

## RUN FOR THE WALL

### Quarterly Newsletter

*“We Ride For Those Who Can’t”*

October 2014

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## THE EDITOR’S NOTES

Judy “Velcro” Lacey

In October the national Point-in-Time Survey (PIT) was conducted all over the U.S. These surveys are carried out twice a year for the purpose of counting homeless veterans. In Mohave County, where I live, we had teams in each city who scoured places where the homeless are usually found. The volunteers were members of our local veterans organizations.



It’s not an easy task, searching under bridges, behind bushes, in alleyways for people who don’t want to be found. We received training on how to approach the homeless, which questions to ask and which not to ask. If

the person is skittish or fearful, don't push—just sit and chat. We were told to be friendly and kind, and to assure them that what we were doing would help them in the end—because the purpose of the survey was to hopefully get more funds from the VA for housing for homeless veterans. Money is doled out based on how many homeless are found in each city, so it's vitally important to find every single homeless veteran. If we count more homeless vets this time than the time before, we would receive more HUD-VASH vouchers for housing.

It was worth the effort, and the scratches and bruises from foraging around the desert, because our homeless count qualified our county for 13 more vouchers. That's 13 more veterans who can sleep in a bed in a warm place with water and toilets, 13 more who can take a shower when they want, 13 more who won't have to fear being roused by the police to "move on!"

There is so much more that needs to be done for our veterans. Are you helping?

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

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Ken "Wish" Hargrove

Almost feel panic as every week goes by, as every month goes by. Almost feel elation as the mental countdown clock ticks away towards another Run drawing near. 'Elation' as the Mission beckons and 'Panic' as I realize the magnitude of what we are about to pull off and I watch all of the flurry of activity going on behind the scenes by Route Coordinators, Road Guard Captains, Advance team Captains, Platoon leadership, state coordinators, fundraising event organizers, Hotel negotiations, meal coordination, gas stop coordination, LEO communication and coordination and rider communications.

"Stoney," "EZ," and "Tumbleweed" are marshalling their resources, engaging their leadership teams and orchestrating the beginnings of RFTW 2015. Our Arlington National Cemetery interaction is once again assured for 2015 (thanks "Road King"). The major metropolitan areas we traverse are well into the planning stages and step-by-step choreography (bet you never thought you'd see "Stoney's" name in the same paragraph with 'choreography'!).



I am impressed each year by the riders who 'step up' when needed and 'step forward' when asked. Thank you!

Our California launch will take a slightly different turn this year, sort of 'back to the future.' Prior to kicking off out of Rancho Cucamonga (RC) back in 2008, we launched for many years out of Ontario, CA (right next door to RC). Well, as we have experienced over the past few years, we have outgrown the capability of RC to handle such a large group as RFTW.

Our Mission will once again begin in Ontario, CA. We will have a significantly larger host hotel (with better rates) with adjacent alternative hotels (with better rates). The Radisson Hotel Ontario Airport will be our new host hotel and we have contracts with four other hotels all within a click of the host. The Ontario Convention Center and Visitors Bureau will handle all reservations for the five contracted hotels all with one single phone number, to be posted.

We will have over 600 parking spaces at our beck and call at The Radisson and we will sleep less than 100 yards from the kick-off staging area at the Ontario Convention Center, which is three times the size of our staging area these past seven years. Tuesday night's RFTW Kick-off dinner will be hosted onsite at the Radisson and INSIDE. Even better, the main drag from KSU on Wednesday morning is a direct merge onto the freeway. FNG's probably cannot appreciate this yet, but...you will!

Now, the main questions I continually get asked:

- Run Hotel lists will not go up until the New Year. The negotiated rates are significant, so please don't try to book outside of the RFTW published window (I know some of you do!) as you'll miss out on \$30 to \$45 a night savings.
- RFTW Registration opens at the same time as every year, January 1<sup>st</sup>. No, we are not behind; it just feels that way since we are ready to roll again the day after we get back!

Support The Mission, Support your Route Coordinator, Take the time to engage others and talk about The Run and if you can, volunteer to be a resource for your Route as well as a Rider for The Mission. All Gave Some, Some Gave All.

*All Gave Some, Some Gave All  
Wish*

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## ► RFTW BOARD OF DIRECTORS, UPDATED

There have been some changes in positions, so here is the updated Board of Directors.

President: Ken "Wish" Hargrove

Chairman of the Board: Harry "Attitude" Steelman

Treasurer: Ken "Catfish" Ward

Secretary" Doug "Sgt. Major" Lyvere

Director of Operations & Training: Greg "Pied Piper" Smith

Director of Merchandise: Ray "ZZ" Brammer

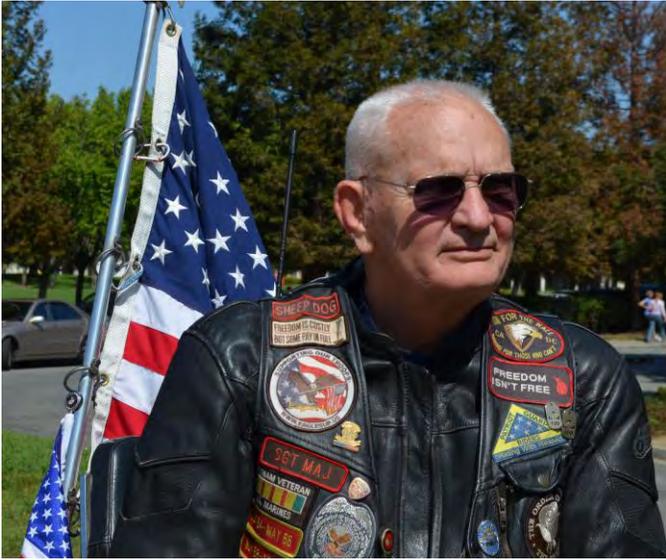
Director of Public Relations/Communications: Harlan "Whitebirch" Olson

Director of Risk Management/Purchasing: John "Wicked" McKee

## MEET THE NEWEST MEMBER OF THE BOD:

**Doug "Sgt. Major" Lyvere**

I served in the Marine Corps from August '63 to October '93, and served in Vietnam from November '64 to May '66, Nov '68 to Nov '69. I was an Artillery Forward Observer, Forward Air Control, Naval Gunfire. While in the Corps I was a recruiter and area supervisor for 8 years, and Inspector Instructor Staff for 3 years.



I also worked with the Wounded Warrior Battalion (Camp Pendleton ), Freedom Excursions, Purple Heart Anglers, Monterey Bay Veterans, and the Wounded Warrior detachments northern California.

I owned and operated the Peninsula Diving Center (25 years), a scuba retail business, and was also a scuba instructor.

I've ridden with RFTW for 10 years—2 years on the Central Route (1 year as a RG), and 8 on the Southern Route (8 years as a RG). Additionally, during that time frame—2 years LEO. I was the camping coordinator for one year and

established/coordinated appearances or the 1st Marine Division Ensemble (Party Band) at Rancho Cucamonga for the past 3 years, and established/coordinated RFTW attendance (400) at the Evening Parade at the Marine Barracks in DC. For 3 years I was a VIP escort and Gold Star Coordinator for Rolling Thunder.

I'm also a RG and Ride Captain for the Patriot Guard Riders, and Assistant State Captain for 7 years, and have been a RG for 5 years for the Ride To The Flag. I am Chairman of the Board for Eagles Up, a 501(c)3 charitable organization focusing on fundraising for veterans and Gold Star Families. I am also associated with most of the veteran-related motorcycle clubs and events in California focusing on support for veterans, among them the VFW, Marine Corps League, and American Legion Riders.

I'm proud to be a part of the RFTW Board of Directors, and look forward to using my experience and skills to work with the Board to ensure that RFTW continues to be the respected organization it is.

## **2015 ROUTE COORDINATORS**

Central: Don "EZ" Burns  
Southern: Jim "Stoney" Stone  
Midway: Billy "Tumbleweed" Smith

## **UPDATE ON HERO BIKE BUILD**

Thanks to the efforts of Wes Alvarez, a Pensacola Florida Harley dealer donated a bike for this year's Bike Build, and the bike that Denise donated will be used for next year,

But donations are still needed to help pay for next year's bike for Brian Mast (see story below). Please make check out to Eagles Up, Inc. and mail to John Barker, 1913 N.W. Crown St., Grants Pass, OR. 97526.

Eagles Up is now doing the fundraising.

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## ► FINANCIAL REPORT

The RFTW FY 2014 Financial Report, as submitted by Treasurer Ken Ward:

### RUN FOR THE WALL Abbreviated Statement of Financial Position as of August 31, 2014

<b>Category</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2014</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2013</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2012</b>
Total Revenue	\$ 309,508.82	\$ 344,890.92	\$ 187,289.68
Total Expenses	\$ 309,474.60	\$ 267,281.97	\$ 182,700.20
Interest Earned	\$ 4.59	\$ 12.05	\$ 23.28
Revenue in Excess of Expenses	\$ 38.81	\$ 77,621.00	\$ 4,612.76
<b>BREAKDOWN</b>			
RFTW Checking	\$ 113,570.70	\$ 136,694.01	\$ 56,671.13
RFTW Savings	\$ 15,086.56	\$ 15,081.97	\$ 34,252.90
Individual Routes	\$ 17,631.87	\$ 20,407.97	\$ 20,407.97
RFTA Funds	\$ 6,857.00	\$ 8,107.00	\$ 8,107.00
Hero's Bike Build	\$ 3,890.76		
Archive Committee	\$ 500.00		
	\$ 157,536.89	\$ 180,290.95	\$ 119,439.00
<b>NOTES:</b>			
2014 Revenue includes all three routes			
2014 Expenses include all three routes, including the additional route supplies.			

