is already in use and available to purchase from many flag companies.

Update: On March 26, SCM 1007, a concurrent memorial urging the United States Congress to adopt the "Veterans Remembered Flag," passed the Arizona Senate on a 54-0 (6 not voting) vote. On March 29, it was transmitted to the Secretary of State, making Arizona the 20th state to adopt the Veterans Remembered Flag.

AN EXTRAORDINARY VETERAN

The man responsible for the birth of the Veterans Remembered Flag is Jim Parks, now 93, of Sonoma, CA. The flag is not his first act of service for veterans. Besides the flag, Parks has been the catalyst for the creation of a veterans cemetery and a memorial. He is truly a veteran serving veterans.

Navy Vet Jim Parks: Still Serving at 92 Friday, May 27, 2011



By SUZIE RODRIGUEZ

SONOMA VALLEY CORRESPONDENT

On Monday, May 30, an audience of more than one thousand people will gather in Sonoma Veterans Memorial Park to observe the annual Memorial Day ceremonies. The entire event will take place before a massive black-granite work of art, the Star of Honor. Shaped like a five-pointed star, it was designed by the late Sonoma artist and architect, Robert Behrens, and is inscribed with the names of approximately 2,000 Sonoma Valley residents who have served in the military from the Revolutionary War onward.

Sonoma veteran Jim Parks is reflected in the Star of Honor Fountain, which was dedicated in 2005 to Sonoma Valley veterans. (John Burgess / PD File, 2005)

The design is intended to resemble the Congressional Medal of Honor when viewed from above. Both the granite sculpture and the plaza surrounding it are shaped like the medal's five-pointed star, and the long walkway leading to the plaza represents the medal's ribbon.

With its size and solidity, the Star of Honor seems to have always been a part of the land where it stands, but it was only completed in 2005. That Veterans Memorial Park and the Star of Honor exist at all is due primarily to one man, 92-year-old WWII veteran James Parks.

A Minnesota native, Parks served in the Navy from 1939-1945 as the Chief Machinist Mate aboard an oil tanker that convoyed in the Atlantic. After the war ended and Parks completed his sea duty, he and his new wife, Evelyn, who was pregnant with their first child, moved to California. Parks took a civilian job at Mare Island and built a home in El Verano. After retiring from his Mare Island job, Parks started his own auto repair business and, later, a motorcycle business. He retired in 1998.

Like many veterans, Jim Parks cherished the idea of being buried in a Veterans Administration national cemetery and receiving recognition for his military service. However, that wasn't feasible. The closest such cemetery, in San Francisco, has long been closed to new interments due to lack of space.

"For Dad to get a military burial," says Parks' daughter, Ruth Chambers, "the nearest cemetery that still had room was over 100 miles away." Parks and his wife subsequently bought a double mausoleum in Sonoma Mountain Cemetery, where she was eventually interred.

Having noticed a sliver of land between Mountain Cemetery and the Veterans Memorial Building, and learning that it was owned by the County of Sonoma, Parks decided that it would be a perfect location for a cemetery in which "every veteran from Kenwood to the Bay who has served in the military" could be buried. He set off a series of negotiations that ended with the county turning over a parcel of slightly more than an acre to the city of Sonoma, with the proviso that it build a veterans cemetery on the land.

Parks hoped to obtain construction money from the Veterans Administration. In his 80s at the time, he asked Robert Behrens to design a cemetery layout. Then, with the design in hand, he flew to Washington, D.C. to meet with the VA. It was a fruitless mission, since the VA cannot legally fund a cemetery of less than 35 acres. In the end, the city of Sonoma took out a loan for construction of the present ground structure, which includes the walkways and landscaping.

But Jim Parks' job wasn't yet done.

After the cemetery was constructed, he frequently heard from people wishing that their veteran father or daughter or grand-son could have been buried there instead of in a distant military cemetery. Parks thought: "Why not create a Star of Honor, with names engraved on it, so people could come here and think about their loved ones?"

The kind of memorial he had in mind would be expensive. "I didn't think it could possibly be built in my lifetime," he said last week. "Do you realize that there are no grants for cemeteries or memorials? None. If I wanted to do this I had to raise the money myself."

After a lifetime of work, Parks had amassed around \$200,000 which he'd planned to leave to his seven children. He called them together and told them that they could share the money after he died, or he could use it to help build the Star. He would go along with whatever decision they made. Recalls Parks: "They each said 'Dad, it's your money, you earned it, and you can do what you want with it.' "

And with that \$200,000 funding, plans for the Star of Honor fell into place. "It would have cost a lot more," Parks says. "It would have cost around \$300,000 if it weren't for so much pro bono labor from so many

people.” Among them were Robert Behrens, who didn’t charge for his design, and Peterson Mechanical in Sonoma, which donated all the piping.

But even then Jim Parks’ wasn’t finished with this project.

Through his efforts with the cemetery and the Star of Honor, he developed the desire to have a symbol to cover all veterans. With the assistance of David Wishingrad, the “Veterans Remembered Flag” was designed. Like the Star of Honor, it echoes the design of the Medal of Honor. The central motif of four concentric, different-colored stars, represents the 5 branches of the military (red), the devotion to duty by members of the armed forces (white), all men and women who have served (blue), and men and women who have been killed in action (gold).

The star is in the process of getting approval from all 50 states so that it can become an official veterans flag, flown at ceremonies. The city of Sonoma is currently constructing a flagpole in the cemetery’s scatter garden. It will be dedicated to James Parks and will proudly fly the Veterans Remembered flag.

If you see Jim Parks on Memorial Day, try to say hello and thank him for his service. He may have left the Navy after World War II ended, but he never stopped serving.

► OTHER STORIES

FEMALE PRISONERS OF WAR

By Alexandra Hemmerly-Brown, Army News Service From www.army.mil

Photo: Maj. Rhonda Cornum, now a brigadier general, steps off the plane upon her release from Iraqi captivity, March 6, 1991, during Desert Storm

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Maj. Rhonda Cornum could see her breath when she awoke on the fourth day of ground fighting during Operation Desert Storm.

It was February 1991, and the flight surgeon combated the chilly Iraqi morning by slipping on her jacket and nursing a few cups of hot coffee.

She was headed out on a routine flight to shuttle passengers, when her UH-60 Black Hawk crew received a call telling them their mission had changed and was now a rescue. That call changed Cornum’s life forever.



A fighter pilot, Air Force Capt. Bill Andrews, had been shot down behind enemy lines and suffered a broken leg. Cornum’s crew was the closest aircraft around.

“Unfortunately we flew right over a big bunker full of weapons and they shot the tail off my helicopter ... and they shot me,” said Cornum, now a brigadier general.

Cornum was one of three Soldiers to survive the 140-mile-per-hour crash. She suffered two broken arms, a bullet wound to her shoulder, and a torn knee, only to be dragged from the wreckage and taken into Iraqi captivity.

She was held in a primitive underground jail cell for eight days in what she calls “austere” conditions. She was also sexually molested by an Iraqi Soldier while being transported to the prison, but said being fondled was low on her list of things going wrong that day.

“The molestation didn’t do a thing to me,” she assured. “It is just as irrelevant now as it was then.”

Cornum said she was more surprised than emotionally damaged from the assault — she was dirty, bloodied and badly wounded.

“If it doesn’t increase the likeliness you were going to stay there longer, and it wasn’t excruciating, and it wasn’t life-threatening, then it really didn’t matter,” Cornum explained.

On March 6, 1991, Cornum was released along with 23 other prisoners of war in end-of-war negotiations.

Cornum’s story is as relevant today as it was 20 years ago. Few women have served as POWs.

From Florena Budwin, a Civil War woman who disguised herself as a man to join union troops and was held in a confederate prison camp, to the 67 Army nurses who were taken captive by the Japanese in World War II, there have been less than 100 military women held as POWs throughout American history.

As the debate of women serving in combat roles continues, Cornum said she believes the biggest contribution of her career is simply the proof that military women can persevere in tough situations.

While Cornum always felt that she was a strong person, she said her experience as a POW only confirmed her belief that she was resilient.

“It helps put everything else in perspective,” Cornum said of being taken captive. “It made you recognize your strength, when previously it hadn’t really been tested much.”

Cornum completed five more years of medical training upon her release, and while studying to take the board, many of her colleagues said it was the most stressful and worst experience of their life — Cornum disagreed.

“The same reason that I came through the POW experience well is the same reason I came through graduate school well, and the same reason I flipped my car and came out of that well — it’s that I approach every problem very similarly, that no matter how bad it gets, it will always get better.”

The brigadier general is now the director of Comprehensive Soldier Fitness, the Army’s authority on resiliency training, and in the past 20 years has authored a book, become a urologist and earned a doctorate’s degree in philosophy.

Cornum said she didn’t come up with how to instill resilience, but she did strongly advocate teaching it before something traumatic happens, rather than after.

She likens teaching resiliency to training for a marathon: not everyone who trains finishes the race, but those who do train have a much better chance at succeeding.

“So you ought to train first,” she said.

“I’m evidence that it works,” Cornum pointed out.

