



# RUN FOR THE WALL

## Quarterly Newsletter

*“We Ride For Those Who Can’t”*

July 2013

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### THE EDITOR’S NOTES



Please forgive me for what I’m about to say, but I think it needs to be said.

I am one of those who monitor our Forum to keep out spammers and also posters who may step over the line of courtesy and respect. Our Board of Directors has never censored the Forum, no matter how nasty the comments directed at the BOD might get. But the constant negative comments only hurt the RFTW mission and cause dismay to the FNGs who join us every year to continue the mission with us.

It makes me so sad to see all the negative comments on the Forum. When I started with RFTW in 2003 I was shocked to hear the many derogatory comments made about the RC, RGs, and the BOD. I thought these people surely must have done something horrible to deserve such berating. But guess what? The same thing happens every single year, no matter who is on the BOD or who are RCs or RGs. Isn’t it funny that every year positions on the BOD change – yet the criticism continues every year. Apparently not a single person in leadership can possibly meet the standards of the complainers. Or maybe it’s that complainers are just not

capable of giving credit to another person for doing their best to keep hundreds of riders safe as they travel across our entire country. Every year there are the same complaints and accusations: this one's a lousy leader, that one can't make a good decision. The complainers always seem to know how things should be run. But one thing always remains the same: no complainers have ever ended up on the BOD where they might prove they can fix everything they complained about. The truth is, the complainers always say they don't WANT to be on the BOD, or a RC or RG. Of course not—because if they were, they might prove they don't have half the leadership qualities of the people they criticized. Every year there are calls for volunteers for the Leadership Group, but I've never seen one complainer in Leadership. That tells me they prefer to remain part of the problem, not the solution.

Just one year I would love to hear, instead of criticism, nothing but praise for all of our leaders who devote so much of their time to help herd us safely across the nation. I would love to see only cheerful faces on everyone as they enjoy and get the most from the RFTW experience. Mostly I would love for our FNGs to enjoy their first ride with us without having to hear malicious remarks and wonder why that's happening in a group with such a noble mission.

We are all part of the RFTW mission, and WE are the ones who make the journey either positive or negative.

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.*

## **OUTGOING PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

The BOD got a full report in DC on the Recon Route, and there will be a third route next year. The BOD has named John Hardcharger Barker the route coordinator. The Recon Route will be called the Midway Route. The BOD also voted and Catfish will take over as the Central Route coordinator Phil "Kickstand" Slone will be heading up the Southern Route.

We had a very good run this year with all three routes, but we did have some accidents along the way and as far as I know there were no life-threatening ones. Our ridership was down in the overall numbers, but our numbers are way to the number of riders who went all the way, and that is a good thing.

The trikes and bikes with trailers platoons have grown a lot on the Southern Route. I know we had nearly 60 and I think Central was about the same. As get older more and more are going to the more stable bikes. That will be something that the new route coordinators and the BOD will need to plan for.



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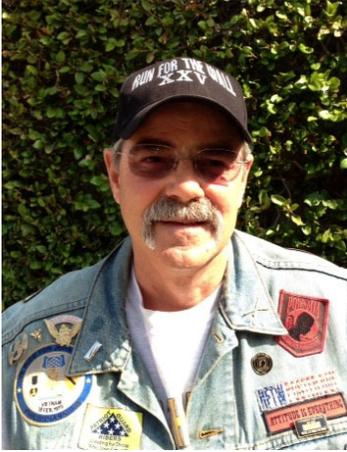
This will be my last entry for the newsletter, as my term has ended. I have enjoyed working with all of the BOD for the last three years and wish them all the best in the years to come. And to all the riders, thank you for a great 25-year-run.

Ray "Too Tall" McDowell  
President BOD Run For The Wall 2013

## **INCOMING PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Hello RFTW Riders—Past, Present, and most importantly—Future!  
Happy 4<sup>th</sup> of July

Many of you know me, or have heard of me already. My name is Harry Steelman—they call me “Attitude.” I stand for Safety. This year the Board of Directors has selected me as their next president. I am truly humbled by this honor which they have bestowed on me. I will do my very best to live up to any expectations that they or you may have.



Our Board is made up of some very fine individuals and I hold each and every one in the highest regard. Three of us, Dave Gladwill, Greg Smith, and I are past Route Coordinators, lending that level of specific route leadership experience to the group. All of us have held positions in platoon leadership, at least three of which, Darrell Neil, Ken Hargrove, and John McKee, have also been Road Guards. Harlan Olson has also worked leadership positions in Advance teams. All three routes are represented on this year’s Board and collectively we are all qualified and ready to ensure that the appropriate level of continuity is provided as our new Route Coordinators gather their respective staffs and begin preparations for RFTW XXVI. I’m sure that they are well on their way to putting together a pretty good program.

I do want to take this opportunity to thank the thousands of individuals and hundreds of organizations that give so selflessly of their time and personal funds to see us across our great nation. These entities work all year to put together the local events that make our journey so amazing. We would be hard pressed to get to Arlington without them. If you have never done this run before, brace yourself. The outpouring of support, understanding and from the bottom of the heart LOVE from our fellow Americans will bring you to your knees. From the Law Enforcement and Fire Department support and the countless number of people who put another countless number of hours in preparing meals and programs; from the spiritual support provided by churches and houses of worship along the way and the Veterans’ organizations, providing emotional and moral support, sometimes even fuel and tolls at our stops, right down to those who greet us on the overpasses and bring their children down to the right of way fence to wave us on with so much respect, on behalf of all of the RFTW riders—I THANK YOU, so very, very much. You are ever so much an integral part of our mission. (Example: This past year the Central Route entered Junction City, KS in a hard, driving rain amidst tornado warnings. Our supporters stood fast on the overpasses, waving and saluting us on while silhouetted by lightning flashes!

Now, as for the business at hand, the Board of Directors for Run For The Wall stands committed to the riders, with emphasis on the FNGs, continuing to guide and assist the Route Coordinators to make the Run increasingly better. This is part of our job. The RCs are tasked with the day-to-day operation of the Run and they take that task very seriously. Safety remains their key focus. The BOD exists to provide the administrative support necessary to keep this great event on the road. We also consider it our responsibility to keep safety the primary focus in the continuous search for improvements to the Run. We take that task very seriously. To that end, we can all expect change to occur and change, as we all know, is not always well received. Four of us have been on the Board for two or more years and we are well aware of the impacts that are made by the decisions that we make. Some of these decisions are made after hours, days, weeks, months, even years of deliberation and discussion. None are taken lightly and none are made “off the cuff.” RFTW is not an easy journey. The days are long. Some days are very hot and some days can be quite cold. Some days are terribly dry and some extremely wet, often windy. Some days are jubilant, some reflective and some downright heartbreaking. We ride through it all. We on the BOD know and understand these things and consider them as we develop our decisions. At the end of the day we know that we cannot please everyone all of the time, but we do recognize the need to make solid decisions with good conscience.

You can help us, and we encourage you to do so. First, please use after action reports and emails or phone calls to the BOD members to make your feelings and ideas known. Second, attend one or more of the three reunions to stand up and speak your piece. The next reunion is to be held in Colorado Springs the last weekend of this month and I encourage everyone who possibly can to join us. Our Colorado folks have put significant effort in making this event extremely worthwhile. And third, I would, at the risk of receiving some severe criticism, ask everyone to be careful and mindful with what you post on the website forum. Yes, we fought for the freedom of speech and the freedom of the press and I would be the last one to suggest that we put any sort of damper on what you post. HOWEVER, almost everyone refers those seeking information regarding the Run to our forum. Everything that is posted there is representative of who we are and what we do, if you will, our mission. To that end we all need to be responsible in our postings and provide positive reinforcement to those who would look to join us and who need information on how to best do that and on what to expect. Please be respectful of the RFTW and to those who have made it one of the mainstays of their healing experience and, in fact their lives.

Thank You for this opportunity,  
“Attitude”  
Honor All Who Serve

God Bless the USA, God Bless RFTW and GOD BLESS THOSE WHO SUPPORT OUR MISSION!

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## ► 2013-2014 RFTW BOARD

<b>President</b>	Harry “Attitude” Steelman
<b>Vice President/Chairman of the Board</b>	Daryl "Top" Neil
<b>Secretary/Treasurer</b>	Ken “Wish” Hargrove
<b>Director of Operations and Training</b>	Greg "Pied Piper" Smith
<b>Director of Merchandise</b>	David “Trunks” Gladwill
<b>Director of Public Relations/Communications</b>	Harlan “Whitebirch” Olson
<b>Director of Risk Management/Purchasing</b>	John “Wicked” McKee

## MEET THE NEW RFTW BOD

Congratulations to our two new board members:

**Greg “Pied Piper” Smith**  
**Director of Operations and Training**



Greg has over thirty-three (33) years of safety, risk management, and training experience and nineteen (19) years of 501 non-profit management experience. He received an Honorable Discharge from the U.S. Navy in 1974; he was stationed at the Naval Training Center in Orlando. Greg has been actively involved with both his profession (including four years on the American Society of Safety Engineers International Board of Directors) and other volunteer activities, including being a founding board member of an addiction recovery non-profit in Smithville, Texas ([www.serenitystar.org](http://www.serenitystar.org)).

Greg's involvement with RFTW began in 2005 and has continued until present time, including positions on the Southern Route as: Pacer/Assistant Platoon Leader, Road Guard, Assistant Route Coordinator, Route Coordinator (2009), Ambassador, and Mentor. Greg lives east of Austin, Texas and it has been rumored he rides a motorcycle...

## **Harlan "Whitebirch" Olson Director of Public Relations/Communications**

I was born and raised on a dairy farm in northeast Iowa. I didn't care much for milking Holsteins, but did enjoy operating farm machinery. It was the Holsteins that made me decide to join the US Army upon graduation from Decorah High School in June of 1962. I enlisted for Military Police, but at induction I recruited to become a member of the US Army Security Agency who gathered intelligence for the National Security Agency. After 11 months of training at Ft. Devens, MA, I was assigned to Saigon, Viet Nam.

After my discharge from the US Army in June of 1965, I used my GI Bill to attend Luther College in Decorah, IA, because my then girlfriend (now wife) Janelle was going to college there. At the same time, I was getting my commercial pilot license because I had my sights on a career in the airline industry. After getting my two-year college requirement fulfilled, I needed to build flight time. So I took a job as a flight instructor in Albert Lea, MN. I couldn't accumulate flight time faster than the Air Force jet jockeys coming back from Viet Nam, so I took a job as an Air Traffic Controller at Minneapolis Air Route Traffic Control Center in Farmington, MN.



I worked as an Air Traffic Controller for 12+ years until the Air Traffic controller strike happened in August of 1981. After things settled down and the realization that my ATC days were over, I went back to school and earned my computer science degree. In 1984, I took a Systems Administrator job with McKesson Healthcare in Colorado where I am still employed and live. The cool thing is, I work out of my home and can do the job from anywhere there is an internet connection.