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## ► 2015 COMBAT HERO BIKE BUILD

*This is the story of Brian Mast, a combat hero and the veteran for whom RFTW is building the next custom bike. RFTW flew Brian into Medford OR on October 5 for a meet and greet and to meet the builder and painter. We*

*have a bike that was donated by a RFTW rider, Denise Kreuzer, of Hayward, CA. It is a 2006 Fat Boy with a rebuilt engine. It's perfect for what we are doing for this Hero.*

My name is Brian Mast, and I am a Special Operations Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician (bomb tech) in the U.S. Army. Recently, I was severely injured while serving in Afghanistan and I wanted to tell you a little bit about me and my family. I grew up in Grand Rapids, MI but call south Florida home. I joined the Army in 2000 out of high school, as I have always been very patriotic and have the greatest love of our country. I enjoyed all things physical and outdoors, and the Army for me was like putting a round peg in a round hole. I just fit.

In January of 2007 I married the girl of my dreams, Brianna. The wedding was in West Palm Beach, FL where we met and still call home.

The Army took us many places, but some things always remained the same ... going to the beach, playing with our dogs and doing anything we could find to do outdoors.

Eventually we ended up at Ft. Bragg, NC where we thought we would finally be able to permanently call a place home, so we built one there. We lived across from a huge park where we would play catch, play fetch, and just enjoy any sunny day we could get outside.

In March 2010, our son, Magnum was born. The joy of our lives. I spent many nights walking back and forth to get him asleep ... only to lay him down and five minutes later ... back to walking again.

When I wasn't away working or out training, my wife and I were working on the yard, going to the pool, or playing with our family's new addition.

On September 19, 2010 while deployed to Afghanistan, my life was changed forever when I was struck by an IED while working with Army Rangers to rid this world of those who would do our country harm. The IED claimed both of my legs; a finger and a part of my forearm, but it didn't kill me. On September 25, I woke up to "do you know where you are?" I did not, but was quickly informed I was at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington DC, and I soon learned I had a whole new world of challenges that I never saw coming. But that is life, right? We cannot always see in advance or pick and choose the challenges we will have to face. We can, however, control how we react to each and every one of them, and for me I know that this will not be the challenge that defeats me.

Initially being back in the states was a blur. It seemed like every few days for the first month was another surgery. There was a lot of pain, not a lot of sleep, and thankfully more love than I have ever felt from my family, friends, and anyone else who somehow heard about me.

Life is peaks and valleys though, and as losing my legs was a pretty big valley it was time to start making some peaks again. The first goal I set was to be able to walk my way into Thanksgiving dinner. It wasn't pretty and looked a lot like a duck walking on land, but with some family help and some crutches I made it.

Next was to have a normal Christmas holiday with my family in sunny south Florida, as this was tradition for us. We made this happen and each day prior felt just a little closer to what I knew before as normal.



Now not that I was slacking before, each day consisted of about six hours or more of therapy, but it was time for something more sporty. This milestone was able to come in the form of an event called Soldier Ride. In early January about 100 wounded warriors and supporters, along with myself, made most of the bike ride from Miami to Key West. I was able to meet many guys who have shared similar experiences to mine, while accomplishing something and having a lot of fun.

It soon no longer became about trying to accomplish things, but instead just living life like it was normal. Brianna and I would play with our son, go to dinner or the mall, we would visit with old friends and even make a few new ones. The President had us as a guest to the State of the Union Address; I took up scuba diving and skiing again with a group through the hospital, and learned to drive a car using just my hands.

I even became used to putting my pants on one leg at a time.

So what do I see for the future? Well, I will continue having physical therapy all day for the next year or until I can walk around as well as I could before my injury. I am hoping to finish my degree. I am working on a Federal Internship program that may help to place me within the intelligence community. Most importantly I will be cherishing my life, wife and son, family and friends more than ever before.

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## ► RFTW 2014—OUR STORIES

### **AND I THOUGHT IT WAS ABOUT A MOTORCYCLE TRIP!!!**

By Dan Koster, 2014 FNG

This whole story starts with the purchase of a Harley Davidson Heritage Softail Classic in October of 2013. As soon as a couple of friends of mine whom I had known some 20 years (road names Bones and Vapors) learned of my purchase, they started twisting my arm to go on this ride. This ride was a run from Rancho Cucamonga, California to Washington DC culminating on Memorial Day weekend. It was called Run For The Wall. After a bit of research I learned that the run was thousands of bikers, some Veterans, some not, who rode all the way across America in an effort to make sure America never forgets their MIAs and POWs and in general show support to all veterans of all wars and to anyone who has ever worn the uniform of the United States of America.

Their stated mission was very much the reason for the ride:

- To promote healing among ALL veterans and their families and friends,
- To call for an accounting of ALL prisoners of war and those missing in action "POW-MIA,"
- To honor the memory of those killed in action "KIA" from all wars, and
- To support our military personnel all over the world.

After being on the run I quickly learned that this was also a very important ride for many Viet Nam vets who were searching for some way to begin to heal. Yes, after some 40 + years some have not begun to heal.

After much arm twisting I agreed to ride one leg of this trip. I rode from Westminster, Colorado to Eagle Nest, New Mexico to join the group. There was an incredible ceremony at Angel Fire, NM at the first Viet Nam Memorial built in the United States. It was very moving to see grown men my age having such trouble in seeing some of the things that brought back such terrible memories.

My ride was to begin the next morning from Eagle Nest to Goodland, Kansas, some 400 miles. First was an excellent breakfast put on by the townspeople of the little town of Eagle Nest, NM. One lady told me that when we came to town we doubled the town's population (kind of reminded me of Geddes). When we left Eagle Nest we had a full-on escort by the New Mexico State Patrol. Our first fuel stop was in Raton, NM where I witnessed the fueling of over 300 motorcycles in less than 20 minutes. It was a very well-orchestrated event. As was most always the case, the fuel was paid for by supporters of RFTW. When we crossed into the Colorado state line just North of Raton, NM, all of the patrolmen who had been escorting us stood at a very impressive salute. Quite a sight to see for an FNG. I'll try to explain FNG in proper terms. In print they call it a Fine New Guy (or Gal) but use your imagination and I think you'll come up with what it really meant. (hint...it does not mean "fine")

Our next stop was Pueblo, CO where once again our gas was paid for and lunch provided at the local National Guard Armory. Great lunch with people waving flags and giving thanks for our cause. Then on to Goodland, KS. All along the way, at an overpass in the middle of nowhere, was everything from the entire overpass covered with people and flags and waves and salutes to the lone man standing on an overpass in the middle of Kansas at full salute until some 300 bikes passed by. Talk about lump in the throat and tear in the eye. WOW!

Again at a National Guard Armory in Goodland, KS were hundreds of townspeople serving a delicious dinner and giving us thanks for our mission and all of us giving them thanks for such a wonderful meal and outpouring of patriotism! There was a prayer before dinner and a ceremony honoring a soldier from Goodland. As I later learned, this was the norm in these towns that acted as our host.

After dinner I went to Bones and Catfish (our route coordinator) and told them of my intent to carry on with my original plan to spend the night in Goodland and then head for home the next morning. The two of them proceeded to give me a half dozen reasons I should rethink that and ended with "oh by the way, the FNGs are the only motorcycle group in the world who get to ride their bike into Arlington National Cemetery." AND by the way, you are an FNG ONE time—whether you ride one leg or all the way to DC. I said "hmmmm" "where is a Wal-Mart, I need more undies and socks"!!! I had decided to go all the way to DC.

I wish I could describe in detail the incredible patriotism we witnessed along the way. Every town we pulled into to gas and rest our butts were flags and salutes and well-wishers. We were treated to flag-waving children in Corydon, Indiana. The townspeople there fed us an amazing catfish dinner. We were treated like rock stars in Rainelle, West Virginia where they had a ceremony for us that left no eyes dry. Along the way we had raised nearly \$11,000 for the school of Rainelle. This is a small, poor town whose entire economy is based on coal. Tough times there, to say the least. At every state line we were met by the Highway patrol and given an escort essentially all the way across their state. I'm talking all the interstate entrances were closed, the towns of Kansas City, MO, St. Louis, MO, Louisville, KY completely shut down for our ride through. It was amazing! We never stopped at a red light all the way to DC. When we entered Missouri, there were at least 15 motorcycle cops in the shape a "V" across the road with two squad cars behind them. All had lights flashing! Incredible sight!