Cornum's approach is similar to how former Army Spc. Shoshana Johnson has lived her life since she was taken into Iraqi captivity in 2003. Johnson, who joined the Army with the goal of one day attending culinary school, was shot in both legs before being taken by Iraqi militants after her convoy was ambushed.

Johnson and six other American Soldiers were moved seven times during their 22 days of captivity in Iraq.

"You don't know what's going to happen from day-to-day," Johnson said of her time as a POW. "I wanted to see my daughter grow up and live her life."

Johnson's daughter was 2 years old at the time, and Johnson said her family was shocked that she had been taken prisoner. Even though her dad spent 20 years in the Army and understood the military's demands, when she joined in 1998, being captured wasn't really a consideration.

Johnson said her strong belief in God and thoughts of her family got her through the 22-day ordeal, yet she admits she was terrified.

"It's a constant fear, because you're in the middle of a combat zone and this country has a history of executing people," she explained.

Now, Johnson said, she is more grateful for the little things in life and sees herself as very blessed. She will finish her culinary arts degree in May, and is set on becoming a pastry chef.

Johnson said she is proud of her time in the Army and doesn't regret her decision to join. However, she said military women have long served in roles they aren't recognized for, and they should receive the proper training for what they might possibly encounter in combat — just as male soldiers do.

Her advice on staying tough while in captivity: "Follow your instincts. You've got to listen to your gut."

Cornum agreed.

"You've got to make the decision that what you're doing is worth the risk before you do it," she said. "Recognize that you have a new job, and that is staying alive with honor."

Not long after Cornum's rescue in 1991, the restriction of women flying aircraft in combat was repealed, and in 1993 Congress rescinded female combat exemption laws, opening up a quarter million jobs previously closed to women.

Earlier this month, the Military Leadership Diversity Commission recommended to the president that DoD eliminate all combat-exclusion policies for women.

WHAT HAPPENED TO U.S. POWS TAKEN FROM KOREA?

Editorial by Matthew J. Larkin, March 28, 2012

In December 1951, uniformed men arrived at my father's home and told my grandfather that his son, Capt. Hugh Francis Larkin, was Missing in Action in Korea. Recently, Hugh's daughter was told that he may have been alive in a Soviet prison camp in 1985.

On the surface, my grandfather, George Larkin, lived the most typical life of the second and third generation Irish Americans who were the foundation of New York City's burgeoning middle class.

An IRS agent, he moved his family from the Bronx to the tree-lined streets of Bayside, received Holy Communion daily, and gave his children a Catholic education.

But Hugh's disappearance was the third in a series of heart-wrenching tragedies that he endured. His first wife suffered an untimely death, leaving him a widower with two boys to raise alone. Later, his life mended, he married my grandmother and had two more children, my father and my aunt.

When America was drawn into World War II, his older sons answered the call and joined the Air Corps. In 1943, his eldest, Tom, was killed while piloting an engineering test flight in Georgia. Life had again returned to a form of normalcy when his second son vanished into the Korean sky.

Hugh was a seasoned World War II pilot who stayed in the Air Force and was deployed during the undeclared Korean War. On December 5, 1951, his F-84E Thunderjet was shot down by two Soviet MiGs. He was last seen ejecting from his plane before it crashed into the East China Sea.

The conditions of the crash made it likely that he did not survive, but his body was never recovered. When the prisoners were exchanged in 1953, he was not among them.

In February 1954, the armistice signed and Korea divided, he was declared dead and the record was closed. The military determination did not dissuade my grandfather, or Hugh's wife, Evelyn, both of whom continued to believe that he may have survived the parachute drop along the Korean coast.

In the years that followed, my grandfather never lost hope and searched for evidence of Hugh as part of the loose network of parents, wives, sons and daughters of the 8000 servicemen who went missing in Korea.

There were rumors of prison camps and stories of Americans secreted out of North Korea into the darkest quarters of the Communist Bloc, but no concrete evidence of Hugh's true fate. My grandfather died never knowing what happened.

Evelyn continued the vigil and after she died, their children carried on, attending meetings, reaching out to veterans' groups and government projects, and donating DNA.

In those sixty Decembers since Hugh's plane was shot down, his remains have never been recovered and no definitive evidence of his death or capture was ever produced. The premise that American soldiers were left behind, prisoners of our worst enemies, is the antithesis of all we believe about this great nation. It undermines the fabric of our military tradition and draws question to a settled social contract.

Yet, the transfer of American POWs, particularly pilots, from Korea to the Soviet Union is now well documented and accepted fact. A 1993 Defense Department report noted that the proof of American POWs taken to Soviet prison camps "is so broad and convincing that we cannot dismiss it."

The Soviets had long struggled with a technology gap and Stalin was determined to conquer it through reverse-engineering. They were set on developing implements of war and the F-86 was the most coveted prize in our aviation arsenal. North Korean and Chinese captors were directed to isolate Air Force POWs for Soviet interrogators while scores of Soviet teams scoured Korea for downed U.S. pilots and airmen to be pressed into technological servitude.

Accounts of the Soviet program swirled as the war drew to a close. The disproportionate number of pilots who went missing and whose remains were never recovered fueled suspicions.

By 1954, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles had reports in hand that confirmed the transfer of American POWs to Siberia, but he was rebuffed by Soviet officials. Eisenhower, our greatest soldier-statesman since Washington, reportedly believed that only an all-out war would bring them back from the darkness of the gulag.

He opted against military action and the issue languished for decades – a cause without a champion – while the families pressed on, voiceless and ignored. All the while, stories filtered out of American POWs held behind the Iron Curtain.

In the early 1990s, the U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIAs was formed and issued a series of detailed reports which left no doubt that Americans were taken to work camps and prisons and never released after the war. At the same time, North Korea repatriated remains of American servicemen and agreed to conduct joint field activities with the U.S.

Through these operations, and similar searches in the region, 174 sets of remains have been positively identified. In 2005, both of these programs effectively ended, blown by the political winds of the time.

There is reason for hope, however. The Russians recently agreed to return to the Joint Commission and there is also a bipartisan bill pending in Congress calling for the resumption of the North Korean joint field activities. The recent death of Kim Jong-il may present a new opportunity – perhaps the best since the end of the war – to establish a foothold in North Korea and gain access.

No proof has been revealed of living American POWs, but the work to uncover the details of this injustice – to shed light on this dark chapter – remains vital. These men gave all they had to this country. They left their families and went to foreign shores to battle the great menace of the time. We may never know whether my uncle was among the taken, but we owe a solemn duty to find out as much as we can about what really happened to these forgotten warriors of the Forgotten War.

Matthew Larkin is a partner in the Syracuse, NY, law firm of Hiscock & Barclay

HUNT CALLED OFF FOR THOUSANDS OF U.S. SOLDIERS IN NORTH KOREA

By Mark McDonald, March 22, 2012

HONG KONG — There are 5,500 missing American soldiers buried in North Korea. Buried, of course, is not exactly the right word.

They are missing in action, to be sure, but they are more covered up than buried. Their bodies remain undiscovered on Korean War battlefields and in unmarked prisoner-of-war graveyards, hidden now by 60 years of frozen mud, floods, neglect, diplomatic strains, political mud.

The remains of an allied soldier found in North Korea were repatriated at a ceremony in Seoul in 2004. Joint recovery efforts stopped the following year.

And they will remain missing for some time longer: The Pentagon has suspended a new search-and-recovery program in the North, an effort that was due to begin in the next several days.

North Korea's planned launch of a satellite with a long-range missile has angered the United States and other nations, and the recovery of dead soldiers appears to be one of the tools that will be used to punish the North or pressure it to call off the launch.

“We have suspended that effort because we believe that North Korea has not acted appropriately in recent days and weeks and that it’s important for them to return to the standards of behavior that the international community has called for,” the Pentagon press secretary, George Little, said Wednesday.

The State Department has already said that a new food-aid deal with North Korea would be killed because of the launch.

When Pyongyang and Washington struck a heartening agreement last autumn to resume joint field searches for the M.I.A.’s after a seven-year suspension, the Pentagon said this: “Accounting for Americans missing in action is a standalone humanitarian matter, not tied to any other issue between the two countries.”

That’s no longer the case. A full accounting is no longer a stand-alone.

Washington agreed to pay the North Koreans \$5.7 million to restart the M.I.A. searches, particularly at the Chosin Reservoir battle site and in Unsan County, north of Pyongyang. The actual scouting and digging was due to start any day now, and two 30-member teams of forensic investigators have already assembled.

A Pentagon spokeswoman said the payments were for North Korean labor, transport and logistical support. In a statement, the military explained its policy: “The U.S. government pays fair and reasonable compensation for the efforts associated with recovering remains, but does not pay for remains or information.”

In all, nearly 8,000 U.S. soldiers are missing from the 1950-53 Korean War, which ended in a truce rather than a full-blown treaty.

North Korea handed the U.S. military 208 boxes of human remains in 1994, muddy jumbles of degraded bones, skulls, teeth, hair and personal effects. The remains were of some 400 different persons, but forensic examiners have so far been able to identify only 63.