I got my first motorcycle, a Harley FLH when I was a high school senior. There were a series of motorcycles through the years, Honda 305 Dream, Honda 450, Honda 750, 1976 Honda Gold Wing. Then there was a 30-year break as family life took over priorities, and in 2006 I purchased a new Harley Electra Glide, followed by a 2007 HD Ultra Classic, then a 2010 UltraClassic Limited. In addition to the Limited I have a 2010 FLHTP police motor that I use for funeral/military escort missions.

Janelle and I were RFTW FNGs in 2007 on the Central Route. Since then I have had several positions. In 2008 I was an assistant platoon leader, in 2009 a platoon leader, 2010 served on Staging Crew, 2011, 2012 and 2013 lead the Central Route Staging Crew.

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## **► 2013 RFTW NEWS**

### **2013 RFTW STATISTICS**

Compiled by John "Wicked" McKee

These are the numbers from the Registration Database which was updated to reflect Pre-Registered and Walk-in Riders (those *actually riding* a motorcycle):

Total Motorcycles arriving in DC	1201
Central Riders -> DC	616
Recon Riders -> DC	31
Southern Riders -> DC	554
Central "Riders" ATW	397
Recon "Riders" ATW	26
Southern "Riders" ATW	349
Central "Passengers" ATW	73
Recon "Passengers" ATW	5
Southern "Passengers" ATW	71
CR Total Riders/Passengers	957
Recon Total Riders/Passengers	39
SR Total Riders/Passengers	840

There were 145 people who pre-registered and did not show-up.

Average age for all routes was 58 years old

Median age was 62 years old

Youngest was 9 years old

Oldest was 83 years old

#### **Participation by State:**

California 423, Texas 230, Arizona 152, Colorado 129, Missouri 127, New Mexico 92, Washington 49, Virginia 48, Louisiana 46, Kansas 45, West Virginia 45, Oregon 42, Mississippi 40, North Carolina 40, Alabama 38, Idaho 36, Illinois 31, Tennessee 28, Ohio 27, Indiana 24, Kentucky 24, Georgia 23, Oklahoma 23, Utah 23, Florida 19, Nevada 15, Arkansas 14, Louisiana 14, Minnesota 14, Hawaii 13, Nebraska 13, South Carolina 13, Wisconsin 12, Wyoming 11, Pennsylvania 8, Montana 7, Michigan 6, North Dakota 6, Massachusetts 5, Maryland 4, New York 4, South Dakota 3, Connecticut 2, Iowa 2, New Jersey 2, Rhode Island 2, Alaska 1, New Hampshire 0, Vermont 0, Maine 0, Delaware 0; **Ontario, Canada 2, Dorset, England 2, Netherlands 1, South Australia 1**

*These numbers include the No-Shows, but still are valuable to see from whence we come.*

Notice that for all of the Northeast states (PA, MA, NY, CT, NJ, RI, ME, VT, & NH) there were a total of 23 participants. We need to reach out to that area of the country.

#### **MESSAGE FROM SR COORDINATOR**

Wow, what an awesome two years. It was such an honor leading Run For The Wall Southern Route in 2012 and 2013. Although I've received "Thank Yous" from Veterans, riders, supporters, and the communities we have touched, each of you that participated in some way are the ones that deserve all the credit. The success Southern Route experienced in 2012 and 2013 is the result of your resolve to ensure the Mission continues and is a success.



Each year Run For The Wall grows, and these last two years have seen the growth in not just the number of participants, but also the number of those we touch.

Mission First has been my mantra and by establishing an “Outreach Coordinator” this last year, I believe that our Mission has now been experienced by more Americans. The Outreach Coordinator was responsible for identifying and coordinating events with family members of those still Missing and ceremonies within communities outside the normal RFTW route. Brian “Bald Eagle” Floyd headed up the Outreach and although he wasn’t able to travel this year due to work responsibilities, he assisted from a far.

As a result of Bald Eagle, Pops, First Gear, Mas, and Karoni’s dedication, Run For The Wall touched the lives of: Barbara Hanson, sister in law, MIA Major Thomas Hanson 9/5/1967; Kevin Lemon, brother, MIA LtCol Jeffrey Lemon 4/25/1971, and Patty Hooper, step-mother, MIA LtCol Earl Hopper, Jr 01/10/68 (Tolleson, AZ); Shannon Spake, daughter, MIA LtCdr Dennis Pike 03/27/72 and Phillippe Ritter, son, MIA George Ritter-Air American (Grand Prairie, TX); Jean Blackard, niece, James Gates 04/22/76 (Bastrop, LA); and Christine Jones, mother, MIA Bobby Jones 11/28/72 (Dalton, GA); These families thank each and every one of you for your support and for standing beside and behind them in their mission to bring their family member home.

Run For The Wall also touched lives within the communities of Odessa, TX; Meridian, MS and Abingdon, VA while participating in special wreath laying ceremonies at the Odessa and Meridian Veteran’s Cemeteries and the Abingdon Veteran’s Memorial.

This type of outreach will continue in 2014 as Bald Eagle has been selected to identify and coordinate special meetings and ceremonies with MIA families and communities within a day’s ride of the Southern Route’s travels.

Dubiski Career High School has become a favorite stop for many. These high school kids are not only working towards their high school diploma but trade skills they can use upon their graduation. As a result of Run For The Wall’s first visit to Dubiski in 2012, the kids and community are learning and talking about our Mission. One event that I hope continues is the Essay Scholarship program I started this last year. The Run For The Wall family ran with my idea of one \$500 Essay Scholarship and by the time we arrived in Grand Prairie, we were able to award three scholarships – one \$1,600 first prize and two \$800 second prizes. I want to thank all the riders for believing that we can make a difference. Thank you to all that read each essay and assisted me in the selection of the three winners.

I believe that each of us can make a difference in the lives of our POW/MIA families and the children that we meet. We must continue to introduce our Mission to all communities so that they can learn and educate others that America has 83,000 American service members left behind on foreign land and at least one POW – Bowe Bergdahl—held captive.

I encourage you to reach out to your own communities and your congressional leaders to ensure that our POWs, MIAs, and KIAs still unaccounted for are Never Forgotten.

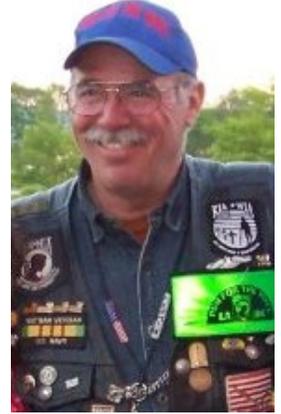
See you in 2014, if not before somewhere along the open road.

Laurie “Airborne” Clay  
2013 Southern Route Coordinator  
“Mission First”

## MESSAGE FROM CR COORDINATOR

I wish to take this time to thank each and every one of you for the fantastic job you did and to tell you “Well Done.” I could not have asked for a more dedicated, committed, hard-working and understanding TEAM to work with on a Mission of this magnitude and importance. You performed your jobs in a truly professional and friendly manner, which led this year’s RUN to be one of the most memorable, safest, and successful RUNs ever. We were not without incident, and part of that was admittedly on me. Perhaps I should have slowed sooner or put the pack into a safer positioning sooner. I am not sure however I am still looking at the incidents and analyzing the sequence of events to impart the findings to my successor.

The weather could have been better for sure, but you all came thru the downpour and hail in Junction City like the true professionals you are. The Chaplains were hard at work in prayer and though the rain and hail didn’t go away, someone was watching over us. By practicing due diligence and taking the initiative to provide for a safer atmosphere for your TEAMS you brought your respective TEAMS thru in a few very tight spots making the RUN safer for all participants. In a way it reminded me a bit of a few years ago when we had snow in Williams, Arizona, of all places.



The Road Guards were outstanding as usual, accomplishing a remarkable feat—giving all of us their total dedication by insuring that we arrived at our every stop, and ultimately Washington DC safe and sound. Griz you did a fantastic job directing and guiding your TEAM each and every day. Your dedication was evident throughout as we traversed this great country of ours.

Our Ambassador TEAM, in their true inaugural year, did a great service to the RFTW organization, particularly the Central Route. They made many stops to spread the word of our Mission as well as made special stops at schools along the way and gave talks to the students and staff. The feedback has been absolutely positive. It is my hope that the Ambassador TEAM will become a permanent part of Central Route’s configuration in the future. Roger, you and your TEAM are to be congratulated for a job well done.

Staging and Fuel TEAMS, as has been your practice in the past and continued to be this year, you did a super job at every opportunity. There were times when you needed to shift gears and re-set, but you did it and did it well. It was unfortunate that George and JJ came down with the crud but capable hands came into play and the Fuel TEAM continued in great fashion.

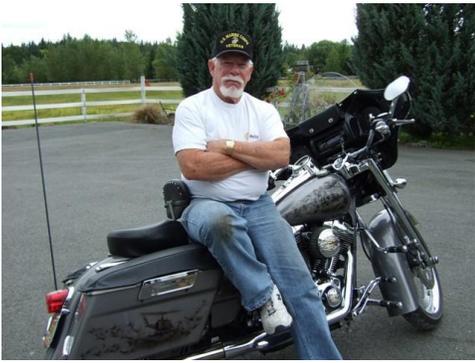
The Honor Guard for John Baca was a great success. Many folks were impressed with this aspect of the RUN and gave many laudatory remarks about having John so well represented. Bruce, it was unfortunate that you had a breakdown—I know how disheartening this was. However, Bob Hatcher stepped up to the plate and made it all continue to work without incident. Thank you Bob.

For all of you I didn’t mention, I apologize. Each and every one of you did a professional and praiseworthy job. I commend you all and ask that should you again volunteer to be part of the leadership TEAM for RUN FOR THE WALL Central Route you will give equal measure of professionalism and effort to your selected leader.

Thank you all, God bless you, and have a safe summer.

Respectfully,  
Stan “Ironfish” Handley  
Honor and Remember

## MESSAGE FROM MIDWAY COORDINATOR



After a great Recon this year, the BOD has authorized a new route, the Midway route. It goes on I-40 all the way to NC then up the coast to Arlington. We will stop at the special forces museum, the Marine Museum, several VA's and some of the best Memorials I have seen.

There will be a total of 225 bikes on this new route in 2014, so as the saying goes, we are looking for a few good folks. Hopefully we will take some of the pressure off the Central and Southern routes and make the whole Run safer.

If anyone is interested in becoming part of the leadership for this route, please send me an email at [hardchargerrftw@gmail.com](mailto:hardchargerrftw@gmail.com).

John "Hardcharger" Barker

## **2013 DOCUMENTARIES**

Two young men, Brady and Jason, filmed the 25th anniversary of the RFTW with interviews across the country along the Southern The documentary, "The Last Ride," centers on Jason's ride with his father across the country with RFTW, as this was perhaps their last chance since Jason's father, Evan Downs Jr., is battling cancer caused by Agent Orange. The documentary is expected to be completed before January. Check their website for progress: [www.thelastridedoc.com](http://www.thelastridedoc.com).

Two other men, Terry Sharp and his son, Byron, are producing a documentary that includes both the Central Route and Southern Route. The documentary will include interviews with board members, Ironfish, Airborne, Gunny Gregory, Karoni "Hoops" Forrester, Gold Star Mother Julie Vinnedge, several veteran riders of the CR as well as several FNGs, residents of Concordia on the CR and residents of Wytheville on the SR. The documentary will be available later this year.