We visited two VA hospitals on our trip. One was the Robley Rex VA hospital in Louisville, KY where we talked with a World War II vet who served under General George Patton and was wounded in the battle of the Bulge. At Robley Rex we heard the most amazing rendition of the Star Spangled Banner anyone had ever heard. A wounded vet sang it as though he was there! Such emotion and enthusiasm! We went to a

very special Viet Nam Memorial in Louisville, KY that was a "sundial" and the shadow of the sundial showed on the names of the soldiers who were killed on that day. The Governor of West Virginia gave us a rousing welcome and ceremony on the steps of the West Virginia capital building in Charleston. Very heartwarming and emotional indeed.

The last morning before getting into Arlington, Virginia was in Lewisburg, WV. It was there that the already incredible trip took a giant leap! There are three routes that comprise the Run For The Wall. Southern Route, Central Route, and Midway Route. Each route selects a person they feel is worthy to participate in the laying of the wreath ceremony at The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. That accounts for the first three people in a 4 person ceremony. Each year the fourth person is drawn at random from one of the routes. The three routes take turns picking the fourth person. This year it just so happened that the Central Route got to pick the fourth person. I was in the Central Route. Those who went all the way to DC got one ticket, no more. You could not buy more, you could not steal more, one ticket that's it. As I looked at my ticket and listened to Catfish read the numbers, I could not believe that out of approximately 500 bikers (many bikes had joined us as we traversed America), I had # 647232!!!! This meant that I received the incredible honor of participating in the wreath laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier!

At first I said "no, this is not right. It should be a vet that does this honor." To a man, every vet told me that I was the right man for the job and they needed people who were not vets spreading their mission. They made me feel very much a part of their group and that it was meant to be. Very humbling!

So there I was, a man filled with incredible pride and honor to be taking place in such a sacred ceremony. A man who had intended to go home after Goodland, KS. A man who thought I was setting out on a motorcycle trip. WOW, it was soooo not a motorcycle trip.

The only way I know to end this story is to tell you in no uncertain terms.....PATRIOTISM IS NOT DEAD! Please don't let the ruckus in Washington DC make you think otherwise. It is alive and well in 90% of ALL Americans. Don't be afraid to wear it on your sleeve. Don't be afraid to walk up to vets and thank them for their service. It is because of them and their sacrifices and their families' sacrifices that we have the liberties we have today. Get involved in your local VFW and help them in any way you can. And please don't think it can never end. That's what the Romans thought. That's what World War I and World War II were all about. It can end. Don't let patriotism die. It is much too precious!

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## ► OTHER STORIES

### NEW MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENT

For his outstanding heroism in one of the bloodiest encounters in the Afghanistan War, former Army Sgt. Ryan Pitts on July 20 became the ninth living recipient of the Medal of Honor for actions in Iraq or Afghanistan.

While serving in the summer of 2008 with the 2nd Platoon, Chosen Company, 2nd Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade, Pitts (20 years old at the time) and his team were transferred to a station on the outskirts



of a village called Wanat. It was expected to be their last mission before returning stateside.

In the early-morning hours of July 13, the base was ambushed by enemy machine gun fire. Soldiers at Observation Post Topside, where Pitts was positioned, were caught in an eruption of small-arms fire, rocket-propelled grenades and hand grenades.

During that initial volley, Pitts was hit by grenade shrapnel in both legs and one arm. Despite his debilitating injuries and loss of blood, he continued to fight and defend his position, throwing grenades then taking up an M240 machine gun.

"I couldn't stand because I couldn't really use my legs," Pitts told CBS News National Security Correspondent David Martin, noting he deduced the enemy to be a mere ten meters away. "So I would pull myself up on a knee and prop my leg up, and then I would blind fire over the top of the sand bags to try and suppress anybody that might be close by or around there."

Because machine guns typically require two soldiers to operate, he added, he "would have difficulties every once in a while with malfunctions, just because the ammo would shift. And so I would have to pull it back down, clear the malfunction and repeat the process over again, blind fire and prop myself back up."

After crawling out of the north fighting position, Pitts said he "looked down at a terrace to the west, and I could see the dead guys down there. And then I kept crawling south and I didn't see anybody in the Crow's Nest, nobody was in the southern fighting position. That's when I realized, I thought everyone was dead. ...I was the only one there."



During the ceremony Monday, Mr. Obama lauded him for "holding the line."

"Eight American soldiers had now fallen and Ryan Pitts was the only living soldier at that post," the president said. "The enemy was so close Ryan could hear their voices. He whispered into the radio, he was the only one left and was running out of ammo. 'I was going to die,' he remembers, 'and made my peace with it.' And then he prepared to make a last stand."

Nine soldiers were ultimately killed in the battle, and 27 - Pitts included - were wounded. But Pitts' prolonged efforts staved the enemy off high ground that could have resulted in far more casualties, and allowed the U.S. to retain possession of the fallen soldiers at the observation post.

"Nine guys died so the rest of us could come home," Pitts told Martin. "And valor was everywhere. ...We did it as a team. No one guy carried the day."

Pitts departed active-duty service in 2009. He now resides in Nashua, N.H., where he uses his business degree from the University of New Hampshire at Manchester as a developer for the computer software industry. His military education includes the U.S. Army Airborne School, U.S. Army Pathfinder Course and the Warrior Leader Course.

## **KOREAN WAR CHAPLAIN AND POW**

Father Emil J. Kapaun was born in Pilsen, Kansas on April 20, 1916. He was ordained on June 9, 1940 and entered the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps in 1944.

He separated from the service in 1946, went to college under the GI Bill, earning his Master of Arts degree in Education, then re-entered the Army in 1948 and was sent to Japan the following year.

In July of 1950 Father Kapaun was ordered to Korea. He was assigned to Headquarters Company, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division. During the Battle of Unsan, he was serving with the 3rd Battalion of the 8th Cavalry Regiment. As Chinese Communist forces encircled the battalion, Kapaun moved fearlessly from foxhole to foxhole under direct enemy fire in order to provide comfort and reassurance to the outnumbered Soldiers. He repeatedly exposed himself to enemy fire to recover wounded men, dragging them to safety. When he couldn't drag them, he dug shallow trenches to shield them from enemy fire. As Chinese forces closed in, Kapaun rejected several chances to escape, instead volunteering to stay behind and care for the wounded. He was taken as a prisoner of war by Chinese forces on Nov. 2, 1950.



The chaplain “calmly walked through withering enemy fire” and hand-to-hand combat to provide medical aid, comforting words or the last rites of the Roman Catholic Church to the wounded, the citation said. When he saw a Chinese soldier about to execute a wounded comrade, Sgt. First Class Herbert A. Miller, he rushed to push the gun away.

After he was captured, Kapaun and other prisoners were marched 40 miles northward over several days toward prisoner of war camps. During the march, Kapaun led by example in caring for injured Soldiers, refusing to take a break from carrying the stretchers of the wounded while encouraging others to do their part. Through the winter, as the American prisoners froze to death, he offered his clothes and cleaned the soldiers’ wounds. Kapaun risked his life by sneaking around the camp after dark, foraging for food, caring for the sick, and encouraging his fellow soldiers to sustain their faith and their humanity. On at least one occasion, he was brutally punished for his disobedience, being forced to sit outside in subzero weather without any clothes on. When the Chinese instituted a mandatory re-education program, Kapaun patiently and politely rejected every theory put forth by the instructors. Guards tortured him for his shows of faith, but on Easter, Father Kapaun offered Mass in church ruins at the camp as guards looked on.

Ignoring his own ill health, he nursed the sick and wounded until a blood clot in his leg prevented his daily rounds. After coming down with dysentery and pneumonia, Kapaun was sent to the camp’s filthy, unheated “hospital,” which POWs called the “death house,” a place with no food or water, and little-to-no medical care, to die. As he was being carried to the hospital, he looked at the guards and said, “Forgive them, for they know not what they do.” He also made his fellow prisoners promise to keep their faith.

Kapaun died two days later, alone, on May 23, 1951.

His remains were never recovered. At war’s end, the surviving POWs walked out of the camp with a four-foot wooden crucifix they had made in his honor.

On April 10, 2013 Pres. Obama presented the Medal of Honor to his family. Chaplain Kapaun was the ninth American military chaplain Medal of Honor recipient. Nine of the eleven POWs who were in the same camp with him were present for the MOH presentation, including Herbert Miller.

## **BATAAN DEATH MARCH REMEMBERED**

It's been 72 years since the Bataan Death March. Pedro Pineda, 94, thinks he might be ready to start talking about it. "Here is something I cannot forget," he said in mid-MAY while meeting with fellow veterans in a San Francisco apartment. "During this march, we had a short rest by an artesian well. We were so thirsty. But the Japanese sentries changed their mind, and told us to go back. On the way back, they bayoneted this guy ..." "Oh my gosh, I saw that," he said, tears rolling down his cheeks and his fists clenched. "I never talked about it. But it happened. I saw it." Pineda, a retired cardio technician from Daly City, isn't the only one who rarely speaks of the infamous World War II massacre in the Philippines, a scorching, 63-mile trek Japanese soldiers forced upon 78,000 American and Filipino prisoners of war following the Battle of Bataan.