The North, on its own, also returned six sets of remains in 2007.

My colleague in the Seoul bureau, Choe Sang-Hun, wrote last year about joint field searches in the North:

American experts were allowed in North Korea in 1996 to guide more scientific recovery efforts. Thirty-three joint on-site missions yielded more than 220 sets of remains. About 80 have been identified and returned to families for burial.

But the operations were halted in 2005 after Washington took issue with the safety and security of its workers.

North Korea has reportedly earned millions of dollars for cooperation over the remains recovery. It has also used the matter to try to entice the United States into bilateral talks. Washington insists that any talks be within a multilateral framework.

“If thousands of U.S. remains buried in our country are washed off and lost due to the U.S. side’s disregard, the U.S. side should be wholly responsible for the consequences as it has developed the humanitarian issue into a political problem,” the North’s official Korean Central News Agency said in April 2010.

The U.S. Defense Department has collaborated with South Korean intelligence agents in interviewing more than 20,000 defectors from North Korea in recent years.

“To date, this effort has produced no useful information concerning live Americans,” the department said.

“Most reports of live Americans in North Korea pertain to six known U.S. defectors. Of the six defectors, only one remains alive in North Korea.”

That defector is James Joseph Dresnok, an Army private from Virginia who, facing court-martial in 1962, ran across a minefield into the North. He enjoys a pleasant retirement from the state, remains unrepentant and is reportedly in failing health. He was profiled in a “60 Minutes” segment in 2007.

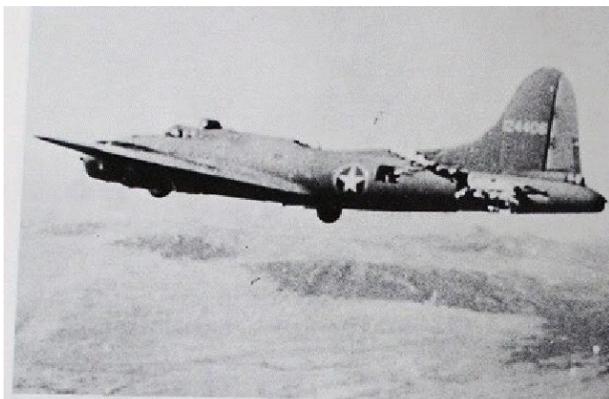
“I really feel at home,” he said. “I wouldn’t trade it for nothing.”

B-17 IN 1943

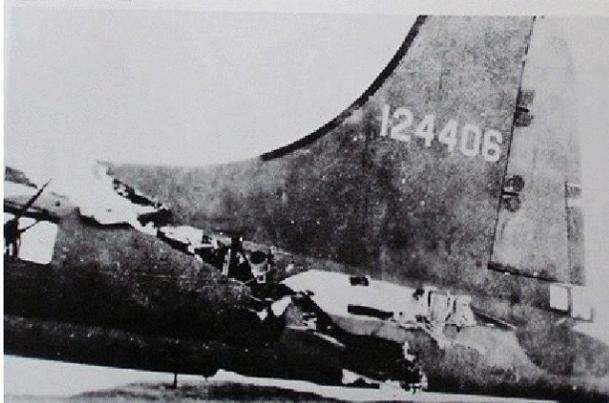
An Amazing Story

A mid-air collision on February 1, 1943, between a B-17 and a German fighter over the Tunis dock area, became the subject of one of the most famous photographs of World War II. An enemy fighter attacking a 97th Bomb Group formation went out of control, probably with a wounded pilot then continued its crashing descent into the rear of the fuselage of a Fortress named All American, piloted by Lt. Kendrick R. Bragg, of the 414th Bomb Squadron. When it struck, the fighter broke apart, but left some pieces in the B-17. The left horizontal stabilizer of the Fortress and left elevator were completely torn away. The two right engines were out and one on the left had a serious oil pump leak. The vertical fin and the rudder had been damaged, the fuselage had been cut almost completely through connected only at two small parts of the frame and the radios, electrical and oxygen systems were damaged. There was also a hole in the top that was over 16 feet long and 4 feet wide at its widest and the split in the fuselage went all the way to the top gunner’s turret.

Although the tail actually bounced and swayed in the wind and twisted when the plane turned and all the control cables were severed, except one single elevator cable still worked, and the aircraft still flew - miraculously! The tail gunner was trapped because there was no floor connecting the tail to the rest of the plane. The waist and tail gunners used parts of the German fighter and their own parachute harnesses in an attempt to keep the tail from ripping off and the two sides of the fuselage from splitting apart. While the crew was trying to keep the bomber from coming apart, the pilot continued on his bomb run and released his bombs over the target.



When the bomb bay doors were opened, the wind turbulence was so great that it blew one of the waist gunners into the broken tail section. It took several minutes and four crew members to pass him ropes from parachutes and haul him back into the forward part of the plane. When they tried to do the same for the tail gunner, the tail began flapping so hard that it began to break off. The weight of the gunner was adding some stability to the tail section, so he went back to his position.



The turn back toward England had to be very slow to keep the tail from twisting off. They actually covered almost 70 miles to make the turn home. The bomber was so badly damaged that it was losing altitude and speed and was soon alone in the sky. For a brief time, two more Me-109 German fighters attacked the All American. Despite the extensive damage, all of the machine gunners were able to respond to these attacks and soon drove off the fighters. The two waist gunners stood up with their heads sticking out through the hole in the top of the fuselage to aim and fire their machine guns. The tail gunner had to shoot in short bursts because the recoil was actually causing the plane to turn.

Allied P-51 fighters intercepted the All American as it crossed over the Channel and took one of the pictures shown. They also radioed to the base describing that the empennage was waving like a fish tail and that the plane would not make it and to send out boats to rescue the crew when they bailed out. The fighters stayed with the Fortress taking hand signals from Lt. Bragg and relaying them to the base. Lt. Bragg signaled that 5 parachutes and the spare had been "used" so five of the crew could not bail out. He made the decision that if they could not bail out safely, then he would stay with the plane and land it.

Two and a half hours after being hit, the aircraft made its final turn to line up with the runway while it was still over 40 miles away. It descended into an emergency landing and a normal roll-out on its landing gear.

When the ambulance pulled alongside, it was waved off because not a single member of the crew had been injured. No one could believe that the aircraft could still fly in such a condition. The Fortress sat placidly until the crew all exited through the door in the fuselage and the tail gunner had climbed down a ladder, at which time the entire rear section of the aircraft collapsed onto the ground. The rugged old bird had done its job.

POW BRACELET FINALLY GOING HOME

By George L. Winship, Editor, Anderson Valley Post
Tuesday, March 13, 2012

For many years, 68-year-old Trudi Michaels wore a silver POW/MIA bracelet engraved with "Capt. Bruce Archer, 3/29/68" that signified the name of a U.S. Marine Corps aviator shot down and presumed captured or killed in action on that date.

Michaels said she was in her late 20s when she purchased the bracelet for \$2.50 late in 1970 or the early part of 1971.

VIVA (Voices in Vital America) was a Los Angeles-based student-run organization that produced and distributed the bracelets following a Nov. 11, 1970, news conference at the Universal Sheraton Hotel in Los Angeles.

That event kicked off a national program to remember military personnel taken prisoner or missing in action during the Vietnam War. At one point, VIVA was receiving more than 12,000 requests per day for the silver or copper bracelets, according to Carol Bates Brown who co-founded the group that later was assumed by the National League of POW/MIA Families.

Between 1970 and 1976, VIVA distributed nearly 5 million bracelets designed to be "worn without ceasing until the day that person returned" to U.S. soil, either alive or as identifiable remains said Michaels, now living in Redding.

After years of futile searching through VIVA newspaper ads listing names of POW/MIA returnees, Michaels eventually removed the bracelet.

"I put it away somewhere for safekeeping and forgot about it until about two weeks ago when I was getting into the drawer of an antique dresser. I opened the top drawer and found a box of Moose Lodge pins. The bracelet was also in there," Michaels said Feb. 28 while in an Anderson home.

Michaels and her best friend, Linda Watkins, were visiting Watkins' brother John Day, a U.S. Navy veteran of the Vietnam War and a self-described Internet sleuth.

Once Day had a chance to do a little digging, he found a personal connection with Capt. Bruce R. Archer, a former U.S. Marine Corps helicopter transport co-pilot.

“It took me about three days of on and off research. First, I checked the information on the bracelet against the names on the Vietnam War Memorial wall in Washington, D.C. When I didn’t find him there, I knew there was a pretty good chance he was alive. I went to Facebook because everybody is on Facebook . . . except for him,” Day said with a rueful smile.

Later, while checking several POW sites, Day ran across a mention of Archer in a book, “We Came Home,” a compendium of POW returnees released by the North Vietnamese government during Operation Homecoming on March 16, 1973.

Day, 58, was a former gunner’s mate stationed aboard the USS Beaufort (ATS-2), an Edenton-class salvage and rescue ship assigned to the north Pacific based in Pearl Harbor.

During Operation Homecoming, Day and his best friend visited Hickam Air Force Base outside Oahu, Hawaii, to watch spellbound as a large group of POWs returned.