## **RFTW 2013 IN THE NEWS**

*Rancho Cucamonga, CA:*

### **Jim Frost**

"It's a very moving experience and some still can't handle it individually, so they have a brotherhood to help them go through the emotions which can overtake them," said former Rancho Cucamonga mayor and city treasurer Jim Frost, who served in Vietnam. The ride will be Frost's tenth time participating.

### **Ray McDowell**

"It's a healing process for all of our riders, to welcome them home," said Vietnam veteran Ray McDowell, president of the Run for the Wall organization. "We ride for all the riders who can't be here; the ones left behind. We want the government to bring them home and we want closure for those guys as a well."

### **Laurie Clay**

"We want to make sure the funding doesn't get cut," Clay said. "One of the things with Vietnam is the soil is deteriorating the bones and remains to the point that in 5 to 6 years they're not going to identify that DNA any longer, so it's imperative we do it now."

*Williams, AZ newspaper interviews:*

### **Rich Harrison**

Rich Harrison of Manhattan, Kan. has seen the power of the wall firsthand.

Harrison, who served in the Navy during Vietnam, is on his 18th run. He told the story of when a rider named "Guns" visited the Vietnam Memorial during a special night run for those who have lost members of their squad.

"So he's up there touching the wall's names in his squad, he got shot up too. He kind of steps back and somebody touches him from behind on the shoulder. He turns around, and it's the nurse that had attended to his wounds over in Vietnam," he said. "She was there for the same reason, because she knew where she lost those people."

### **Kay Julian**

Closure is also an important part of the run for a woman who goes by the road name "Lil Boss." Lil Boss, whose husband was a Vietnam era veteran, started going on the run in 1989.

She said growing up during the Vietnam War was different than growing up during previous wars because people watched it on television and heard the body counts on a regular basis.

"It was hard for a lot of us to grow up watching that. It felt like the war was in our living room, but yet we were so far removed from it," she said. "And for a lot of us, being able to go to the wall and meet with the vets and interact with them and thank them-it brings some closure for us too, because there was an entire generation that was affected by that war."

Lil Boss has taken her four children on the run, where they were able to escort a Vietnam veteran to the wall.

"Some of the vets showed up really closed up, wound up real tight, a lot of issues, and they just didn't want to deal with any of it but they knew they had to go. And there was just something about the kids," she said, adding that the experience helped educate her kids as well as heal the veterans.

### **Stan Handley**

Those healing relationships are also significant for Stan "Ironfish" Handley. Handley, a Vietnam veteran from Colville, Wash., did his first Run for the Wall in 2006.

"I was so deeply moved in the healing process that I was starting into just by being with these like-minded people, we've been in your shoes, we understand that kind of stuff, and the welcoming that I got-it's a family."

Handley is this year's Run for the Wall central route coordinator. The job entails about 11 months of preparation, including planning fueling stops, meals, and accommodations.

"It's a logistical hopscotch trying to get everything put into place," he said. "But once it's in place, it runs like a Swiss watch, it's great."

Handley's favorite part of the run is the people he meets. As the group continues its journey across the country, Handley hopes to make more people aware of prisoners of war and the missing in action.

"Those freedoms are all yours because those people haven't come home," he said. "They have given everything so that you could have this."

*Evansville, IN newspaper interview:*

### **Edwin Romero**

"Our mission is to make sure people don't forget about the POWs and the missing in action," said Edwin Romero, a Vietnam veteran from Youngstown, Ohio. Romero joined Run for the Wall in 2004. Beyond the tribute to the missing, he and other Vietnam veterans have found a community in this event. For many, this ride made them feel—for the first time—honored for their service, he said.

"It was an awakening," Romero said. "For 30 years I had to hide the fact that I was a Vietnam vet. You couldn't get a job, people would shun you. This was the first time I was welcomed home—in 2004—since I returned from Vietnam."

## **NOTES FROM THE FORUM**

### **From MerryGreenleaf:**

Howdy! I just wanted to mention that the Riders came thru Lordsburg, New Mexico a few days ago, and I went to an overpass over-looking Highway 10 to cheer them on and to enjoy the sound and sight of all those motorcycles.

I was delighted when three riders pulled off of 10 and came up to where I was standing to talk for a few minutes. They said they were ahead of the main group and wanted to talk to the lady who was crazy enough to stand out in the hot, desert sun just to watch a bunch of bikers riding by.

I told them it was only my way of showing appreciation for what they were doing. Two of the guys were from Texas and the couple hailed from Georgia. The lady handed me a commemorative [Run For The Wall] 2013 pin and I'm wearing it today. After a hug and handshakes and wishes for a safe ride, they went roaring back down the road heading east for Lordsburg.

I suppose I could have followed the crowd and hung out at the Visitor Center in Lordsburg where the Fire Dept. had a huge American Flag hanging from their tallest ladder to watch the Run For The Wall riders pass by. But I was never one for following the crowd and I'm glad I listened to my heart and drove a few miles west of town to find my own spot to watch; otherwise I would have never met the riders who took a moment to talk to me. I don't know your names, but I hold you in high regard and I hope that you are safe on the road.

God bless all the riders and keep them close. They're showing the greatest respect for the war heroes still living, and also for the ones who have left their marks on our lives and whose names are carved on the Wall.

### **From Paladin:**

To the riders on the Central Route—I was the rider who was forced by a cage into the guardrail on I-40 about 55 miles west of Williams, AZ on May 15th. Aside from Vapors I don't know who else stopped to help me and stayed on the scene until the ambulance arrived. Just seeing your faces bent over me as you worked to stabilize

the situation told me that I had nothing whatsoever to worry about and that is a VERY comforting feeling indeed. In fact it's downright bitchin'!!! I just wish I knew who all of you were so that I could publicly acknowledge you here in the Forum. You folks did a great job in helping me out and I can't thank you enough for it. I prayed for your safe journey both to "the Wall" and then home again and kept track of your progress through the internet.

BTW, my gear which was aboard my scooter is presently resting unpacked on my garage floor. When the scooter comes home in a few weeks it'll be there only long enough for me to reload it and then I'll be heading out to "the Wall" again by way of Rainelle. I've got a few items that must be delivered to "the Wall" and I won't consider the Mission as being completed until I do.

## 2013 DC GROUP PHOTO

Use the below form to order a copy of the 2013 Group Photo at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC. If you have any questions, you may call the photographer, Michael Ventura, at 240-838-6773. He's in Maryland, so don't forget the time difference when calling.

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## ► 2013 FNG STORIES

### A LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCE

By Dave Beckmann, Platoon 12, 2013 CR  
Army '76-'80

A couple of months ago, I stopped in at Johnson's Corner truck stop in Northern Colorado to get a bite to eat. I saw a lot of motorcycles in the parking lot. Many had Patriot Guard emblems, so I decided to find the riders and thank them for their service. Little did I know what was in store for me that day and for the months ahead.

I found the riders as their meeting ended and thanked them. One gentleman said "This is Run For The Wall" and explained what that was. I liked the sound of it so I went home and pulled up the website. I liked what I saw so I bought a motorcycle and attended the next meeting. A new friend at the meeting cautioned me that this was a mission, not a pleasure ride. He also said that it would be a life-changing experience and told me about Rainelle. It was very clear how much RFTW meant to him.

Still, I had reservations. Would I be able to hang with the pack? It had been 27 years since I had ridden and some medical issues concerned me. I had told everyone in the initial meeting of my personal mission to tell every Vietnam veteran I meet "welcome home." I felt it was my responsibility to make the Run.

On May 18, 2013, I headed toward Goodland, Kansas, to join the pack. On the way, I stopped in Limon, Colorado, for fuel. As luck would have it, the advance team arrived shortly after me and I had the privilege to meet MOH recipient John Baca. It was apparent that riding with this pack was an honor not to be taken lightly. I rode ahead to Goodland and prepared for the next six days.

As soon as I sat down to dinner in Goodland, I realized what a dedicated group this was and how seriously they were taking this mission. The pride I felt that with this new association grew every day.

The next several days were grueling. The formation riding proved difficult at times. I can't say enough positive things about the road guards who were over-the-top concerned about everyone's safety. The overall route and platoon leadership was superb.

Along the way, I had the honor of saluting and hugging old Warriors at a VA hospital. I met Gold Star mothers who travel the country in support of Fallen Warriors. I saw thousands of people lining streets, some cheering and waving flags, some standing in quiet reverence with a hand over their heart, some saluting as we passed. I'll never forget the lone older gentleman standing and waving his flag on an overpass in blinding rain and hail with lightning flashing nearby. I hope he knows how much we appreciated him for standing with us. There was the Young Marine saluting as we arrived at the capitol building in West "By God" Virginia. You could feel the emotion when we entered our adopted city of Rainelle, WV, and found nearly the entire population cheering for us. I was astounded to learn that it's a school holiday every time Run For The Wall rides into town. I understand now what my friend meant when he told me about Rainelle during that initial meeting I attended.

As we entered the Washington, D.C. traffic, it seemed as though our formation tightened to keep cars from breaking into the pack. It seemed symbolic of the bond that had formed between the riders. As we stopped in the University parking lot, the pride at making it that far was evident with the cheers, tears, and hugs. "Welcome home!" was the operative statement.

The people with whom I was privileged to ride were some of the most dedicated, loyal, patriotic people I've ever met. It was an honor to stand with them as our wreath was laid at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. It was most certainly my honor and privilege to accompany Vietnam veterans to The Wall.

My trip to D.C. and back covered 11 states, 4334.5 miles and 20 days. I met some of the nicest people imaginable and was witness to many random acts of kindness. I still marvel at the couple in the Lewisburg, WV, Walmart parking lot who helped wrap me in a back support and then prayed for God to grant me safe travel.

As my friend mentioned it would be, this was a life-changing experience. My faith is stronger, my admiration for the devoted and selfless service of all veterans is greater (I never thought that possible!), my love and appreciation for the support of family and friends is undeniable, and my loyalty and love of country will be proudly and unashamedly expressed in greater proportions than ever.

Mission accomplished!

"Welcome home!"

### **THANKS TO MY RFTW FAMILY**

DrZ, SSgt USMC  
1969 – 1978

My brothers and sisters....

I know thanks are not necessary, but I feel I need to say it.

I got into the line to go to The Wall...and turned around multiple times. I couldn't bring myself to walk up to it...or look at the names....or do the things I needed to do for me. But...I received this phone call saying...We are a bit ahead of you...and waiting for you. Now the family who called me know who they are...and I am not going to post their names...but they helped me to make that long walk.

When I got to my family....they walked with me...helping me find my names on The Wall. They gave me strength to complete what I had set out to do. I reached out and touched each name and everything came flooding back. Every time I broke down...my family...and others I call family surrounded me to keep the tourists from snapping pictures of my pain and suffering.

I finished my mission...I read the 91st Psalm at the name on the wall as I had promised one of the vets in a Veteran nursing home. My family was there with me. They fulfilled our saying of never leave a man behind.

So my family ... thank you.