**This picture, captured from the Japanese, shows American prisoners using improvised litters to carry those of their comrades who, from the lack of food or water on the march from Bataan, fell along the road. Philippines, May 1942.**

The incident is rarely taught in schools and is often overlooked in war retrospectives, in part because it was among the worst defeats in U.S. military history and in part because of the sheer horror of what the soldiers endured. But a Berkeley woman is trying to change that. Cecelia Gaerlan has launched a nonprofit, Bataan Legacy, to educate younger generations about the sacrifices and courage of Bataan soldiers. She visits schools, lobbies for Bataan to be included in textbooks, and on May 26 hosted a reunion for Bataan survivors at the Philippine Consulate in San Francisco. "These soldiers gave so much, but people just don't know. That's the double tragedy of Bataan," said Gaerlan, whose father, Luis, 94, is a Bataan survivor. "These men are now in their 90s. Time is of the essence."

The Bataan Death March was in April 1942, four months after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. As a U.S. territory, the Philippines was an early and central player in the war's Pacific Theater, and thousands of Filipino soldiers fought the Japanese under the leadership of Gen. Douglas MacArthur. With much of Southeast Asia under attack by the Japanese, MacArthur's plan was to hold tough on the Bataan peninsula and, after the arrival of supplies and reinforcements, attack north from there. But the Japanese blockaded Bataan, and thousands of American and Filipino troops were left stranded without food or medicine. After

a three-month siege in which 10,000 American and Filipino troops died, the U.S. surrendered. The Japanese then marched the prisoners of war—who were severely weakened from hunger and malaria—across the jungle to an internment camp. During the march, Japanese soldiers executed, bayoneted, and tortured thousands of prisoners. To survive, the prisoners ate grass, maggots, worms, and crickets. They sucked water off guava leaves. How they survived is a mystery, still. “I don't know why we lived. Luck? Something,” Pineda said.

Proculo Bualat, 96, of San Francisco survived, then went on to endure months at the internment camp, where he worked burying the bodies of his cohorts, and then three years performing slave labor in a manganese mine before escaping. He's almost never spoken of those years, his wife Johanna said, but a few memories have stayed with him: that once, while on burial detail, he almost shoveled dirt over a soldier who was still alive; and that the worms that infested a deep wound on his leg probably kept him alive, because they kept away infection. Bualat went on to serve more than 20 years in the U.S. Army before finally retiring as a mechanic with the U.S. Postal Service.



**POWs on the Bataan Death March. Along the March these prisoners were photographed, they have their hands tied behind their backs. The March of Death was about May 1942, from Bataan to Cabanatuan, the prison camp.**

David Tejada, 91, of Daly City started talking about his Bataan experiences a few years ago, after he sought treatment through the Veterans Administration for post-traumatic stress disorder. Talking to other veterans has been enormously helpful, he said. He saw pregnant women bayoneted, girls raped, friends and relatives executed, and countless others starved to death. But it's not those incidents that gave him nightmares in later years, or what drove him to seek help. It was a brief incident on a boxcar at the end of the march. He was jammed on the train with more than 100 other men, packed so tightly and in such excruciating heat that many died on the train, wedged among their fellow prisoners. The train slowed for a minute, and a woman ran over with a basket of cooked chicken. She gave it to Tejada and said, “Can you give this to my son?” “I grabbed it and 100 other guys also grabbed it,” he said, his face wincing at the memory. “I took two pieces and gave the rest to the group. I never gave it to her son. I didn't even know who her son was. But I felt so guilty—I thought maybe he died because I never found him. I had nightmares about that for 40 years. “But then the psychologist at the VA said I didn't need to feel guilty anymore,” he said. “He said I probably saved my own life ... I think we all just wanted to survive.”

[Source: San Francisco Chronicle | Carolyn Jones | May 26, 2014 ++]

## ACUITY FLAGPOLE PROJECT

This is the tallest flagpole in North America!

Standing 400 feet tall, the new Acuity Insurance Flagpole is the tallest flagpole in North America. Located on the Acuity Insurance headquarters campus in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, along Interstate 43 between Milwaukee and Green Bay, the pole supports a 60-foot-wide by 120-foot-long American flag. Located at the base of the flagpole is a brick paver patio featuring the names of Sheboygan County residents killed on active duty.



### Flagpole Facts:

- 400-foot flagpole weighs approximately 420,000 pounds
- There are two versions of the 60- by 120-foot flag:
  - 220 pound flag is flown during normal conditions
  - 350 pound flag is flown during harsher weather
- Each star is 3 feet high and each stripe is 4 1/2 feet wide
- 680 cubic yards of concrete used in foundation
- Over 500 gallons of paint cover the pole
- 11-foot diameter at base tapers to 5 1/2-foot diameter at top
- Three pendulum-style tuned mass dampers reduce movement and vibration
- Designed to withstand a low temperature of -42°F

## THE ERVIN PICKREL STORY

Source: The Times-News (Twin Falls, Idaho) | Brian Smith | 20 Apr 2014

A sleeve full of potatoes. For 70 years, that story remained buried in the mind of Ervin Pickrel, an Army Air Corps radio operator who was taken prisoner during World War II. Those starchy hunks along with a can of meat were the genesis of Pickrel's escape from "the Black March," one of the most horrendous 48 marches in war history.



Pickrel and thousands of other WWII prisoners of war were forced to march 600 miles across Germany over 86 days by Nazis hoping to skirt invading British and Russian forces. Ervin Pickrel, 92, now and then. B-17 Operator/Gunner Pickrel is 2nd from left in bottom row Pickrel, 92, said he didn't talk much about his traumatic experience in the march after the war. When Veterans Affairs doctors recently asked him about his war experiences, he said, he "got tied up in a knot" and was nauseated thinking back on it.

"Right now I'm quite a bit shaky after all these years," he said. "I don't know why, but that's the way it is."

On his farm, Pickrel's children heard bits and pieces. But Pickrel decided to open up more to his family after reading a Times-News article about Paul Kelly, an 88-year-old Twin Falls man who was part of the same march and held captive at the same prison — Stalag Luft IV. This winter, the two former prisoners sat for four hours in Pickrel's kitchen and discussed their experiences. Pickrel said he was tied in knots again, even in the presence of someone who'd been through the same event. Each time he retells the journey, Pickrel said, he gets more comfortable.

"I've done more this morning than I ever have," he said after an interview of more than an hour. "It just ties you up in knots, and I don't know why." Pickrel joined the military at 21. The Nebraska native was trained as a radio operator and served aboard a bomber, flying several missions and taking many close calls. In Northern Ireland, his pilot couldn't get the landing wheels down on the plane. The crew dropped the ball gunner in a lake and landed in a meadow. Like a plow, the gunner's hole scooped up the sod and filled the back end of the plane with dirt, Pickrel said. On his sixth mission, the plane was hit, and the crew was rescued from the English Channel. On his 12th mission, he wasn't as lucky.

A few days after the invasion of Normandy in June 1944, Pickrel was on a bombing mission when his plane was hit. The crew bailed over northern France. "You bet your life I wouldn't want to do that again," he said with a smile. The plane's navigator — a substitute on his last mission — was killed. Except for two waist gunners, the men were taken prisoner together. The two who escaped eventually ended up in German concentration camps, he said. Pickrel landed in an open pasture, with nowhere to hide.

"I could see that old car coming down the hill and see that guard running down to see where I was going to land," he said. "When I raised up, he cut loose with his little machine pistol. B-r-r-r-rapt. I just laid down flat because I didn't have even a stick to fight with." Interrogated and stripped of his comfy heated flight jumper, Pickrel and the other captives were loaded on a railroad train and shipped across Germany. In Berlin, the car stopped, and air raid sirens blew. "We figured, 'Oh brother, here we are locked in those railroad cars.' And the guards were scattering for cover. Those were the main (bombing) targets, those rail yards." They escaped unharmed, but it would not be the last time he and others were unsure of their fate. "You were just kind of numb," Pickrel said. "You just followed orders — you run off, and you'll be shot."

Life was grim in Compound A of Stalag Luft IV. He often thought of home and kept hoping for mail that never came. "You knew you were captured, and you just lived with it." The prisoners' two main forms of entertainment were playing cards delivered by the Red Cross and walking around the perimeter of the compound. Provisions were meager. Each morning he got a piece of bread and a cup of hot water. Most nights they'd be fed soup of boiled kohlrabi, a German turnip, which he now refuses to eat. The Red Cross dropped off rare treats — coffee, canned meat, chocolate, crackers and, most precious, cigarettes. "If you didn't smoke, you could use those to bargain for food," he said. "Those people who were hooked on cigarettes would trade their grandmother for a pack."