“I watched the plane taxi to a stop not 25 yards in front of where I stood,” Day wrote in a Letter to the Editor published that same month by his hometown newspaper, now known as the Anderson Valley Post.

“They rolled out the red carpet and then the honor guard marched into position. As the men departed the plane, their names were read over a P.A. (public address system) and the applause was outstanding!” Day’s letter recounts.

“There were approximately 400 people there to greet them. One lady held a ‘Welcome Home, Lynn’ sign and watched eagerly. I feel very lucky to have been a part of their homecoming, even if it was just to be there and see them set foot on free soil,” Day wrote to the folks back home.

“I can’t say for sure that I shook this man’s hand, but I sure shook a lot of hands that day and thanked each one of them for their service,” Day said Feb. 28 while retelling the story.

Further research led Day to detailed accounts of Archer’s service experiences with fellow Marine and lead pilot Major Paul J. Montague, a native of Anthony, Kan.

Although originally thought to be killed in the crash, Montague and Archer were captured by the Viet Cong and spent 1,814 days in captivity at various prison camps in North Vietnam.

While held as prisoners of war, Montague and Archer’s weight each dropped below 100 pounds due to ill treatment, lack of food, sickness, humiliation and degradation, according to retired Navy Capt. and Mrs. Frederic A. Wyatt, authors of “We Came Home.”

Assigned to the Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 165, Marine Aircraft Group Thirty-Six, First Marine Aircraft Wing, Major Montague and Capt. Archer were flying a CH-46 transport helicopter dubbed a Jolly Green Giant.

On March 29, 1968, they were assigned the mission of inserting a U.S. Army Special Forces unit and Vietnamese Rangers deep into hostile territory east of the Ashau Valley. Because Vietnam lies across the International Date Line, it was still March 28, 1968, on the U.S. mainland, Day explained.

As one of four similar aircraft, the helicopter flown by Montague and Archer successfully arrived three times at the landing zone to ferry in troops and equipment. On the final flight out, they were to retrieve a maintenance

crew that were unable to reach previously downed aircraft from an earlier insertion mission, reads a part of Montague's Silver Star Citation for "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action."

Each time Montague and Archer flew into the landing zone, their helicopter suffered damage from the hostile ground fire and mortar shrapnel. Each time they departed the landing zone, they encountered heavy automatic weapons fire, the citation continues.

"As he was lifting out of the fire-swept area for the third time, his helicopter was repeatedly struck by ground fire. Reacting instantly, Montague (and Archer) skillfully avoided hitting the side of a nearby hill and instead crash-landed the helicopter in a ravine, undoubtedly saving the lives of crew and passengers," states Montague's Silver Star Citation.

"By his courage, resolute determination and selfless devotion to duty despite extreme personal danger, Capt. Montague upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and of the U.S. Naval Service," the citation concludes.

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In that book, Day also found another clue that eventually led him to discover Archer's current whereabouts.

Born in Baltimore, Md., on March 6, 1942, Bruce Raymond Archer later moved to Rochester, NY, where he attended Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, NY, prior to joining the Marine Corps Reserve in 1964, the Wyatts wrote in their book.

After his initial training, Archer went for pilot's training in Pensacola, Fla., where he met and for three months courted Carolyn Corinne Cahoon, a native of that city. Following an engagement of four months, Archer and Miss Cahoon married on April 1, 1967, the Wyatts' book states.

In November 1967, Archer left for Vietnam where he was assigned to co-pilot for Major Montague.

Just prior to their release from captivity, the North Vietnamese government started giving the two officers more food and some sunshine, Archer told the Wyatts in an effort to make them look more presentable to the world.

On March 19, 1973, just days after arriving home via Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines, Capt. Archer and his wife of six years renewed their wedding vows in a ceremony of "rebirth that marked a re-beginning of their life together," Archer is quoted in the Wyatts' book.

With a cake baked by the military hospital's dietitian, a champagne reception was held in the hospital's solarium. Guests at the second ceremony included Capt. Joe Hoagland and his wife, who had served as groomsman and a bridesmaid in the original wedding," the Wyatts wrote.

At the new ceremony, a garter that Archer had thrown to Hoagland during the original wedding was returned to Archer to mark his successful return home, the Wyatt's book concluded. But that isn't quite the end of this story, Day insisted.

Now that Day had the name of Archer's wife, he checked for her profile on Facebook and, viola, sent her a Friend request.

“Since she didn’t know me from Adam, I also messaged her and told her to check me out as a member of the Anderson City Council. I provided her with her husband’s date of birth and a short version of his story that I have just told you,” Day said Tuesday as he prepared to sign a birthday card for his new-found acquaintance, now a resident of Tallahassee, Fla. Day then told Trudi Michaels that he had located Archer’s wife Carolyn Michaels was overcome with emotion.

“I think it’s absolutely wonderful. I was crying so hard I was bawling. I was so happy to find out that he was alive,” said Michaels, a patriot who tries to greet returning veterans even today.

Along with a birthday card, Michaels said she will insert the bracelet and Day will send a rare service patch from his Navy days.

“All in all, it was a fun project for me to do,” Day said.

“And we are just so thankful it turned out so well,” said Donna Day, his wife.

MAN ARRESTED FOR IMPERSONATING COASTIE

PANAMA CITY, Fla. -- Lies, honor and military service are at the crux a case involving an alleged U.S. Coast Guard impostor.

Delroy Bowe, 23, represented himself as a member of the United States Coast Guard with medals and a uniform, Panama City police reported Monday. He was arrested and charged with one count of unlawful use of uniforms, medals or insignia and one count of attempted grand theft.

According to investigators, Bowe represented himself as an active member of the U.S. Coast Guard and opened a bank account at a local bank March 6. He also used personal identification information of another person in an attempt to obtain a new vehicle on credit from a local car dealership, police reported.

Police believe Bowe has utilized the same or similar scheme at other area businesses, representing himself as an active Coast Guard member.

Bowe is not affiliated with the U.S. Coast Guard or any other branch of the military, authorities said. Agents with the U.S. Coast Guard Criminal Investigative Services are assisting with the ongoing investigation.

The arrest comes as the Supreme Court is considering whether to uphold the Valor Act, which makes it a crime to impersonate a service member and wear medals that were not legitimately won.

Opponents of the Valor Act say a court decision to uphold the law would infringe on free speech issues, ultimately outlawing lying.

► **VA NEWS**

PARKINSON’S DISEASE

Veterans who develop Parkinson's disease and were exposed to Agent Orange or other herbicides during military service do not have to prove a connection between their disease and military service to be eligible to receive VA disability compensation.

For the purposes of disability compensation, VA presumes that Veterans were exposed to Agent Orange or other herbicides if they served:

- In Vietnam anytime between January 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975 (includes brief **visits ashore** or service aboard a ship that operated on the **inland waterways** of Vietnam).
- In or near the Korean demilitarized zone anytime between April 1, 1968 and August 31, 1971

Ships or boats that were part of the **Mobile Riverine Force, Inshore Fire Support (ISF) Division 93** or had **one of the following designations** operated on the inland waterways of Vietnam. Veterans whose military records confirm they were aboard these ships qualify for presumption of herbicide exposure.

During your Vietnam tour, did your ship or boat have one of the following designations?

- LCM (Landing Craft, Mechanized)
- LCU (Landing Craft, Utility)
- LCVP (Landing Craft, Vehicle, Personnel)
- LST (Landing Ship, Tank)
- PBR (Patrol Boat, River)
- PCF (Patrol Craft, Fast or Swift Boat)
- PG (Patrol Gunboat)
- WAK (Cargo Vessel)
- WHEC (High Endurance Cutter)
- WLB (Buoy Tender)
- WPB (Patrol Boat)
- YFU (Harbor Utility Craft)

Alphabetized ship list

If your vessel is **not** included in the Mobile Riverine Force, ISF Division 93 or above designations, check VA's alphabetized ship list at <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/shiplist/list.asp>.

BEWARE OF SCAM

Kevin Secor of the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) warns of a scam letter currently being received by relatives of military members. A letter is making the circuit purporting to be from DFAS asking military member's fiancées to register in our system entitling them to benefits in the event of the member's death. All for only a \$350 fee. The bottom line is, save your money. It's not true, it's not a DFAS letter. It's a scam. Please let your fellow Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and families know the score. DFAS policy is we will not send unsolicited email messages with attachments.

FRAUDULENT FUNDRAISING

Arthur H. Wilson, National Adjutant VA, March 19, 2012

In recent months, we've received numerous emails, letters and telephone calls regarding suspected fraudulent organizations who claim to be raising funds in the name of our Organization, or claiming to support DAV and

our programs. The organization most commonly referred to is the "Veterans Support Organization", claiming the ironic acronym "VSO."