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## **► OUR STORIES**

### **THE JOURNEY BEGINS**

By Chuck "Shadow" Gyurek

It's early morning—the sun is just beginning to show itself. It's day one of RFTW 2013. I looked out across the staging area. So many making last-minute checks of gear and sipping coffee in the early morn hours. The steady

droning of motors fills the air as more arrive—a kind of reassuring sound. Underneath that sound, the conversations one hears bits n pieces of. Then comes the announcement of the morning meeting—the first of many to come.

The pledge of allegiance and a prayer with all participating. Then our briefing. Important info about the day's ride and stops, weather and road and traffic conditions. The caution for all to ride safe and stay focused. Then on to our platoon meeting and a tune-up for the coming day's ride. One can feel the anticipation—a bit of electric in the air. And then the call: five minutes to mount up to ride—which actually means about two minutes.

Helmets, goggles, and sunglasses, sun screen and lip balm on. Mirrors readjusted for the hundredth time. All eyes straining ahead anxiously awaiting our leaders to begin to lead us on a journey of honor and respect. A mission 25 years in the making. RFTW 2013 begins.

We are riding in freedom for those who can't! We ensure that none are forgotten. We begin to roll—slowly at first, then picking up speed. Damn we look good. A sense of pride wells up from deep inside of me. So many here giving of themselves for something greater than themselves. We are off on an adventure few will ever know. We learn of so much. We will learn about ourselves. And will learn about our fellow man and our country. We will make bonds that will last the rest of our life. We will meet patriots we never knew existed. We will grow to love our country even more. We will find that we are not alone, that there are so many more that believe as we do. That until all are accounted for, all are returned home, all are honored—we will not rest.

Yes it's our first day out from Rancho Cucamonga, California and I am so proud and honored to be a part of the 25th anniversary of RFTW. It isn't the wind that is making my eyes tear up . . .

## ► OTHER STORIES

### FORTY YEARS LATER IN A VILLAGE IN VIETNAM

*The documentary, "Unclaimed," is about a lost American soldier with no memory of his past.*

John Hartley Robertson was a ghost of history, an American soldier who vanished in a war that was not supposed to exist. And for 44 years, neither did he. Robertson was shot down over Laos on May 20, 1968, as part of a mission by a special forces unit waging a secret war beyond the borders of Vietnam. The U.S. military listed him as MIA, then in 1976, presumed dead. But a Canadian filmmaker and a Vietnam vet tracked down a man living in a remote Vietnamese village who claims to be Robertson, though he has virtually no memory of his former life, has lost his ability to speak English—and is now married to a Vietnamese woman who rescued him, gave him the identity of her husband, a slain South Vietnamese soldier, and bore him four children.

With *Unclaimed*, Emmy-winning Alberta director Michael Jorgensen follows a bizarre trail into a modern-day heart of darkness, guided by Michigan's Tom Faunce, a traumatized Vietnam War vet obsessed with leaving no man behind, even decades after the war. It climaxes—spoiler alert—as the self-proclaimed MIA is flown to Edmonton for a rendezvous with the sole survivor of Robertson's four siblings, Alabama's Jean Robertson-Holley. (He was unable to enter the U.S.) She instantly confirms he's her brother in a cathartic, tearful reunion.

The documentary raises as many questions as it answers: it suggests Robertson's case is cloaked in an elaborate cover-up by the U.S. military. Jorgensen says the U.S. government first became aware of the man claiming to be Robertson as early as 1991, and tried to verify his identity in 2006. But Robertson's siblings were not informed. Then last year, before the reunion, the filmmaker says he was summoned to a meeting with an official from the U.S. military's Joint Personnel Recovery Agency (JPRA), who told him Robertson's sister and brother

(then deceased) had offered up their DNA for testing. Jean, however, insists no one from the agency ever contacted the family.

And as the plot has thickened, this family of apolitical, devout Baptists have become unlikely whistleblowers. In a tragic twist, two weeks after embracing the man she has no doubt is “Johnny,” and proclaiming “a miracle,” Jean, along with her husband, was seriously injured in a car crash. Her daughter Gail Metcalf, who now represents the family, told *Maclean's* they still haven't heard from the government. “I'm not a conspiracy theorist,” said the retired kindergarten teacher and born-again Christian. “I love my government. I'm not trying to pick a fight. I'm not looking for money or attention. But I don't like being lied about.”

Metcalf attended the April 30 premiere of *Unclaimed* at Hot Docs, North America's largest documentary film festival. And among the 205 titles at the festival's 20th-anniversary edition, it's one that festival organizers expect to make serious waves. Already it has drawn fire from the Pentagon. Contacted by *Maclean's*, a Pentagon spokesperson said the JPRA never contacted Robertson's siblings or claimed to have their DNA. He says a JPRA official met with Jorgensen only at the filmmaker's request.

Jorgensen's film began as a portrait of Faunce, the Vietnam war veteran suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder who found Jesus and vowed to devote his life to humanitarian work. Tipped off by an ex-soldier who knew Robertson, Faunce led the filmmaker to the story. Together they made two trips to Vietnam, with a team that included interpreter Hugh Tran, an Edmonton police officer whose family had fled Saigon in 1981. The man they discover in a remote village seems so transformed by his ordeal, and four decades of living another life, he no longer looks like an American. His gracious, humble bearing seems more like that of a Vietnamese peasant. He tells his story, via an interpreter, of being captured immediately after jumping from a helicopter that crashed during a firefight on a Laos mountaintop. “They locked me up, high in the forest, in a cage,” he says. “I was in and out of consciousness from torture and starvation. The North Vietnamese soldier hit me on the head with a stick, shouting, ‘American!’ Then he would hit me even harder; I thought I would die. I never said anything, though they beat and tortured me.”

He says he escaped after four years, hid in the woods and was found in a field by a woman who nursed him back to health and would become his wife. She registered him as a French-Vietnamese resident named Dan Tan Ngoc, borrowing her late husband's surname and birthdate. Robertson's special-ops unit was so clandestine, its soldiers wore no ID or dog tags, so his old identity evaporated. As for losing his ability to speak English, that's called “second-language syndrome,” according to Martin Mrazik, a psychologist at the University of Alberta interviewed in the film. “It doesn't surprise me,” he says. “The only way he could make sense of the world around him was by talking in Vietnamese.”

During the five days the family spent with their emotionally fragile visitor, his comprehension of English began to come back. And there were dramatic flashes of recognition. On meeting Jean's husband, Henry Holley, Johnny remembered his brother-in-law “worked in the drug store;” no one on the team knew Holley had spent 15 years as a pharmacist. In Vietnam, when shown photos of Robertson's two American daughters, he wept. (According to the filmmaker, the eldest daughter agreed to help confirm his identity after seeing video of him, but a week later, following talks with Gen. Ed Reeder of the U.S. special forces, she changed her mind.)

Faunce's team built a compelling case. They even persuaded their man to have a molar extracted and sent to a U.S. forensics lab, which conducted enamel isotope tests to prove it belonged to someone who grew up in America. Also, Ed Mahoney, a former U.S. soldier trained by Robertson, joined the crew in Vietnam and recognized him immediately. “It was instantaneous,” he told *Maclean's*. Mahoney, 72, was the original catalyst behind the quest. Calling Robertson a “father figure,” he says he spent 21 years searching for him, scouring everything from military records to the Library of Congress.

But you wonder why Robertson's family doesn't just erase all doubt with a DNA test. “It would be like me asking to prove your sibling belonged to you,” says Metcalf. “We don't need it.” She concedes that she'd be

willing to take a DNA test but has never been asked. “The government has never talked to us. I know the naysayers are going to say it’s a scam, and my answer is: why doesn’t he ask for anything?” In fact, the man she calls Johnny was happy to go back to being Ngoc with his Vietnamese family, and seeks no compensation. As for Jorgensen, he doesn’t believe he simply found what he’d hoped to find. “From a dramatic standpoint,” he says, “if that wasn’t him, boy, that would be a very interesting story. So there’s this guy in Vietnam who looks exactly like him, who walks and talks like him? Who is he?”

Metcalf’s family, like that of any MIA, receives annual updates from the military. She says they’ve included 32 bogus claims by men who said they were Robertson—“people in Vietnam trying to making money off this man”—but she says Ngoc’s claim was not among those reports, which she finds “kind of odd.” In 2004, photos of Ngoc first surfaced, and in 2006, U.S. officials subjected him to a marathon interrogation in Vietnam, she says. “He had a lot of paranoia about anyone trying to help him,” she adds, stressing that his siblings should have been informed and invited to come along.

The filmmaker also recounts a cloak-and-dagger scene of his arranged meeting with the JPRA official at the Seattle airport in August 2012. By uncanny coincidence, after landing, Jorgensen talked to Jean for the first time by phone. “She was over the moon that John could be alive,” he recalls, “and she said, ‘I have never heard from the U.S. military.’ ” After hanging up, he says, “there’s a tap on my shoulder and the guy from the JPRA is standing there.” When the official told him that Robertson’s sister and brother had provided their DNA, Jorgensen was shocked because he’d just talked to Jean, and her brother had died the previous month. But he didn’t tip his hand. As for the Pentagon denials, Jorgensen says he has a recording of a phone call to the JPRA official that will prove the military is lying. He adds that a source “very high up” in one of three military agencies that handle MIAs told him: “We all know there are guys there. It’s not like the Vietnamese won’t let them go. We don’t *want* them to come back.”

Curiously, Jorgensen is leaving others to follow up the film’s loose ends. Emblematic of how documentaries have come to adopt the style of dramatic fiction, *Unclaimed* dwells on the emotional narrative. “If I was doing an investigative report,” says the director, “I could shake a lot of bushes, but I was afraid of coming across as conspiratorial. I just don’t think that’s very sticky.” Yet even if the answers are missing, the questions are not about to go away.

## WAR HERO, WORLD WAR II POW DIES

By Patrick Rupinski Business Editor

James H. Henderson served his country in two wars, earned two Purple Hearts and was a prisoner of war in Nazi Germany. Yet when he returned to civilian life, he still felt a need to continue to serve his country.



“When I would speak to people about what it means to be a volunteer at the Tuscaloosa VA, I would use Mr. Henderson as an example of someone with the character and willingness to continue to serve,” said Damon Stevenson, public affairs officer of the Tuscaloosa Veterans Administration Medical Center.

Henderson, a war hero and a longtime volunteer at the medical center, died June 2 at age 88.

Henderson was born in Grove Hill but grew up in Tuscaloosa. After graduating from high school, he joined the United States Army Air Forces in 1943, serving in World War II. He was serving as a machine gunner on a B-24 when the plane was shut down over Germany. He survived by parachuting but was captured and interned at a POW camp near Munich until the end of the war.

In a 2009 interview with The Tuscaloosa News, Henderson recalled that he was on his 28th mission over Germany when his plane was shot down.

He was in the POW camp for about six months and during that time, he lost about 30 pounds. “The thing that was so bad was they starved us to death,” he recalled during the interview.

He said when he tried to motion to his captors that he was hungry, they pointed a gun at his head. He said he never did that again.

When the camp was liberated, Henderson weighed about 90 pounds.