He and a friend often summoned the strength to walk around the camp two or three times a day. That paid off when they were forced to march, he said. "The guys who sat on their butts in the barracks the whole time, when they got out on the road their feet wouldn't hold up." Eight months passed before Pickrel and the others were forced to march west to avoid Russian forces charging in from the east. The long overcoat he was issued always was "flip-flopping around your feet." Pickrel said he tried to cut a hole in it to button it away from his feet. His knife slipped and sliced his knuckle open. "That's my war wound," he said, laughing.

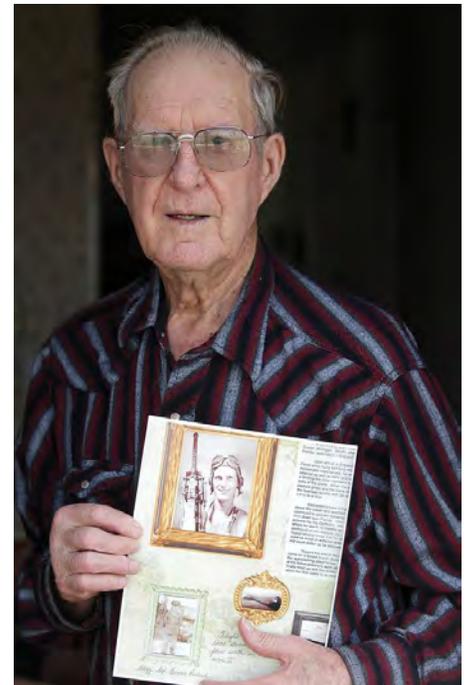
The prisoners slept in crowded barns at night. Many soldiers had dysentery and no water other than what they were given to drink twice a day. Pickrel luckily avoided the disease. "If you pooped your pants, you still had to wear those damn pants." "The back end of my heels peeled off just from walking in the wet ground," he recalled. "For 80 days, we didn't have a change of shoes or clothes." The German guards had it almost as bad as the prisoners, he said. "You kind of felt sorry for them. We stopped at noon one time, and the soldier lay on the

ditch bank there, took his shoe off and he had a hole in the bottom like that,” Pickrel said, making a zero with his fingers. “He got a wad of grass and stuffed it down in his shoe to plug that hole up. I thought, ‘My God — what are you guys fighting for if you have to do things like that?’”

As they neared the end of their march, the exhausted prisoners could hear British guns in the distance. Their captors stopped. In a barn, the prisoners found a stash of potatoes. “The guard was good enough to let us go in there and get a handful of potatoes,” he said. “We emptied that sucker quick. I got a sleeve full of potatoes, tied a knot in my shirt and filled it full.” The next day, they started marching the prisoners east — the direction from which they had come. Pickrel, throwing up from all the potatoes he’d eaten, pulled his friend aside. They agreed he couldn’t walk anymore. They found the back of the line and stayed near a sick guard in worse shape. “When he wasn’t lookin’, we scooted across the line, into the trees and laid down,” Pickrel said. The march trudged on, and they were alone. For a few days they hid in the trees, startled by deer that rattled the brush. They joined some British soldiers, and the group hid while three Germans ominously carried a large machine gun up a creek. Not far behind, the British forces gave chase. Pickrel said his rescuers were eager to feed and transport him. He was flown to Paris and deloused. “The minute you stepped through the door, the guy was there with his spray gun full of DDT,” he said. “... They just soaked you with DDT because you were covered in lice. ... It’s a wonder it didn’t kill me.”

Returning to Idaho, Pickrel picked up farm life. He never thought about therapy and didn’t put in for veterans medical benefits until recently. “I didn’t let it bother me. The kids always wanted me to write a book or something on it, but I never could do it.” He said he didn’t suffer many ill effects from the war, though other soldiers, such as Kelly, struggled to readjust to society. “For him, it’s just carry on,” said daughter Diane Clemens. “I think a lot of men were like that.”

Although he mostly avoided the subject, Pickrel did react one night when he and his wife, Velma, were playing cards. With news of the Iraq invasion on the television, Pickrel slammed his cards down and ran to the bathroom. “He wasn’t like Ervin,” Velma said. “Ervin wouldn’t do that. We had never any trouble with that. ... Around that time, we had heard of other veterans having flashbacks.” Clemens said she feels fortunate to hear her father’s incredible story, as so many other veterans’ experiences were never told. “I’m even learning more things today,” she said. “Like the potatoes in the sleeve — I’d not heard that one.” “Yeah, well, we cleaned that poor old farmer out,” Pickrel said.



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## ► VA NEWS

### UPGRADED DISCHARGES

Many Vietnam veterans discharged under less than honorable conditions, but diagnosed with PTSD long after their military service, might soon have the chance to upgrade their discharges under new guidance issued by the Department of Defense. PTSD did not become officially recognized by the medical profession until 1980.

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel has directed that boards for correction of military records or naval records begin to “fully and carefully consider every petition based on PTSD brought by each veteran.”

His September 3 memo gives Army, Navy, and Air Force secretaries “supplemental guidance” that boards are to use when petitioners seek discharge upgrades claiming that unrecognized Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder caused the misbehavior that led to Other Than Honorable discharge.

Many of the veterans who will gain from the new guidance served during the Vietnam War, before the medical community recognized PTSD as a disabling service-connected condition. PTSD only received a medical diagnostic code in 1980, five years after that war officially ended.

Hagel instructed boards to give “liberal consideration” to any language found in medical records describing one or more symptoms that meet diagnostic criteria for PTSD or related conditions. Liberal consideration also is to be used when veterans’ civilian providers have diagnosed PTSD. And where PTSD “is reasonably determined to have existed at the time of discharge,” it is to be “a mitigating factor” in the misconduct that generated an Other Than Honorable, also then called Undesirable, discharge.

## **VA HUD-VASH UPDATE**

In addition to the \$300 million in Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program grant awards announced on August 11, 2014 serving 115,000 Veterans and their family members, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald announced 30 SEP the award of \$207 million in SSVF grants that will help an additional 70,000 homeless and at-risk Veterans and their families. The grants will be distributed to 82 non-profit agencies and include “surge” funding for 56 high-need communities. During the brief history of this program, VA has helped tens of thousands of Veterans exit homelessness and prevented just as many from becoming homeless. The “surge” funding will enable VA to strategically target resources to high need communities where there are significant numbers of Veterans who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness.

Under the SSVF program, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is awarding grants to private non-profit organizations and consumer cooperatives that provide services to very low-income Veteran families living in – or transitioning to – permanent housing. Those community organizations provide a range of services that promote housing stability among eligible very low income Veteran families (those making less than 50 percent of the area median income). The grants announced today will fund the fourth year of the SSVF program. “The Department of Veterans Affairs is committed to using evidence based approaches such as SSVF to prevent homelessness and produce successful outcomes for Veterans and their families,” McDonald said. “This is a program that works, because it allows VA staff and local homeless service providers to work together to address the unique challenges that make it difficult for some Veterans and their families to remain stably housed.”

Under the terms of the SSVF grants, homeless providers offer Veterans and their family members outreach, case management, assistance in obtaining VA benefits and assistance in receiving other public benefits. Community-based groups can offer temporary financial assistance on behalf of Veterans for rent payments, utility payments, security deposits and moving costs. In the first 2 years of SSVF operations (through FY 2013), nearly 100,000 Veterans and their family members received direct assistance to exit homelessness or maintain permanent housing, including over 25,000 children. “With the addition of these crucial resources, communities across the country continue a historic drive to prevent and end homelessness among Veterans,” said Laura Green Zeilinger, Executive Director of the U.S. Interagency Council on

Homelessness. “The SSVF program gives Veterans and their families the rapid assistance they need to remain in permanent housing or get back into permanent housing as quickly as possible.”

In 2009, President Obama announced the federal government’s goal of ending Veteran homelessness by the end of 2015. The SSVF grants are intended to help accomplish that goal. According to the 2014 Point-in-Time Estimates of Homelessness, homelessness among Veterans has declined 33 percent since 2010. Through the homeless Veterans initiative, VA committed more than \$1 billion in FY 2014 to strengthen programs that prevent and end homelessness among Veterans. VA provides a range of services to homeless Veterans, including health care, housing, job training, and education. More information about VA’s homeless programs is available at <http://www.va.gov/homeless>. Details about the Supportive Services for Veteran Families program are online at <http://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf.asp>.

## **DEADLINE EXTENDED FOR LEJEUNE VETS**

From Armytimes.com

The Veterans Affairs Department has extended its deadline for veterans to receive reimbursement for medical costs related to exposure to contaminated water at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, and announced it will start paying out-of-pocket health costs for family members with certain health conditions related to drinking toxic water at the military base.

Complying with a law passed in 2012 — the Honoring America’s Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act — VA has released two announcements clarifying its health care coverage and reimbursement policies for illnesses in veterans and family members who lived at Camp Lejeune from 1957 to 1987.

More than 750,000 people may have been exposed to polluted drinking water at Camp Lejeune that contained volatile organic compounds and other chemicals like benzene and vinyl chloride.

When reports of the contamination first surfaced, it was thought to be confined to one main housing area, the result of illegal dumping by an off-base dry cleaner. Later, the pollution was found to be more extensive, encompassing two major water treatment facilities fouled by industrial spills, poor disposal practices and leaking underground storage tanks as well as the dry cleaning compounds.