Veterans Support Organization has been the target of many investigative reporters from major metropolitan television news stations, to small community weekly print publications. It is hard to conduct a generic internet search using the text "Veterans Support Organization" without finding related articles which include words such as "scam" or "fraud". Veterans Support Organization operates by going into any given city and setting up shop in local malls or camping out at the entrances of large retail stores, supermarkets or convenience stores. They have even been known to stand on traffic islands in major intersections with a bucket in their hand. Their purpose? To raise money in the name of veterans with little or no intention at all of providing any meaningful service to their supposed cause. The following links are just a sampling of two investigative reports which truly expose the shady dealings of the Veterans Support Organization:

<http://www.myfoxny.com/dpp/news/shame/veterans-support-organization-20110203> and

<http://www.newschannel5.com/story/12039178/newschannel-5-investigates-veterans-fundraiser-group>

These suspect organizations make it more difficult for DAV entities, at every level, to conduct legitimate fund-raising programs which are truly designed to benefit disabled veterans and their families. Not only does Veterans Support Organization and others like them directly compete with our Organization for funds, it taints the mindset of citizens who would otherwise give to our Organization, but feel angered or betrayed because they may associate our Organization with those similar to Veterans Support Organization.

The problem? Veterans Support Organization has recently made small donations to two (2) DAV chapters (that we are aware of), in an insincere effort to substantiate their claim to support DAV. Of course, the donations made were minimal, and I suspect, represents a very small fraction of a percent of the total monies donated to their group. It is difficult to claim that Veterans Support Organization, and others like it, do not support DAV when they make meaningless donations to local chapters.

What can we do? Do not accept donations of money, items or services from Veterans Service Organization. Prior to accepting donations from an unknown group, do your research. Use the internet to search for the organization by name. In this day and age, when someone is scammed, they turn to the internet to report the questionable activities. And much like in the case of Veterans Support Organization, it becomes quite clear that this is a group with whom we do not wish to have our name associated with in any way. Be aware of other legitimate veteran's organizations in your local communities. If you witness an individual, or a group of individuals soliciting funds outside of stores or other locations, ask questions, but do not become confrontational. Ask for literature or website information. If you run across representatives of Veterans Service Organization, or others like them collecting money in your communities, inform the store manager of the group's history and ask that they be removed. Feel free to contact the media in your area and inform them of your personal knowledge of this group and ask that they follow up. Typically, once the group feels like they've been exposed, they pack up and move to the next city. Most often, the solicitation of funds by Veterans Support Organization and other organizations like them are not necessarily illegal, but the pretenses of their solicitations are not truthful.

Be well informed and don't be afraid to ask questions. Should you have questions about any organization raising money in the name of veterans, you should contact your State's Attorney's Office, or the appropriate regulating agency in your state.

Please share this information with your fellow DAV members. Feel free to share with your families and friends as well.

MORTGAGE RELIEF FOR SERVICEMEMBERS

Stars and Stripes reports that servicemembers victimized by unfair mortgage practices could see reimbursements and refinancing costs cut in half under plans outlined by President Barack Obama. Under the plan, Federal officials will review thousands of military mortgages started since 2006 for any irregularities. Troops or families who were illegally foreclosed upon would receive at least \$116,000, plus thousands more in punitive payments from the banks. Military homeowners will not have to apply to be eligible for the payouts or new programs. However, troops who believe they may be eligible can call 800-896-7743 for more information. To keep up with VA loans and other mortgage issues, visit <http://valoan.military.com/>

VETERAN-OWNED SMALL BUSINESSES

Through congressional efforts, Public Law (PL) 106-50 was signed into law in 1999 and Part 19, of the Federal Acquisition Regulations, gave Service Disabled Veterans the opportunity to be part of the Federal Government contracting arena as a designated group. As enacted, Public Law 106-50 established a SDVOSB procurement goal of 3 percent for all federal agencies and prime contractors.

However, it was discovered that PL 106-50 did not allow for set aside procurements for SDVOSBs and thus, other mandates were created to establish lawful procurement vehicles to assist agencies in achieving the 3 percent goal. However, the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) "Veterans First Program" is not operating in a manner that puts Veterans first and uses other procurement methods to bypass SDVOSBs and VOSBs. The MOPH urges that you insist that the VA adhere to Congressional intent and guarantee that veterans do come first in implementing the Veterans First Program.

The organization now known as the "Military Order of the Purple Heart of the U.S.A. Inc.," (MOPH) was formed in 1932 for the protection and mutual interest of all combat wounded veterans and active duty men and women who have received the decoration. Chartered by the Congress, the MOPH is unique among veteran service organizations in that all its members were wounded in combat. For this sacrifice, they were awarded the Purple Heart Medal. With grants from the MOPH Service Foundation, the MOPH and its Ladies Auxiliary promote patriotism, fraternalism, and the preservation of America's military history. Most importantly, through veteran service, they provide comfort and assistance to all veterans and their families, especially those requiring claims assistance with the VA, those who are homeless, and those requiring employment assistance. Through the VAVS program, MOPH volunteers selflessly provide assistance to hospitalized veterans at VA medical facilities and state veterans homes.

► OTHER NEWS

RESOLUTION TO HONOR NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS

SCR 1018 is a concurrent resolution that seeks to honor the approximately 20,000 Native American veterans who live in Arizona.

The primary sponsor is Sen. Jack Jackson Jr., D-Dist. 2, et al.

Major Actions: 25 Jan 2012- First Read and assigned to the Senate Veterans, Military Affairs and Government Committee and Senate Rules Committee. 16 Feb 2012-Given "Do Pass" recommendation in Senate Veterans, Military and Government Affairs Committee 6-0-1 absent.

NEW MEDAL TO HONOR VIETNAM WAR VETERANS

By Judy Lacey

A company that produces commemorative military medals announced the minting of a new 50th Anniversary Commemorative Medal, which honors the service of all veterans of the Vietnam War.

Pieces of History created the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War medal. Its ribbon drape represents the flag of the Republic of Vietnam, which consists of a yellow field and three horizontal red stripes. It is flanked by stripes of green to represent the jungles of Vietnam. On the left side of the ribbon are stripes of red, white and blue representing the United States flag, and on the right side are stripes of white and black representing the POW-MIA flag.



On the front of the medal is a dragon, often used in Vietnamese folklore and mythology and a recognizable symbol of Vietnam. Below the dragon is an enameled ribbon of the Vietnam Service medal, which was issued to all U.S. military personnel who served in Southeast Asia (including contiguous waters or airspace) from 1961-1975. The anniversary dates on the medal represent the deployment of MAAG-1 in 1956 to the end of the war in 1975.

On the reverse side of the medal is an enameled POW-MIA flag, which serves “as a symbol of our Nation’s concern and commitment to resolving as fully as possible the fates of Americans still prisoner, missing and unaccounted for in Southeast Asia”. Surrounding the POW/MIA Symbol are the words, “In Honor of Your Service – You are not Forgotten.

Pieces of History has previously minted the 50th Anniversary medals for World War II and the Korean War, both of which bore the official Department of Defense 50th Anniversary Committee seals.

A leatherette presentation case is also available for \$5. For more information or to order, call (800) 564-6164, or visit www.piecesofhistory.com.

REMAINS OF LAST U.S. SOLDIER IN IRAQ

A Shiite extremist group handed over a simple wooden casket containing the remains of the last U.S. soldier missing in Iraq, a prominent Iraqi lawmaker said Monday, drawing a close to a case that has anguished the American's family since his 2006 disappearance. "Shiite lawmaker Sami al-Askari, a close ally of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, said the remains of Staff Sgt. Ahmed al-Taie were turned over last week as part of a prisoner exchange agreement between the Iraqi government and the militant group Asaib Ahl al-Haq."

"The Pentagon confirmed Sunday that it had recently received remains that were verified as al-Taie's. But al-Askari's comments provide the first confirmation that Asaib Ahl al-Haq, an Iranian-backed insurgent group, was responsible for the 2006 kidnapping of al-Taie after the Iraqi-born soldier sneaked out of the heavily guarded Green Zone in Baghdad to visit his wife and family on a Muslim holiday."

"Al-Askari said Asaib Ahl al-Haq last week acknowledged killing al-Taie within a year of his October 2006 abduction. He said he did not know exactly when al-Taie was killed. In an interview with The Associated Press, al-Askari said he supervised the negotiations for al-Taie's body and was present when Asaib Ahl al-Haq turned over a simple wooden casket containing the remains to Iraqi authorities on Feb. 22. He said the casket was immediately transferred to the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad."

"The Iraqi authorities did not open the casket, which was not heavy," al-Askari said. He said the negotiations for al-Taie's body had been taking place "for a while."

PREPARATIONS BEGIN FOR RECOVERY OPERATIONS IN NORTH KOREA

The Associated Press reported on February 28 that "an American ship has arrived in North Korea to support the hunt for the remains of soldiers missing-in-action from the Korean War. Chief of the U.S. Pacific Command, Adm. Robert Willard, said Tuesday the ship is unloading equipment at Nampho, a port city west of the capital, Pyongyang."

"The U.S. and North Korea agreed in October to restart the search for thousands of American service members, a sign of easing tensions between the wartime enemies. The program is due to begin formally on March 1, with a U.S. advance team arriving in Pyongyang later in the month."