James H. Henderson served his country in two wars, earned two Purple Hearts and was a prisoner of war in Nazi Germany. Yet when he returned to civilian life, he still felt a need to continue to serve his country. “When I would speak to people about what it means to be a volunteer at the Tuscaloosa VA, I would use Mr. Henderson as an example of someone with the character and willingness to continue to serve,” said Damon Stevenson, public affairs officer of the Tuscaloosa Veterans Administration Medical Center.

“The sad thing was, after the war, we discovered that there were about 2 million (POW relief) packages sent to Germany by the Red Cross,” he told The Tuscaloosa News. The packages never got to the prisoners.

During the Korean War, Henderson returned to active duty, He was wounded in battle.

After he left the military, Henderson earned a degree from the University of Alabama and became an educator. Walter Turner, immediate past post commander of VFW Post 6022 in Cottondale, said he met Henderson at one of the post’s National POW-MIA Day remembrance ceremonies.

“He never bragged about his service or being a prisoner of war,” Turner said. “He was very proud of his service to his country. He was a laid back gentleman who was a straight shooter and to the point.”

Stevenson, too, recalled Henderson as a humble man.

“He gave so much to his country but in his mind, he felt the need to continue to serve his fellow veterans as a volunteer,” he said.

At the VA Medical Center, Henderson would serve coffee to patients waiting to see doctors and talk and share stories with the patients, Stevenson said.

“He warmed up to people. He is a man who will be truly missed.”

## **VIETNAM WAR-ERA FILMS UNEARTHED**

Keeping in touch with loved ones fighting on the front lines has changed. These days, military families can use webcams or e-mail. In the past, they turned to home video, and before that, film.

A man in Albuquerque, N.M., found some rare film footage from the Vietnam War era and now, he wants to return those memories to more than 200 families.

In 1968, Sheri Maloy is one of the people captured on film. She was 9 years old when she made a holiday greeting film for her father, a soldier in Vietnam.

The films were sent to New Mexico Air national guardsmen stationed in Vietnam. Art Sena was one of those airmen, and recalls seeing his family's message, all those years ago. He worked with the Air Guard to track down the films, and then got in touch with CBS affiliate KRQE, in Albuquerque.

Jessica Garate, of KRQE News 13, recalled, "We pulled out the projector, and for the first time since 1968, he was able to watch that holiday greeting. You could tell he was just very touched by what he was able to see." Sena wanted to share it with others, and with help from a private donor, was able to get the 16 millimeter films digitized.

Rhoda Weill, of Rolling R Productions, watched all the greetings as she converted the films. "It's just fun to watch," she said. "All the clothes and the hair and some of the funny things they said."

One of the participants told the camera, "And when Danielle gets upset, she walks around the house ... and strokes her brow and 'Wonder where my pills are' to keep me from screaming at her."

Maloy says the footage is priceless. "What goes through my mind is actually when I see my mom in this," she said. "Just hearing her talk and seeing how pretty she looked."

Sena has only found 20 of the families seen in the films. He wants to find the rest, so they can get a piece of their family history. He said, "It just meant so much to me to have my family message here and I know it was important for other families to have that."

[http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-505263\\_162-57585855/vietnam-war-era-films-unearthed-man-attempts-to-reunite-families-with-their-films/](http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-505263_162-57585855/vietnam-war-era-films-unearthed-man-attempts-to-reunite-families-with-their-films/)

## **D-DAY SURVIVOR: POW SHARES STORY**

By Airman 1st Class Tom Brading, Joint Base Charleston Public Affairs Office

During the summer of 1943, Reggie Salisbury was just another country boy from Ridgeville, S.C., spending his childhood on his father's chicken farm hunting, fishing and just being a good old country boy. He was thousands of miles away from the front lines of World War II and the Germans who would eventually take him prisoner.

Salisbury knew it was only a matter of time before he was drafted into the military, so with a sense of patriotism he took it upon himself to enlist. At the age of 18, Salisbury left the southern comfort of his father's farm to serve in the U.S. Army.

"I was always the show off," said Salisbury in regards to his attitude during combat training. "I volunteered for everything: raiders, paratroopers and just about anything to get out there. I was turned down for those, but I was selected to be a Native American Code Talker scout."

The Comanche and other Native American tribes spoke languages unlike anything the Germans had heard before; languages that, if used as codes, were unbreakable. The Americans used these Native American dialects to relay messages on the battlefield. It was Salisbury's job to carry the radio and protect the Native American code talkers, much the same as Nicholas Cage's character depicted in the movie "Windtalkers."

And on that infamous day, June 6, 1944, among the allied troops that bravely stormed the beaches of Normandy, France, were Comanche Code Talkers and their scouts, including Salisbury and Code Talker Charlie Wall.

A British sailor approached Salisbury and Wall on the deck of an old, decrepit shrimp boat chugging towards Omaha Beach on the morning of the invasion. The sailor spit tobacco juice between them into the English Channel and said, "This is going to be your last ride, blokes."

Salisbury could hear the sounds of machine guns firing and explosions coming from the shoreline. The British sailor's 'death sentence still sends chills down Salisbury's spine even today.

Carrying radio equipment and armed with only a pistol, Salisbury and Wall hit Omaha Beach and were immediately met with heavy fire by the Germans. Salisbury saw death all around him, yet he kept his wits despite being bogged down in the muddy and bloody sand. The tide had turned crimson from the blood and fallen service members were being washed ashore. As the chaos of war raged loudly along the French waterfront, Salisbury, the other scouts and the Code Talkers successfully transmitted messages back to commanders.

Salisbury picked up an assault rifle from a fallen soldier and began returning fire. His mind drifted back to his South Carolina home where he learned how to use guns for hunting.

"This wasn't like hunting in South Carolina; I didn't know if I was going to make it out alive that day," said Salisbury. "But really, I didn't have time to think about it. I just stayed low and knew not to look up in the same place twice."

Salisbury survived the D-Day invasion after he and another soldier, also a South Carolina native, had the idea of putting bulldozer blades onto the tanks so the tanks could dig up the hedgerows and clear paths off the beach and out of the killing zone. From there, he and Wall were able to head inland towards the French countryside. But surviving D-Day was just the beginning for Salisbury; the prelude to months of horror and pain. Across a valley, where the 30th Division had set up operations, was a no-man's land where Salisbury and Wall watched two German soldiers out in the open. According to Salisbury, it felt like a trap. Yet, a young officer ordered Salisbury and another scout to lead a patrol to attack the Germans. The patrol followed the two soldiers and eventually came across a group of German soldiers eating inside a small house in the middle of a wheat field. Even though Salisbury expressed his concerns, the officer in charge ignored him and ordered the men to attack the Germans. The Americans opened fire and killed the Germans. The success of the mission, however, was short-lived.

More Germans surrounded the troops and after a brief firefight, the patrol ran out of ammunition. They disassembled their weapons and kneeled into the wheat field to conceal their location.

"The Germans were so close; I just knew they could hear my heart beating," said Salisbury. "I hid in that wheat field with the other Americans, but it wasn't long before we were detected. Charlie also spoke German and he was translating the Germans' orders ... they were yelling, 'Come out with your hands up.'"

Without ammunition and staring down the barrels of enemy rifles, Salisbury accepted the fact he would die on that French field in 1944. He didn't even have time to pray. He just exhaled a single breath into the frigid air and closed his eyes as the German soldiers lifted their weapons at the unarmed men.

Reggie Salisbury, 87-year-old Army veteran and member of the American Ex-Prisoners of War – Lowcountry Chapter, reflects on his military experience at his home in Ridgeville, S.C., Sept. 14, 2012. Salisbury was a scout for a Native American Comanche code talker named Charlie Wall and is a veteran of the Invasion of Normandy and Ex-POW. (U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Tom Brading/Released) Salisbury was ready to die for his country.

"But, before any of us were shot, all I heard was 'Nien! Nien! Nien!'" said Salisbury. "It was one of the German officers yelling 'No' over and over. He had other plans for us."

The Americans were searched by the Germans, stripped of their field jackets, cigarettes and chocolate. Then they were ordered to march with their hands on their heads. Salisbury had no idea where he was marching to. "If any of us slowed down or dropped our hands during the march, we were hit in our backbone with the stock of a German rifle," said Salisbury. "So, I kept walking."

It would turn into a very long walk.

"I was in a group of about 16 POWs," said Salisbury. "We marched for a month across France into Belgium. There were only two German guards watching all of us."

Salisbury thought of escaping, but he knew what would happen to the others if he escaped. All the prisoners knew the rules: if one POW tried escaping, they all died. "We were in it together," said Salisbury. "If we all couldn't leave, then none of us would."

When they got to Belgium, the group was placed with other POWs and crammed so tightly into an old rail boxcar that no one could even sit comfortably. The car's floor was covered with horse manure from a previous shipment, and a small hole covered with barbed wire let some air into the putrid rail car. The men were given a bucket of oats to eat.

They spent seven days on that train before finally stopping and landing the POWs into a world of terror and interrogation. Salisbury was threatened by a Japanese officer for information. However, no matter how hard they tried to extract information, Salisbury endured and never said anything other than what he was trained to say.

"I gave them my name, rank and serial number," said Salisbury. "Other than that, I stayed quiet."

Salisbury was now forced to work, so he volunteered for the groups working outside the prison camp. This gave him an opportunity to meet locals and trade items for food. However, one incident gave him something he still carries with him today: a scar on the top of his forehead.

"I was bringing boxes into a drug store when I noticed the girl working there spoke Polish," said Salisbury. "I don't speak Polish so I asked a guy nearby how to say, 'where can I place the boxes?'" Unfortunately, whatever he told me to say wasn't the question I intended."

The cashier giggled at Salisbury and moments later, a German soldier with the Schutzstaffel insignia, the mark of the dreaded SS, rushed into the store. The SS guard overheard the conversation and was furious with what Salisbury said, although Salisbury had no idea what it was or why it was in bad taste. The SS soldier responded by smashing Salisbury's skull with the stock of his rifle and leaving Salisbury in a pool of his own blood on the floor of the drug store.

"I still have no idea what I said that was so bad," jokes Salisbury.

Like other POWs, Salisbury ate very little food during his imprisonment. Because he worked outside, he continued trading his few rations with locals for items like potatoes, barley and wheat. But toward the end of his imprisonment, food became even scarcer. By the time he was liberated, his body weight had dropped from 160 to 92 pounds.

Salisbury and his Native American brothers-in-arms were eventually freed from German imprisonment as the war began to wind down. They were taken from the prison camp and cleaned up, fed like royalty and given some free time in Europe. As good as it all was, there was only one place Salisbury wanted to be.

“I just wanted to go home,” said Salisbury. “After being a prisoner, the rest of my life fell together like most lives do; I got married, got a career and retired.”

Although he’s lived his life in peace since the war, the images of combat and his experiences as a prisoner were always kept close inside him. For more than 30 years, he never shared his POW story with anyone, including his wife. Yet, he unburied his past on a snowy night in 1973 when the television aired images of POWs from Vietnam coming home to America. Salisbury was overcome with emotion. He opened up to his wife and told her his life as a POW.

“Since I told my wife that night, I have been active about sharing my story with others,” said Salisbury. “It’s important to remember the sacrifices made by all of our military veterans.”

## **FIVE DECADES AS A POW**

By Alastair Gale

SEOUL—Yoo Young-bok's worn hands and gnarled fingernails are the only visual clues of his 47 years spent working in North Korean mines.