The 15 illnesses covered under the law include certain cancers, such as breast, lung, esophageal and bladder cancer, as well as other medical conditions like kidney and liver problems, infertility, miscarriage and birth defects.

VA began providing care to affected veterans for these diseases after the Camp Lejeune water law passed in 2012. But VA did not announce its plans to pay for family members’ care until Sept. 24 — and even those procedures have not been finalized.

Under the new rules, veterans have until Sept. 24, 2016, to request status as a Camp20Lejeune veteran and be eligible for retroactive reimbursement of out-of-pocket medical costs back to Aug. 6, 2012 — the day the legislation authorized VA to begin providing benefits for Camp Lejeune veterans.

Veterans can apply for Camp Lejeune status at any time, even after the 2016 date, but will not be eligible for reimbursement.

Under the new rules, VA will reimburse family members diagnosed with one of the 15 contaminant-related illnesses back to March 26, 2013, the date Congress provided funding for the law.

Family members also must apply for status using the Camp Lejeune Family Member Health Care Program Application form.

VA will not provide any direct medical care to affected family members.

While some Camp Lejeune veterans receive disability payments for their service-related exposure at the installation, the benefit is not automatic

The water contamination at Camp Lejeune is the largest environmental hazards incident on a Defense Department facility in the United States.

## **VA TO CONTINUE TOWN HALL EVENTS**

WASHINGTON – Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald has directed all Veterans Affairs (VA) healthcare and benefits facilities to continue to hold quarterly town-hall events to improve communication with, and hear directly from, Veterans nationwide. This follows the recent completion of town-halls at these facilities held between August and the end of September of this year.

Every one of our medical centers and regional benefits offices held town hall meetings around the country in August and September, but we have more listening to do to better serve Veterans and their families,” said Secretary McDonald. “As part of our Road to Veterans Day, VA is taking a hard look at everything we do in order to reorganize the Department around the needs of Veterans. Direct feedback from Veterans, employees and stakeholders is an important component of that Roadmap, and key to improving our services and operations,” Secretary McDonald added.

Details of events at each location will be forthcoming from local facilities. Additionally, VA is looking to continue to improve the town hall notification process, making sure we have the benefit of extensive local input. In addition to Veterans and their families, the quarterly meetings are open to Congressional stakeholders, Veterans Service Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations and other community partners.

## **VA PROCESSES 1.3 MILLION CLAIMS IN 2014**

WASHINGTON – More than 1.3 million Veterans received decisions on their Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability compensation and pension claims in fiscal year (FY) 2014 – the highest number in VA’s history, surpassing last year’s record-breaking production by more than 150,000 claims.

This second year of record-breaking production comes as VA continues to transform the way it provides benefits and services, to deliver faster and higher quality decisions, to Veterans, their families and survivors. At the end of the year, the disability claims backlog (defined as any disability claim pending longer than 125 days) was reduced by 60-percent from the peak backlog in March 2013 and is at its lowest number in nearly 4 years. Veterans waited, on average, 119 fewer days for a decision on their claim than Veterans did in FY 2013. VA is on target to hit its 2015 goal.

These improvements were not made at the expense of quality. The accuracy of VA’s decisions continues to rise from an 83-percent accuracy level in 2011 to a 90-percent accuracy level today. When focusing specifically at the medical issue level, accuracy is at 96 percent.

“I am so proud of our employees—more than half of whom are Veterans themselves—who continue to work tirelessly to deliver the benefits our Veterans have earned through their service to our Nation,” said Under Secretary for Benefits Allison A. Hickey. “But we all also recognize there is still much more work to do to better serve Veterans.”

VA’s move to a web-based electronic claims processing system has enabled a quicker, more accurate and integrated benefits delivery. VA once processed 5,000 tons of paper annually—today it processes 93 percent of Veterans’ disability claims electronically. One in seven Veterans who submit a claim to change the status of a family member now does so online and more than half of those are paid in one to two days. VA’s progress would not have been possible without the support of its strong partners. Veterans Service Organizations (VSO) and State and County Veterans Service Officers embraced the Fully Developed Claim (FDC) program, which enables VA to make faster claim decisions when Veterans submit their claims with all available evidence and certify they have no more evidence to submit. Now, 37 percent of the claims received from VSOs are FDCs.

## **80,000 VETS WITH PTSD COULD GAIN DISCHARGE UPGRADES**

As many as 80,000 veterans who suffered from post-traumatic stress and received other-than-honorable discharges can use evidence of their PTSD to petition service boards to upgrade the bad paper discharge.

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel this month directed that boards for correction of military records or naval records begin to "fully and carefully consider every petition based on PTSD brought by each veteran."

His Sept. 3 memo gives Army, Navy and Air Force secretaries "supplemental guidance" that boards are to use when petitioners seek discharge upgrades claiming that unrecognized post-traumatic stress disorder caused the misbehavior that led to Other Than Honorable discharge.

Many of the veterans who will gain from the new guidance served during the Vietnam War, before the medical community recognized PTSD as a disabling service-connected condition. PTSD only received a medical diagnostic code in 1980, five years after that war officially ended.

Hagel instructed boards to give "liberal consideration" to any language found in medical records describing one or more symptoms that meet diagnostic criteria for PTSD or related conditions. Liberal consideration also is to be used when veterans' civilian providers have diagnosed PTSD.

And where PTSD "is reasonably determined to have existed at the time of discharge," it is to be "a mitigating factor" in the misconduct that generated an Other Than Honorable, also then called Undesirable, discharge.

Hagel likely is reacting to several recent developments including a federal class action lawsuit filed last March on behalf of Vietnam veterans, which generated a wave of publicity and attracted an influential advocate in Hagel's former Senate colleague, Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn.

Blumenthal said last week that many veterans went to war when PTSD "was undiagnosed and untreated" and it "caused many of them, particularly from the Vietnam era, to be given less than honorable discharges."

Read the entire article at <http://www.sunherald.com/2014/09/20/5811691/80000-vets-with-ptsd-could-gain.html>

## **ADAPTIVE SPORTS GRANTS SUPPORT DISABLED VETERANS**

WASHINGTON – Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald today announced the award of approximately \$8 million in grants to provide adaptive sports opportunities for disabled veterans and disabled service members of the Armed Forces. Adaptive sports are those sports that have been created or modified for persons with disabilities.

“Partnering with national, regional, and community-based non-profit organizations allows VA to provide rehabilitative adaptive sports opportunities to our disabled veterans and service members all across the country,” said Secretary McDonald. Disabled veterans who participate in adaptive sports improve their health and quality of life, make new friendships and discover that physical rehabilitation healing comes in many forms and can also be great fun.”

The new program provides grants to eligible entities to plan, develop, manage and implement programs to provide adaptive sports activities for disabled Veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces. Funding may be used for such things as training, program development, recreation therapists, coaches, sports equipment, supplies, program evaluation and other activities related to program implementation and operation.

The grants will be distributed to 69 national, regional and community programs serving all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and American Samoa. Approximately 10,000 Veterans and service members are expected to benefit.

Information about the awardees and details of the program may be found at [www.va.gov/adaptivesports](http://www.va.gov/adaptivesports).

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## **► OTHER NEWS**

### **NEW TBI TREATMENT FACILITY**

Utah now has a facility with nine two-bedroom apartments that are available for veterans suffering from TBI (traumatic brain injury). The veterans will receive forty hyperbaric oxygen treatments over a month stay. The treatments run Monday through Friday with two two-hour treatments each day, followed by a physical therapy session. The treatments are free to veterans and transportation to and from the treatments will be provided by the American Legion. These treatments have been proven to help vets with TBI and eliminate the need for drugs which can lead to the Veteran suicides that are now 22 a day.

The VA does not pay for hyperbaric oxygen treatments. This program is being made available to our veterans by a 501c3. The American Legion in Utah is looking for veterans who can take advantage of this opportunity and they are going to explore transportation options for travel to Utah. Please share this e-mail and reply to [ajuarez@AZLegion.org](mailto:ajuarez@AZLegion.org) if you are or have a candidate for this program.

Thanks for your help in helping us to help our Veterans suffering from TBI. For God & Country, Judi Beischel American Legion PDC 2013-2014

## INCARCERATED VET FACILITIES

It's a tidy cellblock. You might even say shipshape. Patriotic murals decorate clean, white walls. The blue Navy flag hangs next to the red Marine Corps banner. And inmates at the veterans unit of the Vista Detention Facility—a San Diego county jail—sit politely to hear a message that just might change their lives. “We don’t want to see you come back here. You can do it. Each one of you is smart enough and disciplined enough. You’re veterans, and you’re something special,” said Albert Slater, a retired Marine lieutenant colonel and volunteer with the nonprofit group American Combat Veterans of War. Then Slater asked each of the 32 incarcerated veterans to raise a hand. “When you came into the military, you vowed to put your life on the line to protect the United States,” he said. “I want a vow from you today that you’re not going to come back to this f—kin’ place.” A cheer—“Oo-rah!”—came back from the inmates.