KOREA RECOVERY STALLED

A program to recover the remains of the 5,500 American soldiers missing in North Korea from the Korean War has been shut down again, just two weeks after being announced, due to renewed tensions over North Korea's planned satellite launch, reports the New York Times. The US was going to pay for the \$5.7 million program, and two 30-member forensic investigation teams were just days away from beginning recovery work. "We have suspended that effort because we believe that North Korea has not acted appropriately in recent days and weeks and that it's important for them to return to the standards of behavior that the international community has called for," a Pentagon spokesman says.

The United States' new food aid program to the North has also been canceled because of the North's plan to launch a satellite on April 15, in celebration of the centenary of the birth of Kim Il Sung. North Korea claims the launch is for peaceful purposes and is allowed under international agreements, but the United States and other countries say the launch contravenes the ban on ballistic missile development. Japan's defense minister has ordered the country's military to ready its missile defense program, CNN reports.

The two countries agreed in October to allow the search for remains to resume this year, though Pentagon officials were not clear whether any U.S. teams had begun searching inside the country. It was to be the first time the U.S. had searched since tensions halted an effort in 2005. In the decade of searching before that, the U.S. recovered remains of more than 225 service members, according to Pentagon information.

The agreement allowed U.S. teams to search in a region 60 miles north of the capital city of Pyongyang and near the Chosin/Jangjin Reservoir, where more than 2,000 soldiers and Marines are believed to be missing, according to an October Pentagon announcement of the agreement.

The announcement said the deal was separate from any other issue between the two countries.

"Accounting for Americans missing in action is a stand-alone humanitarian matter, not tied to any other issue between the two countries," the statement said.

Little said that although the U.S. hopes to re-engage on remains recovery, North Korea's "provocative" behavior made it necessary to halt to hold North Korea "accountable."

"When there are suggestions that they might launch ballistic missiles, when they make bellicose statements about South Korea and engage in actions that could be construed as provocative, we think that it's not the right time to undertake this effort," Little said.

Of the approximately 83,000 Americans missing from all wars, more than 7,900 are from the Korean War, with 5,500 of those believed to be missing in North Korea, according to the Pentagon.

AIRMAN MISSING FROM VIETNAM WAR IDENTIFIED

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced on April 5 that the remains of a serviceman missing in action from the Vietnam War have been identified and returned to his family for burial with full military honors.

Air Force Tech. Sgt. Allen J. Avery of Arlington, Mass., was buried April 6 at Arlington National Cemetery. On April 6, 1972, six airmen were flying a combat search and rescue mission in their HH-53C Super Jolly Green Giant helicopter over Quang Tri Province in South Vietnam when they were hit by enemy ground fire and crashed.

In 1988, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) turned over remains they attributed to an American serviceman; however, the name provided by the SRV did not match anyone lost or missing from the Vietnam War. The remains were held by JPAC pending improved technology to facilitate a later identification.

From 1989 to 1992, Joint U.S./SRV field investigations, led by the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), found evidence leading to an aircraft crash site as well as two reported burial sites. Team members recovered human remains and personal effects as well as aircraft debris. As a result, the crew was accounted-for in 1997 and buried as a group at Arlington National Cemetery. Three airmen were also individually identified at that time.

In the mid-2000s, JPAC's laboratory's improved scientific capability enabled them to match the 1988 remains to the correct loss. The Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) tested these remains against all servicemen who were MIA from the Vietnam War with negative results. Later AFDIL expanded its search to make comparisons with previously-identified individuals. In 2010, as a result of mitochondrial DNA testing, the remains were matched with four of the six airmen from the 1972 crash, including Avery.

SEARCH FOR BODY OF AIRMAN KILLED IN IRAQ

There is no question Major Troy Gilbert died when his aircraft crashed in November of 2006. Iraqi insurgents broadcast a video of both the aircraft wreckage and Major Gilbert's body still attached to his unopened parachute. When U.S. soldiers reached the wreckage there was no sign of Major Gilbert's body. All that was recovered was a small bit of human tissue from the aircraft's cockpit. That tissue was returned to his family for burial at Arlington National Cemetery.

Major Gilbert saved the lives of 20 soldiers the day he died and received the Distinguished Flying Cross for his actions. But the story doesn't end here. The following is excerpted from a WFAA TV (Dallas – Fort Worth) exclusive by Jim Douglas.

[Begin Excerpt] The next year, on Sept. 11, 2007, insurgents released a second video. This time, a produced propaganda piece showed close-ups of Maj. Gilbert's badly decomposed corpse exhumed from a grave, still in a flight suit. It displayed his military ID, and singled him out as "America's baby killer."

It was anguishing proof that his body still existed. "His whole body is still over there somewhere, buried in a shallow grave," Ronnie Gilbert said. "All we're asking for is: Bring him home." "For five years! Five years we have been waiting patiently," Kaye Gilbert cried. "Patiently waiting for the Air Force and everyone over there to do their business. Find our son."

Then the U.S. pulled out of Iraq in December, the family could wait no longer. Maj. Gilbert's sister in Arlington questioned the Pentagon's prisoner of war/missing personnel office. "Well, if our troops are no longer there, who is looking for him?" Rhonda Jimmerson asked. "Who is putting that effort in?"

The answer they got is that no one is looking. Officials told them there's no search for Troy Gilbert because he is listed as killed in action, "body accounted for." Kaye Gilbert described her reaction. "Shock. Total shock. Anger. I felt just like 100 years of service this family has given to the Air Force. I feel like we have been tossed to the wind."

The Gilberts spent their lives on Air Force bases Ronnie as a senior master sergeant; Kaye worked as a secretary. Rhonda Jimmerson said the family didn't want to raise the issue during the war. "I don't want to say it was swept under the rug, But I think it was just forgotten," Jimmerson said. "Other, more important things, came up at the time. We were fighting a war."

Now Troy Gilbert's family fights to have his status changed to "unaccounted for" so the search can be reopened.

And they want his story told. About how his Christmas presents and a Bible reading for his wife and five children arrived the same day casualty officers knocked on the door.

And about the reason Maj. Troy Gilbert flew his jet fatally close to the ground that day. They say he told radio operators he wanted to avoid hurting innocent civilians who were near the insurgent fighters. The Gilberts say the Iraqis also owe their son a debt of gratitude.

Kaye Gilbert grimaces as she forces her feelings into words. "And since my son is partially in the ground in Arlington, one or two inches maybe, but 99 percent is still in the ground over there, please, please help us get him home," she said.

The Gilberts say they don't want anyone else to put their life at risk to find their son's remains. They've been told that Americans did search for days after the crash.

But now that the war is over, they believe there is more that could be done to bring Maj. Troy Gilbert back home. **[End Excerpt]**

After the airing of this story and a meeting with Major Gilbert's parents, the Pentagon agreed to resume the search for Major Gilbert's remains.

REMAINS OF POW HEADING HOME

REMAINS OF KOREAN WAR POW RETURNED

The remains of a Korean War POW have finally been laid to rest. Army Corporal Chester Roper's family gathered March 23 in Evergreen Park to pay their final respects.

Roper was captured in 1950 by enemy forces during the Korean War. He was reported missing in action and died in 1951 at a prison war camp.

Army Cpl. Chester Roper's family wondered what happened to the young man who went to fight in the Korean War. All they knew was that the 20-year-old from Pittsburgh went missing and was never heard from again. Without confirmation of his death, the family never arranged a funeral. His mother and sister rarely spoke of their grief, and Roper's fate was a taboo topic, said his nieces, who knew only that their uncle likely perished in the war and they should not pry for more information.

In December, a Department of Defense special unit assigned to attach names to U.S. troops killed in past conflicts confirmed that unidentified remains held in Hawaii were those of Roper, who died as a prisoner of war in North Korea. They used dental records and an old X-ray of Roper's clavicle to make the identification. Advances in technology and better access to former war zones during the past 10 years have helped the Department of Defense identify hundreds of service members classified as missing in action or prisoners of war. In 2011, the remains of 90 military personnel were identified, officials said. This year, 16 service members have been identified and their families have been notified, said a spokeswoman for the DOD POW/Missing Personnel Office.

Roper's remains were returned Wednesday at O'Hare International Airport to his closest living relatives, his two nieces.

Nearly 8,000 American's involved in the Korean War are unaccounted for, but a dent has been made in the numbers by the DOD's Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command.

ACCOUNTED FOR FROM VIETNAM

The number of Americans announced as returned and identified since the end of the Vietnam War in 1975 is now 906. (Five more Americans previously listed as KIA/BNR in Cambodia (4) and Laos (1) have been accounted-for, though not yet named/announced by DPMO.) Another 63 US personnel, recovered post-incident and identified before the end of the war, bring the officially listed total recovered and identified to 969. Of the 1,677 still missing or otherwise unaccounted-for from the Vietnam War, 90% were lost in Vietnam or in areas of Laos and Cambodia under Vietnam's wartime control: Vietnam-1,286 (VN-472, VS-814); Laos-326; Cambodia-58; Peoples Republic of China territorial waters-7; more than 450 were over-water losses.