Mr. Yoo, 82 years old, is one of an estimated 24,000 South Korean prisoners-of-war that North Korea didn't repatriate after the signing of the Korean War armistice, 60 years ago in July. Most were put to work in mines in the north of the country, where many died. A few hundred are thought to still be alive in North Korea.

Mr. Yoo, who escaped the North in 2000, is one of a few voices campaigning for increased efforts to free those still detained. He tells his own life story and talks about those left behind at college events and with other groups such as government workers.

"Why should young people join the military if they know that South Korea doesn't put efforts into bringing back prisoners?" he says. In South Korea, men are required to serve around two years in the military.

The South Korean government says the issue of detained POWs has been raised repeatedly with North Korea, including after summit meetings between the heads of state in 2000 and 2007. On Monday, the Foreign Affairs Committee of South Korea's National Assembly passed a resolution calling on North Korea to return all surviving war prisoners.

The North refuses to acknowledge the existence of any POWs. Defectors from the North say the prisoners were considered as liberated fighters corrupted by the South and subjected to surveillance and discrimination.

A Seoul-based group recently published the addresses of 113 POWs that it says remain in the far north-east of the country, based on information it says comes from defectors and other sources within North Korea.

Prospects for progress in securing the release of the POWs or the almost 2,000 other South Koreans officially recognized by Seoul as abductees held in the North, remain grim. Relations between North and South Korea have deteriorated sharply this year following the North's February nuclear test, closure of a jointly run industrial park and threats of war.

But at the same time, human-rights issues in North Korea, including abductions of foreign nationals, are getting more attention following the establishment of a United Nations inquiry into human-rights abuses in North Korea in March.

Mr. Yoo's own story is one of cruel twists of fate and stubborn survival instincts. Trapped in Seoul in June 1950 when the North invaded, he was press-ganged into the North Korean army.

He deserted soon after and spent two years in South Korean prisons because he fought for the North. On his release he was drafted into the South Korean army and posted to a frontline position. Just over a month before the armistice was signed he was captured in an ambush by Chinese troops sent to support the North Korean army.

Along with other POWs, Mr. Yoo was sent to work in mines in North Korea doing jobs such as pushing carts and drilling in treacherous conditions. Deaths from cave-ins, suffocation and exhaustion were nearly daily occurrences, he recalls.

"As well as the physical hardship, the mental toll was punishing as we lost hope of returning to the South," he says.

At the North-South border in 2012, Yoo Young-bok wrote on a pink ribbon, 'I wish for peaceful unification.' Mr. Yoo recounts the biggest blow to the POWs was North Korea's move to conceal their identity by giving them all North Korean citizenship in 1956. He survived by training to be a surveyor, a job that would eventually help him avoid much of the hard physical labor that others endured.

Other than hearing difficulties compounded by blasting work in the mines, Mr. Yoo appears in good health despite struggling through the mid-1990's famine in the North.

Mr. Yoo raised a family in the North, but his wife died in 1994 and after his children moved out he decided to take the great risk of trying to escape through China after hearing stories of others making it out of the country.

His daughter introduced him to a guide, who led Mr. Yoo as part of a group on a weeklong journey to the Chinese border, bribing policemen and security officials along the way to avoid detection. An exhausted Mr. Yoo crossed the Tumen River near the town of Musan into China on the night of July 27, 2000.

In China, Mr. Yoo was met by his stepbrother, who brought him to Seoul. Waiting at the airport was his 94-year-old father and the rest of his family, who had long thought he'd died.

Since 1994, a total of 80 POWs have made it back to South Korea from the North by their own efforts and those of their families. Most require the use of brokers, who charge thousands of dollars to bring defectors to the South. Some have been forcibly returned to North Korea after being caught in China.

Those that remain will be into their 80s, like Mr. Yoo. Some may not want to go through the upheaval of return. But for those that have even a little chance of seeing their families in the South again, Mr. Yoo and human-rights groups continue to push for more pressure on North Korea.

"To be forgotten is worse than dying," Mr. Yoo wrote in a book about his life.

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## ► VA NEWS

### NEW VA FORM FOR CLAIM DENIAL

The VA has a new form for veterans who have applied for a VA benefit claim and been denied. This resource will create a letter stating that you disagree with the VA rating decision about your claim and that you want to appeal the decision to the Board of Veterans Appeals.

If you disagree with the rating decision you can write a statement to your local VA office saying that you disagree and you want to appeal the decision to the Board of Veterans' Appeals. This statement is called a Notice of Disagreement (NOD).

You must send your NOD within one (1) year of the date your local VA office mailed you its original decision denying your claim.

This is an easy-to-use form that you can fill out online. The program will create a letter and instructions. All you need to do is:

1. Answer a few simple questions.
2. Print out your form (letter and instructions).
3. Proofread and sign it.
4. Make copies for your own records.
5. Send the original to your Regional Department of Veterans Affairs Office.
6. Send this letter and all other letters to the VA by registered mail with a return receipt request.

<http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21-0958-ARE.pdf>

## VETERAN LEGISLATION

*Legislation can be followed at <http://thomas.loc.gov/bss/d111/sponlst.html>.*

**H.R.32 -Military Surviving Spouses Equity Act.**A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to repeal the requirement for reduction of survivor annuities under the Survivor Benefit Plan for military surviving spouses to offset the receipt of veterans dependency and indemnity compensation.

Sponsor: Rep Wilson, Joe [SC-2] (introduced 1/3/2013) Related Bills: S.734

Committees: House Armed Services

Latest Major Action: 1/3/2013 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the House Committee on Armed Services.

To support this bill and/or contact your legislators send a message via:

<http://capwiz.com/moaa/issues/bills/?bill=62315971> or

[http://capwiz.com/dav/issues/alert/?alertid=62626651&queueid=\[capwiz:queue\\_id\]](http://capwiz.com/dav/issues/alert/?alertid=62626651&queueid=[capwiz:queue_id])

**H.R. 154 - V.A. Public Service Vet Medal.**A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to establish a Department of Veterans Affairs Medal for Distinguished Public Service to honor veterans who make remarkable and distinguished contributions to their communities. Sponsor: Rep McIntyre, Mike [NC-7] (introduced 1/4/2013) Committees: House Veterans' Affairs Latest Major Action: 1/11/2013 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs.

**H.R. 164 - Disabled Vet Space A Travel.** A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to permit veterans who have a service-connected, permanent disability rated as total to travel on military aircraft in the same manner and to the same extent as retired members of the Armed Forces entitled to such travel.

Sponsor: Rep Bilirakis, Gus M. [FL-12] (introduced 1/4/2013) Related Bills: S.346

Committees: House Armed Services

Latest Major Action: 1/4/2013 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the House Committee on Armed Services.

**H.R. 257 - Veterans Health Equity Act of 2013.**A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to ensure that veterans in each of the 48 contiguous States are able to receive services in at least one full-service hospital of the Veterans Health Administration in the State or receive comparable services provided by contract in the State.

Sponsor: Rep Shea-Porter, Carol [NH-1] (introduced 1/15/2013)

Committees: House Veterans' Affairs

Latest Major Action: 1/22/2013 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Health.

**H.R.288 - CHAMPVA Children's Protection Act of 2013.**A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to increase the maximum age for children eligible for medical care under the CHAMPVA program.

Sponsor: Rep Michaud, Michael H. [ME-2] (introduced 1/15/2013)

Committees: House Veterans' Affairs

Latest Major Action: 1/15/2013 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

To support this bill and/or contact your legislators send a message via

<http://capwiz.com/moaa/issues/bills/?bill=62338091>

**H.R. 293 - Army Combat Action Badge Eligibility Expansion.**A bill to expand retroactive eligibility of the Army Combat Action Badge to include members of the Army who participated in combat during which they personally engaged, or were personally engaged by, the enemy at any time on or after December 7, 1941.

Sponsor: Rep Nugent, Richard B. [FL-11] (introduced 1/15/2013)

Committees: House Armed Services

Latest Major Action: 1/15/2013 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the House Committee on Armed Services.

**H.R. 303 - Retired Pay Restoration Act.**A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to permit additional retired members of the Armed Forces who have a service-connected disability to receive both disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs for their disability and either retired pay by reason of their years of military service or Combat-Related Special Compensation and to eliminate the phase-in period under current law with respect to such concurrent receipt.

Sponsor: Rep Bilirakis, Gus M. [FL-12] (introduced 1/15/2013) Related Bills: S.234

Committees: House Armed Services; House Veterans' Affairs

Latest Major Action: 1/15/2013 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the Committee on Armed Services, and in addition to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

To support this bill and/or contact your legislators send a message via

[http://capwiz.com/dav/issues/alert/?alertid=62354151&queueid=\[capwiz:queue\\_id\]](http://capwiz.com/dav/issues/alert/?alertid=62354151&queueid=[capwiz:queue_id])

**H.R. 333 - Disabled Veterans Tax Termination Act.**A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to permit retired members of the Armed Forces who have a service-connected disability rated less than 50 percent to receive concurrent payment of both retired pay and veterans' disability compensation, to eliminate the phase-in period for concurrent receipt, to extend eligibility for concurrent receipt to chapter 61 disability retirees with less than 20 years of service, and for other purposes.

Sponsor: Rep Bishop, Sanford D., Jr. [GA-2] (introduced 1/22/2013)

Committees: House Armed Services; House Veterans' Affairs

Latest Major Action: 1/22/2013 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the Committee on Armed Services, and in addition to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

**H.R.369 - Reducing Barriers to Veterans' Benefits Act.**A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to establish a presumption of service connection for certain veterans with tinnitus or hearing loss.

Sponsor: Rep Benishek, Dan [MI-1] (introduced 1/23/2013)

Committees: House Veterans' Affairs

Latest Major Action: 1/23/2013 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

**H.R.386 - Homes for Heroes Act of 2013.**A bill to provide housing assistance for very low-income veterans. Sponsor: Rep Green, Al [TX-9] (introduced 1/23/2013) Related Bills:H.R.384

Committees: House Financial Services; House Ways and Means

Latest Major Action: 1/23/2013 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

**H.R.569 - Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2013.**A bill to increase, effective as of December 1, 2013, the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans, and for other purposes.

Sponsor: Rep Runyan, Jon [NJ-3] (introduced 2/6/2013) Related Bills: H.R.570, S.893

Committees: House Veterans' Affairs

Latest Major Action: 2/6/2013 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

**H.R.570 - American Heroes COLA Act.** A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for annual cost-of-living adjustments to be made automatically by law each year in the rates of disability compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for survivors of certain service-connected disabled veterans.

Sponsor: Rep Runyan, Jon [NJ-3] (introduced 2/6/2013) Related Bills: H.R.569, S.893

Committees: House Veterans' Affairs.