**A patriotic artwork is displayed on the wall near the telephones in the Vista Jail housing module for military veterans.**

San Diego County’s veterans-only jail unit is a fairly new experiment in harnessing the memory of military service to put convicts back on the crime-free path. Launched in November, the unit’s success has prompted the sheriff’s department to open a second one later this fall at the Vista jail. The San Diego Association of Governments is gearing up to study the unit’s track record, thanks to a \$334,000 grant from the National Institute of Justice. Inmates in the Veterans Moving Forward Program get an intense slate of county-provided classes on substance-abuse prevention, career planning and anger and stress management. But sheriff’s officials said community volunteers, such as the Oceanside-based American Combat Veterans of War, play a key role in why the veterans unit appears to be working. “An important piece for anyone in custody is for it to be recognized that you have self-worth and what you do with your life matters,” said Christine Brown-Taylor, re-entry services manager for the sheriff’s department. “All the groups that come in, they don’t treat them like inmates. They are treating them like another human being,” she said. “That’s very powerful.”

Law-enforcement and justice programs focused on veterans are on the ascent nationally, a response to the 2.2 million service members who took part in the post-9/11 wars. Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder are twice as likely as other veterans to be arrested for crimes, according to research cited by SANDAG. However, other factors, such as growing up in a violent home and a history of substance abuse, also play a role in that equation. San Diego County launched a veterans

court, one of a handful in the state, in February 2011. It allows first-time and nonviolent offenders with military-related mental-health problems to get treatment instead of certain incarceration, along with the possibility of eventually having their records cleared. The first vets court opened in Buffalo, N.Y., in 2008. The all-vets jail unit is a more recent addition to the national scene.

## WOUNDED WARRIOR PROJECT UNDER FIRE

Over the past decade, the Wounded Warrior Project has emerged to become one of the celebrated charities in the country—but with its prominence comes deeper scrutiny and criticism. It's a broad but closely held sentiment within the veterans' advocacy community: grumbling and critiques about the fundraising behemoth WWP has become, and whether it has been as effective as it could be. In interviews, critical veterans' advocates and veterans charged that the Wounded Warrior Project cares more about its image than it does about helping veterans; that it makes public splashes by taking vets on dramatic skydiving trips but doesn't do enough to help the long-term wellbeing of those injured in combat. These criticisms come from a broad cross-section of veterans and their advocates, the vast majority of whom refused to speak on the record due to the sway the Wounded Warrior Project carries.



“They are such a big name within the veterans’ community. I don’t need to start a war in my backyard,” a double-amputee veteran who served in Iraq told *The Daily Beast*. But granted anonymity, the vet gave voice to what is at the very least a perception problem for the WWP: “They’re more worried about putting their label on everything than getting down to brass tacks. It’s really frustrating.” The same veteran spoke of waking up in the hospital after an IED hit his supply truck—WWP, he said, had given him only trivial merchandise: a backpack, a shaving kit and socks. “Everything they do is a dog-and-pony show, and I haven’t talked to one of my fellow veterans that were injured ... actually getting any help from the Wounded Warrior Project. I’m not just talking about financial assistance; I’m talking about help, period,” he said.

Some gripe in interviews with the *Beast* about how the charity has become more of a self-perpetuating fundraising machine than a service organization. WWP certainly is successful at fundraising: It had revenues of more than \$300 million, according to its most recent audited report, up from approximately \$200 million the year before. “In the beginning, with Wounded Warrior, it started as a small organization and evolved into a beast,” said Sam, an active-duty Army soldier who works with Special Forces. It’s “become so large and such a massive money-maker,” he says, that he worries the organization cares about nothing more than raising money and “keeping up an appearance” for the public with superficial displays like wounded warrior parking spots at the Walmart. Sam said he’s not interested in becoming involved with the Wounded Warrior Project after he leaves active-duty service—he prefers small nonprofits that are “just trying to survive” with a smaller budget and narrower mission. “They’re laser-focused on making money to help vets, but forgetting to help vets,” said one veterans’ advocate. “It’s becoming one of the best known charities in America—and they’re not spending their money very well.”

The organization also engages in branded partnerships for everything from ketchup to paper towels to playing cards—something that rubs other veterans’ groups the wrong way. “It’s more about the Wounded Warrior Project and less about the wounded warrior,” said a second veterans’ advocate. “You have an organization that is spending God knows how many millions of dollars saying that they’re helping people, but they’re not,” said Davis, an Iraq War veteran. Here are the charity’s self-reported results: As of

September, the Wounded Warrior Project said it was serving more than 56,000 wounded vets and nearly 8,000 family members. To date, the WWP's benefits team has helped 6,600 veterans submit benefit claims, and their Warriors to Work program helped place 1,900 veterans in jobs. The organization offers peer mentoring, employment assistance services, physical health and wellness activities, and long-term support initiatives.

But of the more than 56,000 veterans the group counts as “alumni,” meaning that they have been registered with the organization, many don’t directly engage with WWP. Less than two-thirds (62 percent) of alumni participated in at least one WWP activity or service in the past year, according to a survey of alumni the group shared with the Beast. But according to their internal database, 78.9 percent of alumni have been involved with “engagements and interactions” with WWP this year. The Wounded Warrior Project has also gotten mixed results from charity watchdogs: Charity Watch gave Wounded Warrior a C+ in 2013, up from a D two years prior. Charity Navigator gave it three out of four stars. WWP claims to currently spend 80 percent of its budget on programs for veterans. But their formulation includes some solicitations with educational material on it as money spent on programs. A 2013 collaboration between the Tampa Bay Times and the Center for Investigative Reporting reported that the charity spent just 58 percent of donations directly on veterans’ programs. That year, the figure WWP self-reported was 73 percent. In contrast, a veterans’ charity like Fisher House, which received four stars from Charity Navigator and an A+ from Charity Watch, spent close to 95 percent of its budget on its programs.

There is also a distinct bitterness, especially from smaller advocacy groups, about the level of executive compensation doled out to the group’s leadership: For example, CEO Steven Nardizzi makes an annual salary of \$375,000, according to their most recent tax report. WWP counters that its volunteer Board of Director studies similar organizations to determine executive compensation, and that their CEO’s compensation is approximately one-tenth of 1 percent of its budget. Nardizzi himself has dismissed charity ratings as unhelpful in the past. Ken Davis, a veteran who served in Iraq before being injured, is considered among the “alumni” of the Wounded Warrior Project—even though he said he no longer wants to be associated with it. “I receive more marketing stuff from them, [and see more of that] than the money they’ve put into the community here in Arizona,” he told the Beast. “It’s just about numbers and money to them. Never once did I get the feeling that it’s about veterans.” He could have used a ride to a VA facility for health care, he said. But rather than receive practical assistance from the WWP, he got a branded fleece beanie. “They’re marketing, they’re spending money—but on what?” Davis asked.

Outside defenders of the Wounded Warrior Project, in interviews with the Beast, suggested that critics were merely jealous of the charity’s success, and that the disapproving criticisms were merely a function of fear that WWP was eating up their donor dollars. “There’s a certain level of jealousy, that [WWP] have such cachet, and on a daily basis people will associate [other prominent veterans’ groups] as Wounded Warrior. That rubs people the wrong way,” said one such defender in the nonprofit sphere. As for the administrative costs of the charity, the nonprofit worker continued, “There is a fundamental misunderstanding in the public sphere about what it really costs to run an effective nonprofit.” For its part, the Wounded Warrior Project dismisses much of the criticism. The branding of products will “help to create awareness of the challenges and needs of this generation of veteran ... help fund the 20 free programs and services we provide to injured veterans, their families and caregivers, and inform veterans of the programs and services we provide so that they can register as Alumni to take part in them,” their spokeswoman said.

As for the comfort packages and merchandise, Roberts notes that it reflects the group’s origins: WWP started with just six friends packing backpacks to provide items to wounded services warriors at Walter

Reed Medical Center. And the group also says employees are empowered to provide direct assistance to veterans such as rent, utilities, food, and emergency repairs. The Wounded Warrior Project is certainly not a scam, nor an ill-meaning charity. Even its fiercest detractors admit that WWP has the right motives, even if they believe WWP can be a lot more effective. But as the Wounded Warrior Project has grown to become one of the nation's most prominent veterans' groups, it still has room for improvement. Can it claim to serve 56,000 vets when at least one-third haven't engaged with the group in the past year? Or claim to be maximally effective if it spends more of its budget on administrative costs than the top-ranked charities in the field do? At the very least, the Wounded Warrior Project has a perception problem among a broad group of fellow veterans advocates and vets themselves. "You have an organization that is spending God knows how many millions of dollars saying that they're helping people, but they're not," said Davis, an Iraq veteran.