ACCOUNTING COOPERATION: JPAC is continuing a process in Vietnam with Vietnamese Recovery Teams (VRTs) handling logistic requirements and advance preparation, before being joined by a smaller number of US personnel. This recovery construct is viewed as a way to expand the pace and scope of field operations, called for by Vietnam since the League Delegation's visit in March 2009. The Joint Field Activity (JFA) conducted in November included investigations, Last Known Alive (LKA) investigations, a VRT and four recoveries, with two Recovery Teams (RTs) extended until December 15th, when they redeployed to Hawaii, ending 2011 Vietnam War field operations.

Another JFA is now underway in Vietnam, the largest such operation in some time, including six recovery teams and two investigation teams. Joint Advance Work took place from February 27th until March 8th, and full scale investigations and recoveries began on March 9th at multiple sites. Until now, the US had largely failed to respond adequately to the Vietnamese 2009 proposal to increase the pace and scope of such operations. This pace must be continued and, where possible, further expanded to enable getting answers before witnesses are no longer available and remains have disintegrated even more due to the acidic soil in the region.

A small US team successfully conducted recovery operations in Laos in November but, in early December, JPAC Commander MG Stephen Tom, USAR, conveyed the message to the Lao government that cost factors precluded extending the helicopter contract. In fact, most Lao Air helicopters do not meet safety requirements for transporting US military personnel and, unfortunately, the Lao government did not extend the contract with privately owned Lao West Coast Helicopter Company (Air New Zealand). Negotiating a new contract proved to be very difficult, and JPAC had to make a go/no-go decision by December 31st.

All hoped the Lao would respond positively by that date to appeals from US Ambassador Karen Stewart, JPAC and the League to use ground transportation for the January JFA. Inexplicably, the Lao leadership denied the request, noting concern for team safety, a rationale justified 25 years ago, but not in today's environment. As a result, January accounting operations in Laos, already reduced in size and scope, were cancelled.

MG Tom returned to Vientiane in late February for semi-annual POW/MIA Consultations, trying to work out an agreement that would serve as an interim solution. Initially, Lao Air (owned and controlled by the Lao Ministry of National Defense-MND) proposed tripling the cost for helicopter support. Had they held firm on that position, it would have caused a halt to further accounting cooperation between Laos and the US until a reasonable solution could be found. The League and Department of State urged JPAC to hold firm against any attempt to use accounting cooperation as a basis for virtual extortion as it would denigrate the service and sacrifice of America's unreturned veterans, our missing loved ones. Agreement was finally reached on helicopter costs for the current JFA in Laos, but the difficulty is far from over. It now appears that separate negotiations will be required for each JFA, a time-consuming and difficult way to proceed, but apparently doable, according to JPAC's Commander.

Despite the above, for the first time in years, DIA's POW/MIA specialist in Laos, Dustin Roses of the Stony Beach Team, is participating in joint field operations, conducting interviews of sources with potentially useful information. While this is an important step toward fully utilizing this specialist and, though long overdue, the Lao government has yet to agree for him to conduct such interviews outside the timing of JPAC field operations. The Lao government's objections have continued despite the fact that all Stony Beach interviews would be fully coordinated with the Lao government, and trips outside Vientiane would be in the company of a designated Lao official. The League is hopeful that this initial step will demonstrate to skeptical Lao decision-makers that this highly qualified specialist is focused solely on POW/MIA matters, and there is no viable rationale for limiting his ability to help locate information useful to the accounting mission.

A successful JFA was recently completed in Cambodia. One JPAC recovery team and a trilateral investigation team worked with Cambodian counterparts, the first such operations in Cambodia this year. More investigations and recoveries should be scheduled in FY12, instead of completing only one per year, as has been the norm in recent years. With only 54 US personnel still unaccounted for in Cambodia, and six or so incidents located and

awaiting excavation, an all-out push by the US, ably assisted by Cambodian officials whose cooperation is the most highly praised and reliable, could actually achieve “fullest possible accounting” objectives in the near term. Expectations must be reasonable, tempered by the horrors inflicted by the Khmer Rouge on the Cambodian people.

STATUS OF JPAC FUNDING & PERSONNEL: According to JPAC Commander MG Steve Tom, USAR, and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for POW/Missing Personnel Affairs Bob Newberry, full funding for FY12 scheduled operations should not be a concern. According to Mr. Newberry’s letter to the League, dated January 4, 2012, “. . .the Department increased funding for JPAC beginning in 2012 to meet the statutory requirements to increase accounting for missing Americans from all past conflicts and will continue to support the program to meet the emergent North Korea requirement. There should be no effect on JPAC operations in Southeast Asia as a result of a lack of funding.” That assurance is welcome, but there are some aspects that raise questions; namely, what about 2013 and beyond in this era of budget cuts? And, though assured there is no funding obstacle to the pace of Vietnam War accounting operations, JPAC could change schedules, especially if the assured funding does not arrive in JPAC accounts before deadlines for making go/no-go decisions. This situation warrants very close monitoring. (The League thanks each of you who wrote Members of Congress to urge full funding for POW/MIA accounting organizations to accomplish the mission.)

In addition to planned resumption of excavations of burial sites in North Korea, momentum is also building to resume recovery operations in Burma/Myanmar, offering the prospect of bilateral humanitarian cooperation. This is a scenario the League has advocated and welcomes, but NOT at the expense of reducing Vietnam War accounting efforts. As above on funding and personnel concerns, this is something to closely monitor and to ensure that Members of Congress understand the need to simultaneously pursue accountability for personnel missing from all wars. The signals to today’s active duty, all-volunteer military are undeniable. Those now serving must have confidence that should they be captured or become missing, our nation will do everything feasible to recover them. This includes S/SGT Bowe Bergdahl, USA, captured in Afghanistan and believed held by the Taliban in Pakistan.

BURMA SEARCH FOR MIA’S MAY HELP TIES

By AP / Denis D. Gray, Mar. 14, 2012

(LAIZA, Burma) — Forced to skim the ground under a 100-foot (30-meter) cloud ceiling, fighting rain and wretched visibility, the C-47 Skytrain probably proved an easy target for Japanese gunners. Packed with ammunition, the aircraft exploded, plunging into a jungle that swallowed it up for 57 years.

Today, the remains of seven U.S. airmen on that ill-fated flight lie in the military's Arlington Cemetery. They were the last to be recovered before Burma halted a search for 730 other Americans still missing from World War II in the Southeast Asian country.

But now, as bilateral relations improve, there's hope others missing in action will be brought home.

Negotiations with senior U.S. officials began last month, following up on a visit in December by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Most of the MIAs were airmen flying some of the war's most dangerous missions as they hauled supplies to beleaguered Allied forces over snowy Himalayan ranges and boundless jungles.

Clinton urged Burma leaders to cooperate in short-lived recovery operations suspended eight years ago.

This time around there are grounds for optimism. After decades of isolation and often brutal rule by the military, the regime is initiating some democratic reforms and appears bent on bettering ties with the United

States, which continues to impose economic sanctions on Burma, also known as Burma. The MIA talks offer one of the few avenues now open toward normalization.

"We are happy to hear that Mrs. Clinton's trip to Burma has made it possible for more of our men to come home to their families," said Robert Frantz, brother of one of those who perished in the 1944 Skytrain crash, U.S. Army Air Force Sgt. Clarence E. Frantz.

"Our group of families has been behind any and all efforts to recover more of our men from anywhere," Frantz said.

Although Washington insists the MIA search will be a strictly "stand-alone humanitarian matter," a joint search could bear political fruit as it did in Vietnam. Following the Vietnam War, dialogue between the one-time enemies was restricted to the MIA issue.

"The U.S. and Burma could come together through the search for missing Americans much like happened in Vietnam two decades ago," said Murray Hiebert, an analyst with the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Cooperation by Burma, he said, could help its government build goodwill with the U.S. Congress and administration, making it easier to lift the sanctions, provided the reforms also proceed.

However, even with full-fledged teamwork, recovery missions will face major obstacles.

Most of the crash sites are known to be in the country's northern Kachin state, a remote region of dense jungles, high mountains, poor roads and an ongoing insurgency. The Kachin ethnic minority have been fighting for autonomy from the central government for decades.

Continued conflict would certainly place many areas off-limits to U.S. search parties, although the rebel Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) is decidedly pro-American. Kachin and American soldiers forged close bonds fighting the Japanese and the bush-wise guerrillas rescued many downed airmen.

KIO spokesman La Nan, interviewed at the rebel headquarters here, said the Kachin were ready to help once a peace agreement is reached.

"When the country is at peace, we hope that we and a new (American) generation of their descendants will be able to identify their human remains," he said.

The carefully orchestrated U.S. MIA operations everywhere require sound security, medical evacuation, communications and transport before a green light is given, said Lt. Col. Marc E. Geller, commander of the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) unit which would undertake the Burma search. (MORE: Chasing the Dragon: In Burma, All Conversations Seem to Lead to China)

Tasks of the Hawaii-based JPAC include the search for 1,680 missing servicemen from the Vietnam War and 74,180 still unaccounted for from World War II.