Latest Major Action: 5/22/2013 Referred to Senate committee. Status: Received in the Senate and Read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

### **H.R. 1494 – New Agent Orange Bill**

Rep. Chris Gibson (N.Y.) introduced the “Blue Water Navy Ship Accountability Act” (H.R. 1494) that requires the United States Army and DoD’s Joint Services Records Research Center (JSRRC) to do a comprehensive search to determine which ships operated on the inland waterways of Vietnam between January 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975. Service members serving on those ships would be eligible for a presumption of Agent Orange exposure when filing a disability claim with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

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## **▶ OTHER NEWS**

### **ENDING VETERAN HOMELESSNESS**

At the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans conference in Washington D.C. in June, Arizona was recognized by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan as one of only two states in the nation on track to end veteran homelessness by 2015. Madison Street Veterans Association has been an integral part of this mission. They recognized early that there would be an influx of homeless women veterans with the recent advent of women in combat. To that end, MSVA opened up a separate, secure homeless Women Veterans Transitional Living Center this year.

## **HIRING MISSION**

JPMorgan Chase leads the charge to employ 100,000 U.S. military veterans by 2020. More than 1 million service members are projected to transition out of the military by 2016—a statistic that JPMorgan Chase & Co. considers an opportunity. In 2011, with 10 other private sector companies, the company launched the 100,000 Jobs Mission, with a goal of hiring 100,000 veterans by 2020. In just two years, 64,628 transitioning U.S. service members and military veterans had found jobs through the program.

What began with 11 companies — JPMorgan Chase plus AT&T; Briardridge Financial Solutions Inc.; Cisco Systems Inc.; Cushman & Wakefield Inc.; EMC Corp.; Iron Mountain Inc.; Modis; NCR Corp.; Universal Health Services Inc.; and Verizon Communications Inc. — has grown to 102 companies and evolved into a stable, ongoing initiative to hire veterans and share best practices.

## **STOLEN VALOR ACT**

President Obama signed the bill that makes it a crime to wear medals or make a false claim that you are a hero if you are doing it to accept remuneration of any kind. The last Stolen Valor act was ruled unconstitutional because it interfered with freedom of speech. This Stolen Valor act makes it clear that if you are going to accept any form of gain from it, then it is a crime.

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## **► EVENTS**

### **OFFICIAL RFTW REUNION**

**July 26-28**

**Colorado Springs**

The official 2013 RFTW Reunion will be in Colorado Springs, on the last weekend in July.

Doubletree Hotel  
1775 East Cheyenne Mountain Blvd.  
Colorado Springs, Colorado  
1-719-576-8900

For all Central and Southern Route participants. Mountain rides planned, great weather, fun, fellowship, reacquaint, reminisce, Garden of the Gods, USAir Force Academy, Pikes Peak, and more!  
Make hotel reservations here <http://tinyurl.com/RFTWReunion2013>.

You can register through the STORE on the main RFTW website, as well as make your hotel reservations via a link from there.

Registration Fee is \$45, which gets you into the Friday night hosted Happy Hour, access to all the Rides setup for the Reunion and the Saturday evening Gala Dinner and Riders/Board of Directors Meeting.  
<http://rftw.org/store/shopdisplayproducts.asp?search=yes&bc=no&catalogid=56>

## **CRIPPLE CREEK**

### **21st Annual Salute to American Veterans Rally**

Cripple Creek, Colorado

August 16 - 18, 2013

<http://www.theveteransrally.org/>

## **ANGEL FIRE REUNION**

### **August 30 - September 1, 2013 - Labor Day Weekend**

Angel Fire/Eagle Nest, NM

Book your own rooms

Friday night: Social hour in Eagle Nest

Saturday: Brick Laying Service Project, lunch at noon.

Saturday night: Dinner in Eagle Nest and Riders Meeting with some RFTW Board Members.

Sunday morning: Church service at Memorial Chapel

In addition to reuniting and reminiscing, RFTW Riders lay individual bricks, unit bricks, and Medal of Honor recipient bricks on the grounds of the Angel Fire Vietnam Memorial on the Saturday of the reunion. This is a project that RFTW has adopted and is welcomed by the David Westphall Veterans Foundation.

## **KERRVILLE, TX REUNION**

### **September 27-29**

YO Ranch Resort Hotel - Kerrville, TX

2033 Sidney Baker

Kerrville, TX 78028

[www.yoresort.com](http://www.yoresort.com)

(877) 967-3767

Room Rates: \$92.00

Booking Code: RFTW0913

RV Accommodations

Kerrville-Schreiner Park

(830) 257-5392

Buckhorn off I-10

(800) 568-6458

Contact Janice Wentworth (214) 906-5357

Or email [stitchnbitch1@earthlink.net](mailto:stitchnbitch1@earthlink.net) for more details.

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► **BRINGING THEM HOME**

**LETTER FROM BOWE BERGDAHL**

June 30 marked four years since the capture in Afghanistan of POW Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl.

Bergdahl's family recently received a letter from the captured Idaho soldier. His mother and father issued a statement on Thursday saying they've received a letter they are confident was written by their son. In the statement, Bob and Jani Bergdahl say the letter, delivered through the International Committee of the Red Cross, gives them hope that their son is doing as well as can be expected, under the circumstances. They thanked the Red Cross for its help and support -- and renewed their plea for his captors to release him. They asked that Bowe's captors consider their plea to release him, "but in the meantime, we ask that you please continue to keep him in good health and allow him to keep corresponding with us."

"We have received a letter from Bowe through the Red Cross," his father told a family friend. "He was scripted and redacted but he was no doubt alive and his faculties fully functioning as of two months ago. They are being very careful with him. He is still highly valued at high levels."

The last update of any kind the family received was video released by the Taliban in May 2011. The Taliban is believed to be holding him in northwestern Pakistan. Bowe and his family are longtime residents of Wood River Valley, Idaho.

The Taliban first demanded \$1 million and the release of 21 Afghan prisoners and Aafia Siddiqui in exchange for Bergdahl's release. They are now offering to trade Bergdahl for the release of five Taliban senior operatives being held in Gitmo.

## **CHOSIN RESERVOIR KIA IDENTIFIED**

U.S. Army Master Sgt. Olen Berry Williams of Clanton finally received the memorial service and burial with full military honors he never had after perishing in the Korean War in the 1950s.

Master Sgt. Olen Berry Williams, a highly decorated non-commissioned officer who served 10 years in the military and saw combat action during both WWII and the Korean war, died during the Battle of Chosin Reservoir in North Korea. He was declared missing in action Dec. 12, 1960 and was positively identified in April 2013.

Williams never married and never had children of his own. He enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1940 at the age of 27, having previously worked on the family's farm and in a lumber mill. The last of his 15 siblings died in 1998.

Of the 3,288 U.S. Army soldiers who were attacked in the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir, 2,504 soldiers, including Sgt. Williams, were listed as MIA. His unidentified remains were discovered on the eastern side of the Chosin Reservoir and were repatriated by the Chinese government on September 15, 1954. His remains were buried alongside many other unidentified servicemen at the National Military Cemetery in Hawaii.

In 2012 his case was reopened. After using forensic identification tools and biographical information, on April 2, 2013, a positive match was made confirming the remains were those of Master Sgt. Williams.

Sgt. Williams is survived by nieces and nephews. He was buried next to his parents and younger sister.

## **SAILOR MISSING FROM VIETNAM WAR ACCOUNTED FOR**

The Department of Defense announced April 30 that it has found the body of Navy Lt. Dennis W. Peterson, of Huntington Park, who has been unaccounted for since the SH-3A helicopter he piloted crashed in Ha Nam

Province, North Vietnam, in 1967. Four servicemen took off from the USS Hornet aboard an SH-3A Sea King helicopter, on a search and rescue mission looking for a downed pilot in Ha Nam Province, North Vietnam. During the mission, an enemy concealed 37mm gun position targeted the helicopter as it flew in. The helicopter was hit by the anti-aircraft gunfire, causing the aircraft to lose control, catch fire and crash, killing all four servicemen.

Peterson was buried at Arlington National Cemetery May 2 along with the other crew members aboard his aircraft: Ensign Donald P. Frye of Los Angeles; Aviation Antisubmarine Warfare Technicians William B. Jackson of Stockdale, Texas; and Donald P. McGrane of Waverly, Iowa.

In 1982, after the war was over, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam repatriated some soldier remains, which U.S. officials identified as Frye, Jackson, and McGrane in 2009. In 1993, a joint U.S./S.R.V. team, investigated a loss in Ha Nam Province. The team interviewed local villagers who identified possible burial sites linked to the loss. One local claimed to have buried two of the crewmen near the wreckage, but indicated that both graves had subsequently been exhumed.

Between 1994 and 2000, three joint U.S./S.R.V. teams excavated the previous site and recovered human remains and aircraft wreckage that correlated to the crew's SH-3A helicopter. In 2000, U.S. personnel excavated the crash site recovering additional remains. Analysis from the Joint POW/MIA Command Central Identification Laboratory subsequently designated these additional remains as the co-mingled remains of all four crewmen, including Peterson.

## **WWII SOLDIER IDENTIFIED**

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced June 14 that the remains of a U.S. serviceman, who was lost during World War II, have been identified and will be buried with full military honors.

Army Staff Sgt. James M. McKain, of Philadelphia, PA, was buried June 20 in Arlington National Cemetery.

On May 7, 1944, McKain was aboard a B-24D Liberator that departed Nadzab, New Guinea, on a bombing mission. Due to mechanical troubles, the B-24D was delayed in departing the airbase and was unable to join the formation after takeoff. Neither McKain, nor the nine other crewmen aboard the plane were seen after takeoff. In 1946, the War Department declared all ten men to be presumed dead.

In 1973, an official from the Papua New Guinea Forest Department reported finding a wartime aircraft in the mountains northwest of the city of Lae. In October 1973, a team from the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) responded to the report and visited the site, where they found aircraft wreckage that corresponded to a U.S. military B-24D. The RAAF recovered possible human remains, which were transferred to the U.S. Army Mortuary in Tachikawa, Japan. Given the limited technology at the time, the remains could not be individually identified. In 1974, the remains of the crew were buried as a group at Arlington National Cemetery.

In April 2008, a Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) team investigated and surveyed the crash site. The team recovered additional remains and aircraft wreckage, including a radio call sign data plate that matched the crews B-24D.

To identify the remains, scientists from JPAC and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory used circumstantial evidence and forensic identification tools such as dental comparisons and mitochondrial DNA, which matched McKain's niece, grand-niece, and grand-nephew.

## **SOLDIER MIA FROM VIETNAM WAR IDENTIFIED**

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced on June 25 that a soldier missing from the Vietnam War has been accounted for.

Army Spc. 5 John L. Burgess, of Sutton Bay, Mich., was the crew chief of a UH-1H Iroquois helicopter that crashed in BinhPhuoc Province, South Vietnam. Also killed in the crash were 1st Lt. Leslie F. Douglas Jr., of Verona, Miss.; 1st Lt. Richard Dyer, of Central Falls, R.I.; and Sgt. 1st Class Juan Colon-Diaz, of Comerio, Puerto Rico. Another crew member, Pfc. John Goosman, survived the crash and was rescued. Remains representing Dyer, Colon-Diaz, and Burgess, were buried as a group in a single casket on July 2 at Arlington National Cemetery.

On June 30, 1970, while on a command and control mission, the helicopter was struck by enemy fire, causing it to crash. Shortly thereafter, friendly forces recovered remains of Douglas, Colon-Diaz, and Dyer. The three men were individually identified and buried with full military honors. At that time, no remains were attributed to Burgess.