In Burma, many sites would require landing zones for helicopters — scarce in the country — to be cut out of triple canopy jungle, he said.

As many as 30 sites already investigated or excavated in 2003 and 2004, when the U.S. was forced to pull out, would probably be revisited. Some remains from those searches have yet to be identified.

"Just the sheer numbers of missing make it very important. There's a lot of work left to be done there, a huge potential. We are in a waiting mode but incredibly excited," Geller said.

If recovery operations resume, it is unlikely to happen before next January, during the dry, winter season in Kachin state.

Although it's been decades, many family members of the missing, including grandchildren, have not forgotten.

"We always had pictures of him on the piano and around the house. He never left us," Robert Frantz said of his brother in an interview from Elkton, Maryland.

One of his sisters wrote the U.S. government, year after year, asking for any news. She died a month before Clarence's remains were found in 2001 by an American missionary who ran into an old man describing wreckage of an aircraft near his village.

Clarence had volunteered in 1941, serving in the U.S. Cavalry until it was disbanded. He was then sent to fly as a radio operator on resupply missions along a 600-mile (965-kilometer) route between northeastern India and China, dubbed the "Skyway to Hell" and the "Aluminum Trail" for the number of planes that didn't make it.

Writes military historian Frank McLynn in his 2010 book, "The Burma Campaign":

"Take-off was often in heavy weather with no radar, no traffic control and inadequate radios. After fighting through zero visibility, the pilots would often get above the cloud canopy into clear air to find a plane flying straight at them; mid-air collisions were frequent."

Pilots spoke of being "tossed about like an egg in a tin" by roiling clouds and savage crosswinds that could tear an airplane apart. In 1943 alone, nearly 400 airmen went down, with only 125 of them rescued.

Clarence's plane, according to accounts pieced together from the MIA search and other sources, took off from India, made it over a Himalayan range known as "The Hump" but probably veered off course as it prepared to drop desperately needed food and mortar shells for embattled U.S. troops at Mytikyina in northern Burma.

Japanese ground fire appears to have brought down the aircraft some 60 miles (96 kilometers) northwest of Laiza. Searchers, delayed by poor weather for 2 1/2 days, scoured the area for 66 hours but found no trace of the two-engine plane.

The JPAC team discovered a number of airplane parts along with six teeth and bone fragments. Two of the crewmen were identified through DNA testing, and the others were confirmed dead from other evidence. All seven were buried with full honors in 2010.

Robert Frantz, the only one of six brothers and sisters still living, received an identification bracelet that was found at the crash site; their mother had given it to Clarence. Before his death at age 24, he had mailed an engagement ring to his high school sweetheart.

"But he never got home to get married," Robert said.

6TH ANNUAL RFTW BBQ FUNDRAISER

Saturday, April 14, 2012; 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Raytheon Company

2000 East El Segundo Blvd.

El Segundo, CA

Enter at El Segundo Blvd. Gate (at Continental Blvd.) You must show driver's license ID to enter property.

Raytheon is a huge supporter of veterans and of RFTW. This is the sixth year they are providing a RFTW BBQ to help raise funds for us. Please attend if you're able to, and urge any FNGs you know to attend.

Entry fee is \$10, which includes lunch and raffle ticket. There will be food, vendors, music, raffles, and a 50-50 drawing.

All proceeds from this event are donated to RFTW.

Please RSVP with the number in your party to Danny Lopresto (310.647.2009 or dlopresto@raytheon.com) so they will know how much food to set up.

WELCOME HOME VIETNAM VETERANS

April 29, 2012

Phoenix, AZ

In-Country Viet Nam Veterans, in conjunction with the Vietnamese Community in Arizona and many other generous veteran organizations, are again holding the Viet Nam Remembrance Day Ceremony. The 18th annual Ceremony will be held April 29, 2012.

In this ceremony, we will "welcome home" those that received no welcome, adoration from our Nation or thank you for sacrifices and for serving in Vietnam. On this day, they will receive congratulations, admiration and gratitude, something which was eluded the generation that served in Vietnam. This ceremony will especially pay proper homage to the fallen and to the cause to which lives were given.

The commemoration starts at 08:30 a.m. with ceremonies at 9:00 a.m. and will be held at Wesley Bolin Plaza, Phoenix, AZ (16th Ave/17th Ave - Adams Street westbound/Jefferson Street eastbound - one way streets)

For more information contact Josie Kakar-Delsi at 520-836-1022 or kakar_delsi@cgmailbox.com.

MID-AMERICA BIKE WEEK

May 27 – June 2, 2012

Hot Springs, Arkansas

If you'll be anywhere near Arkansas on your ride home from DC, be sure to plan on stopping in Hot Springs for the Mid-America Bike Week.

Bike Week is a major fundraiser for disabled veterans and their families. The \$10,000 State-Wide Poker Run starts at varies points around the State on May 27th and ends in Hot Springs on June 2nd. Riders may join the Poker Run anytime during the week. All of the Hot Springs activities are from May 31st through June 2nd.

Jack Elder said Bike Week schedules their annual programs to follow RFTW because RFTW veterans appreciate what they do and always show up. More info is online at www.Mid-AmericaBikeWeek.org. Please

spread the word to everyone you know with a motorcycle. They have invited over 500,000. Pre-registration is now open. If you have questions, contact Jack Elder, BOD President Mid-America Bike Week, Inc. at (501)463-8841 or mabikeweek@yahoo.com.

► SICK CALL

CommoDog

CommoDog had surgery April 4 and had a spinal tap to drain fluids. It was thought he would have to have another surgery, but it wasn't necessary. He returned home from the hospital on Easter Sunday and was well enough to post on the Forum again April 8. We're glad you're recovering well, CommoDog.

► TAPS

Floyd Marlowe

We lost Floyd Marlowe this year. Funeral Services were held in Blythe, California on April 6th.

Run For The Wall depends on thousands upon thousands of volunteers across our nation each year. Behind them are a few hundred dedicated leaders, often unknown and unrecognized because most of their work is performed behind the scenes and without publication or fanfare. Floyd exemplified that leadership.

If you've been involved with the Run for a while, you will remember the Southern Route Lunch Stop on Day One in Ehrenburg, Arizona – gas on your dime & go, grab a quick lunch if they'd serve you quickly enough; and stage to head east. The nearest town of any consequence was back in California. Blythe was considered, and Floyd Marlowe was discovered. (That was back in about 2006, prior to the 2007 Run.)



Floyd was a life-long resident of Blythe, a retired Riverside County deputy sheriff, and co-owner of the Sizzler Steak House and Marlowe Farms. The Marlowe family were pioneers in the Blythe area since early in the last century. Floyd was a natural to take the leadership role in the Blythe lunch stop on Day One: He knew most everyone in town, including all public safety organizations, the Chamber of Commerce and City Council; and probably everyone who walked into the Sizzler. Floyd had the personality to carry it off... he was the kind of guy who would bring a smile to your face simply by mentioning his name. And Floyd had a profound respect for any man or woman who wore the uniforms of our nation's military.

If you've rolled into Blythe on Day One, you've encountered a freeway and town escort, hundreds of citizens on the roadside, a fuel stop with gas donated; and you have also experienced a formal sword-raised welcome salute by the JROTC to a lunch provided by the citizens of Blythe, and a program acknowledging respect for the mission of RFTW... coordinated by Floyd Marlowe through over twenty formal organizations and hundreds of volunteers in Blythe alone.

When Floyd was contacted for a coordination meeting for the 2010 Run, he answered the phone from his hospital room in San Diego. Typical of Floyd, he had already gathered enough money to cover the Blythe fuel stop. His sister, Janet White, was already working on details for the Run. That's just the way he was.

After his 2010 adventures, Floyd wrote a testimonial, quoted in part on August 18th: "Thank you to the Desert Air Ambulance, Inc., and Desert Critical Care Transport, Inc., for saving my life more than once...." Sadly, in March 2012, Floyd's flight was only one way.

His service was held on Friday, April 6, 2012 at the Zion Lutheran Church in Blythe at 1100 hours. RFTW has sent flowers, and Shirley "Top Sarge" and Jerry McNeely represented RFTW at the service. Please say a prayer or offer words of comfort to Floyd's family.

The organization that Floyd created to support RFTW will carry his legacy forward.

Davis "Stickhorse"

"Stickhorse" was killed in an accident on April 7. He was a member of the Wytheville, Va. Moose riders and a Moose Member. He had planned to ride out to California and back to the Wall this year with the group out of Wytheville leaving about 6 May. Condolences to his family from the RFTW family.

Chuck Schantag

The National Alliance of Families mourns the passing of Chuck Schantag of the POW Network. He passed away February 23 at the age of 64. Chuck founded the first POW/MIA BBS on the internet, in the days before websites became common place, giving family members and activists a place to share information and ideas. He was responsible for bringing the Homecoming II POW/MIA Bios on line. He and his wife Mary expanded the Network seeking out and exposing phonies and wannabes. Chuck and Mary worked with RFTW since 1989. To Mary and the extended Schantag family RFTW offers our deepest sympathy.

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: _____ 2012

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.