From 1992 to 2012, more than a dozen joint U.S./Socialist Republic of Vietnam (S.R.V.) teams investigated the case, in BinhPhuoc Province, recovering human remains, personal effects, military equipment, and aircraft wreckage associated with this loss.

Burgess was accounted for using forensic and circumstantial evidence.

## **AIR FORCE MAJOR IDENTIFIED**

Major Luis F. Guillerman, USAFR, from PA, listed as MIA on April 30, 1968, in Laos. His remains were returned on February 14, 2006, and identified on May 13, 2013.

Lt.Colonel Robert Pietsch and Maj. Luis Guillerman were flying an A26A aircraft over Laos when their plane was downed in Savannakhet Province, Laos. Their last known location was about 10 miles east of the city of BanMuong Sen. He served with 606th Air Commando SQDN, 56th Air Commando Wing, 7th AF.

## **AIR FORCE LT COL IDENTIFIED**

Lt Colonel Robert Pietsch, USAF, from OH, listed as missing in Laos in the same incident as Major Luis F. Guillerman on April 30, 1968. His remains were recovered August 2, 2006 and identified May 7, 2013. He served with 606th Air Commando SQDN, 56th Air Commando Wing, 7th AF.

## **POW/MIACOMMITTEE PROPOSED**

Representative Michelle Bachman (R-MN), introduced **H. Resolution 231**, requiring “a select committee to be known as the Select Committee on POW and MIA Affairs” to be formed. This Select Committee would be charged to “*conduct a full investigation of all unresolved matters relating to any United States personnel unaccounted for from the Vietnam era, the Korean conflict, World War II, Cold War Missions, Persian Gulf War, Operation Iraqi Freedom, or Operation Enduring Freedom, including MIAs and POWs missing and captured.*” If formed, this select committee would be empowered to hold hearings, hire staff and conduct interviews for the remainder of the 113th Congress, i.e. for two years until the next election is held for the House of Representatives.

## **DPMO DIRECTOR VISITS SOUTHEAST ASIA**

In mid-May, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (DASD) for POW/Missing Personnel Affairs Montague Winfield visited Vietnam (including a field recovery site), Laos and Cambodia for talks with senior officials in each country. Assuming that points raised in each country were those prepared in advance, DASD Winfield's visit was useful in reinforcing the importance that US officials, in particular the POW/MIA accounting community, and the American people attach to achieving longstanding League accounting objectives. DASD Winfield stopped briefly at JPAC Headquarters in Hawaii en route home. The League looks forward to a full report at our 44th Annual Meeting.

## **OPERATIONS IN VIETNAM**

JPAC launched an Advance Team on May 10th to make preparations for the main body that arrived to conduct operations on May 20 and will continue to conduct recovery operations at five sites, plus one underwater recovery, until June 22, meaning three RTs and two Vietnamese Recovery Teams (VRTs) working at five different locations in southern provinces. The previously scheduled Investigation Team (IT) was canceled, and then partially restored; even the Research Investigation Team (RIT) was reduced in scope and attributed to a lack of JPAC funding. That shortage was temporarily corrected with the Continuing Resolution at FY13 levels. Due to a freeze on hiring and potential furloughs, it is important for Congress to be asked to ensure reliable funding for JPAC operations. JPAC also hosted a senior Vietnamese Ministry of Public Security (MPS) delegation that was en route back to Vietnam after completing its program in DC at the invitation of the CIA. Another month-long JPAC mission, involving six RTs and two ITs, is scheduled August 5–September 7.

## **MIA WORK 'ACUTELY DYSFUNCTIONAL'**

By Robert Burns, The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon's effort to account for tens of thousands of Americans missing in action from foreign wars is so inept, mismanaged and wasteful that it risks descending from "dysfunction to total failure," according to an internal study suppressed by military officials.

Largely beyond the public spotlight, the decades-old pursuit of bones and other MIA evidence is sluggish, often duplicative and subjected to too little scientific rigor, the report says.

The Associated Press obtained a copy of the internal study after Freedom of Information Act requests for it by others were denied.

The report paints a picture of a Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, a military-run group known as JPAC and headed by a two-star general, as woefully inept and even corrupt. The command is digging up too few clues on former battlefields, relying on inaccurate databases and engaging in expensive "boondoggles" in Europe, the study concludes.

In North Korea, the JPAC was snookered into digging up remains between 1996 and 2000 that the North Koreans apparently had taken out of storage and planted in former American fighting positions, the report said. Washington paid the North Koreans hundreds of thousands of dollars to "support" these excavations.

Some recovered bones had been drilled or cut, suggesting they had been used by the North Koreans to make a lab skeleton. Some of those remains have since been identified, but their compromised condition added time and expense and "cast doubt over all of the evidence recovered" in North Korea, the study said. This practice of "salting" recovery sites was confirmed to the AP by one U.S. participant.

JPAC's leaders authorized the study of its inner workings, but the then-commanding general, Army Maj. Gen. Stephen Tom, disavowed it and suppressed the findings when they were presented by the researcher last year. Now retired, Tom banned its use "for any purpose," saying the probe went beyond its intended scope. His deputy concurred, calling it a "raw, uncensored draft containing some contentious material."

The AP obtained two internal memos describing the decision to bury the report. The memos raised no factual objections but said the command would not consider any of the report's findings or recommendations.

The failings cited by the report reflect one aspect of a broader challenge to achieving a uniquely American mission — accounting for the estimated 83,348 service members still listed as missing from World War II, Korea and Vietnam.

## **POW/MIA REPORT**

As of June 22, there are now **1,645** personnel listed by the Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) as missing and unaccounted-for from the Vietnam War. The number of Americans announced by DPMO as returned and identified since the end of the Vietnam War in 1975 is now **937**. Another 63 US personnel, recovered by the US and I.D'd before the end of the war, bring the official total of remains repatriated from the Vietnam War to 1,000. Of the 1,646 missing for personnel, 90% were lost in Vietnam or in areas of Cambodia and Laos under Vietnam's wartime control: Vietnam-1,276 (VN-469, VS-807); Laos-310; Cambodia-53; PRC territorial waters-7; 450+ over-water losses are on DPMO's list as No Further Pursuit.

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## **► ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **NEED KIA INFO**

Moms, dads, wives, husbands of our Killed In Action: please send me your name, the name of your loved one (rank, branch of service), where they were Killed In Action, and the date. Also include whether you will be in Rancho Cucamonga. Email the info to me at [doug@lyvere.com](mailto:doug@lyvere.com).

I will be sending you individual letters explaining why I'd like this info.

Doug Lyvere  
SgtMaj, Marine, Ret.

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## **► SICK CALL**

Our thoughts and prayers are with the following riders:

**Dave "Timberwoof" Roy**, Crestline, CA is recovering from injuries suffered when a car pulled out in front of him. He was thrown 25 feet from his motorcycle and spent days in the trauma center. He broke his left hand (5 fractures), right clavicle, had a contused lung/heart and severely injured right leg.

Jack “Chief” Brammer had emergency spinal surgery April 18. He had a mass pushing against the spinal cord and lost leg motion. He is now walking a little distance with a walker. Chief was disappointed that he wasn’t able to drive the SR merchandise truck this year, but he was at the dinner in Rancho to see everyone off.

Hector Castenada, Don McAfee, and Cruzerr and his son Michael Garcia were in an accident near Wentzville, MO on May 20 when a car veered into the RFTW pack. Hector is recovering after suffering a compressed disc in his back and compound fracture of his right leg. Don was seriously injured and had several surgeries and may need more. Cruzerr and Michael had minor injuries.

David Trunks Gladwill is recovering from a torn rotator cuff when he dropped his bike on the Run.

## ► TAPS

### Jim Huggins



*Jim Huggins (on scooter) on this year's RFTW with his wife Joyce and fellow VVA 785 buddies John Baca (MOH) and Bill Mimiaga ("Monsoon"), Lew, and Allen*

Jim was a Navy Seabee, 100 % disabled. He was a member and past president of VVA Chapter 785, as well as a member of the VFW, American Legion, and DAV, and was a great advocate for veterans and their families in need. He was a master craftsman in civilian life. Jim and his wife Joyce supported VVA's "Mobile Waterpoint" in RFTW for nine years. He was a quiet, unassuming veteran who always had a kind word for everyone. He loved RFTW, his family, and fellow veterans. He will be missed.

From Bill "Monsoon" Mimiaga: Aloha All. Word has reached most of you of the passing of our personal friend and longtime VVA Chapter 785 Member Jim Huggins on May 29. He made his last "mission" to "the Wall" on the 25th Anniversary of the "Run For The Wall" and as stated by Joyce...this is what he especially wanted to do for the entire year. It was a great journey for Jim and Joyce and their two Veteran drivers, Lew and Allen. We saw Jim everyday as he was greeted by fellow brothers who stopped by his buggy to welcome him home, talk story and break bread together. This last Sunday we saw Jim and Joyce off in DC as they were headed to the Quantico Museum and then a leisurely drive backhome to California.

The van was pulled off the Interstate, just beyond Gallup on the Navajo Road, because Jim was having difficulty breathing. By the time the paramedics arrived, Jim had passed.

Joyce will have Jim cremated and per his wishes he will be buried at sea with many of his fellow "Band of Brothers and Sisters," a proud Navy tradition that Jim respected.

Jimmie will be missed...."Fair Winds and Following Seas" be always at your back shipmate on your final journey to Valhalla. God Bless Joyce and family as Jim is now cradled in the Lord's arms.

*VVA 975 held a memorial for Jim in June.*

## **Marty “Mudbug” Robertson**

Marty Mudbug Robertson of New Mexico recently passed away from a massive heart attack in his living room. Pat Badger Robertson advised that he was not feeling well when he woke. There was nothing EMS could do. They advised that Mudbug went quick. Please keep Pat Badger Robertson and the family in your prayers. God Bless You, Marty Mudbug Robertson. You will be forever missed.

## **► CLOSING THOUGHTS**

Here are a few of the many videos available of this year’s RFTW:

Jacksonville Mississippi

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=10200223807336554&set=vb.1193529563&type=2&theater>

Arriving at Casino 66 in NM for fuel:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/484603721565339/?fref=ts>

Arriving at Red Rock Park in Gallup, NM:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9w2lM7N\\_NuY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9w2lM7N_NuY)

Rolling Thunder

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=p901JA0s2pU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=p901JA0s2pU)

Mission Complete” by Jon "Weasel" Meleshenko

<http://vimeo.com/67031994?ref=nf>

An excellent background on the Kentucky Vietnam Veterans Memorial

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/484603721565339/?fref=ts>

Leaving Wentzville, MO

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T3crq32f\\_qo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T3crq32f_qo)

On the way back from RFTW, Don “Bullet” Pierce was looking up a friend in Loraine TX and ran into someone who knew his friend. Turned out the guy he accidentally ran into, Doyle “Shady” Mitchell, was a musician and when his noticed Don’s Road Guard sticker, told him that years ago he wrote a song about RFTW! How’s that for a coincidental meeting? Here’s the song:

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



***You Are Not Forgotten***



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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: \_\_\_\_\_ 2013

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.