## **STOLEN VALOR UPDATE**

**Joseph Teti** -- Discovery Channel's "Dual Survival" reality star Joseph Teti, a former Army and Marine Corps special operator, has been disavowed by the Special Forces Association and stripped of his membership with the group. "He is no longer a member and cannot rejoin," retired Army Col. Jack Tobin, president of the association, told Military Times. The association's National Board made the decision after some two dozen current and former Special Forces soldiers came forward with allegations of misconduct against Teti. In the group's 50-year history, only 10 members have gotten the boot. Although Tobin declined to discuss the specifics of Teti's removal, the group's bylaws allow for membership to be revoked for lying about their Special Forces credentials or any "actions, deeds, or behavior by a member which brings discredit, humiliation, or embarrassment upon the Association." Teti and Discovery Channel did not respond to several requests for comment.



**Former Marine Joe Teti, shown in Sri Lanka filming an episode of the Discovery Channel's popular 'Dual Survival' show**

Teti, however, was clearly proud of his membership with the group. Until recently, it was the first entry listed under "professional affiliations" in the biography section of his personal website. Teti has been at the center of a growing storm over his military and combat duty claims since joining Dual Survival last year. He replaced David Canterbury, another Army veteran on the popular survival show, after allegations surfaced that Canterbury lied about sniper and airborne qualifications. Teti has faced far more controversy,

however, including allegations that he misrepresents himself as a “combat veteran” despite never serving in combat while in the military.

In an April interview with *Military Times*, Teti defended his claims to combat experience, saying he served as a contractor in a highly classified special operations unit. He said he served in Force Recon as a Marine and later served as an enlisted Green Beret in the Army National Guard, leaving military service shortly after the 9/11 attacks to pursue work as a private contractor. “Never have I said that I served in the military in Iraq or Afghanistan,” he said at the time. “I want to clear the record right now. I was in a government counterterrorism unit doing direct action missions right alongside Tier 1 assets.” He insisted the government unit in which he served was so secret that he was barred from even discussing it. “Don’t even guess about it because that will get you in big trouble. Don’t even take liberties at guessing because you’re actually crossing a legal line right there. ... I am not at liberty to discuss — ethically, legally, morally — who I worked for,” he said.

Special Forces Association members are applauding the move to take Teti off the group’s rolls. “He’s an embarrassment to the Regiment, because of the falsehoods, lies, and embellishments he’s used in association with his Special Forces qualifications,” says retired Army Sgt. Maj. George Davenport, a “life member” of the organization. Among his lies, says Davenport, are claims that he was a graduate of the Special Forces Combat Diver and Special Forces Sniper courses. “I personally checked with the Special Forces schools and he did not go to those courses. There is no record of him attending,” says Davenport, founder of the “Special Forces Poser Patrol” Facebook page, which added Teti to the group’s “Wall of Shame” Sept. 30 in the wake of the SFA’s decision. [Source: *Army Times* | Jon R. Anderson | Oct. 01, 2014 ++]

**Richard Arthur Rahn** -- In public, Rahn was a Ranger-tapped command sergeant major who attended American Legion gatherings and other ceremonies, swapped tales of combat with veterans and pressed the flesh with civic leaders. In private, he offered comfort to a Gold Star family—visiting their Minnesota home, shedding tears with them over their fallen son, even offering a small statue of a praying soldier as a token of appreciation for their sacrifice. In reality, he was a faker and a felon. Rahn, 54, spent the summer attending various events while posing as a high-ranking noncommissioned officer, but when he donned his dress uniform at an Olivia, Minnesota, Legion post to greet participants in a motorcycle ride paying tribute to six fallen soldiers, the ruse was up.



**The toothpick and sunglasses were two red flags for veterans that Richard Rahn was faking military service. A Ranger tab was sewed on his uniform, and he wore a Combat Infantryman Badge with two stars — an award given out only 325 times.**

Veterans spotted multiple problems with the uniform, everything from an out-of-whack ribbon rack to a Combat Infantryman Badge that would've required Korean War service. Tips came in to local law enforcement, and it soon became clear that unearned medals were the least of Rahn's problems. Police in Willmar discovered Rahn was a convicted felon in two other states, found guilty on drug and burglary charges. They also got a tip that he'd come into possession of a firearm—an illegal act for a convicted felon in Minnesota. On September 9, a month after his in-uniform appearance in Olivia and subsequent trip to the home of Greg and Kim Schmit, police entered Rahn's Willmar home with a search warrant, found a firearm and arrested him. The next day, a search of a storage unit outside town uncovered two more firearms and "a U.S. Army dress uniform, with medals and insignia.

Army personnel officials confirmed to Army Times there's no record of Rahn serving in the Army, much less as a decorated NCO. That was news to Gold Star parent Kim Schmit, who had believed the man she'd offered dessert to and discussed religion with—the one who spoke of the 90 men lost under his command and spent an hour discussing her son, Joshua, who died in Iraq in 2007—was who he said he was. Or, at least, that he had been. Unless investigators can show Rahn benefited financially—or in some other measurable fashion beyond ego boost—from wearing a uniform he didn't earn, charges related to stolen valor aren't likely, Police Chief Felt said. The chief said his men "are beating the bushes" to find such evidence, but that any charges would come at the federal level. Rahn pleaded not guilty to the firearms charges October 1, and he's scheduled for a pre-trial hearing in January and remains in Kandiyohi County Jail.

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## ► BRINGING THEM HOME

### KOREAN WAR MIA IDENTIFIED

The remains of a Union Mills soldier, missing in action (MIA) in the Korean War, have been positively identified 54 years after he went missing and was presumed dead.

The family of Cameron Morrison Flack, who joined the Army at age 17, received confirmation Monday from the Department of Defense that his remains will be returned to Rutherford County sometime in September.

Flack was the son of the late I.K. and Texie Flack of Union Mills and grew up in a large family. He went to school at Union Mills High School before dropping out and joining the Army in 1949.

Flack was one of four Rutherford County MIAs from the Korean War, missing since 1950. Others are William Harold Pate, Thomas Wray Yelton and Frank Robert Barrett. DNA has been submitted by family members of Pate and Yelton, but to date their remains have not been identified.

According to the Flack family heritage, Cameron Flack went to Fort Jackson, South Carolina for basic training with the 50th Infantry Division Third Battalion Com. N.

After basic training he was sent to Fort Benning, Georgia and was then sent into combat in September 1950 as a member of Company L. 3rd Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division.

Less than three months after arriving in Korea, Flack was missing in action. Flack was listed as MIA while fighting the enemy on or about, Dec. 2, 1950, the Korean War site says. The Department of Defense records Flack was presumed dead on Dec. 31, 1953, the day all MIAs from the Korea were presumed dead.

He was lost in one of the biggest battles the United States Army has ever had—the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir. They were in 35 degrees below zero temperatures and were completely surrounded by the Chinese and outnumbered. Two days of battle and they just about wiped out his regiment.

## **BRINGING PVT. LAWRENCE GORDON HOME**

In the last issue, you read about PVT Lawrence S. Gordon who was killed in action near Normandy on August 13, 1944. The group of RFTW riders, led by “Easy” Williams, who planned a ride to Eastend, Sask., Canada to honor Gordon when his remains were finally brought home completed their mission. All who participated were thrilled to have been a part of that mission, which was flawless. The Gordon family was overwhelmed and honored at RFTW’s participation. Mrs. Gordon said, “You have restored my faith in the American people.”

This Power Point presentation tells the story of the PVT Gordon mission.

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/5ogimwisxle3p1v/RFTW%20Operation%20Pvt.%20Gordon%20show.ppsx>





RFTW riders place coins on Pvt. Gordon's casket

## **BENDEGOM, VIETNAM**

Staff Sgt. James L. Van Bendegom, U.S. Army, Company B, 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division, was lost July 12, 1967, in South Vietnam. He was accounted for Oct. 17, 2014. He will be buried with full military honors.

## **JIMMIE COLLINS, WWII**

2nd Lt. Jimmie D. Collins III, U.S. Army Air Forces, 446th Bombardment Group, Eighth Air Force, was lost on June 21, 1944, in the Netherlands. He was accounted for Oct. 15, 2014. He will be buried with full military honors.

## **LONALD SKEENS, KOREA**

Cpl. Donald D. Skeens, U.S. Army, Company E, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division, was lost Sept. 4, 1950, in South Korea. He was accounted for Oct. 11, 2014. He will be buried with full military honors.

Sgt. Arnold Pitman, U.S. Army, Company L, 3d Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division, was lost Dec. 12, 1950 in North Korea. He was accounted for Oct. 7, 2014. He will be buried with full military honors.

## **SOLDIER MISSING FROM KOREAN WAR ACCOUNTED FOR**

On July 25, 2014, the Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced that the remains of a U.S. serviceman, missing from the Korean War, have been identified and will be returned to his family for burial with full military honors.

Army Master Sgt. Lawrence O. Jock, 37, of Fort Covington, N.Y., was buried Aug. 1 in Malone, N.Y. On July 14, 1953, Jock was a forward observer assigned to Battery A, 955th Field Artillery, 8th U.S. Army, which operated in support of the Republic of Korea's 3rd Division near Kangwon Province, North Korea. Chinese forces attacked, forcing the 3rd Division's units to abandon their positions. After this battle, Jock was reported as missing in action. Approximately two weeks after the battle, an Armistice agreement was signed between the United Nations and North Korea. As part of the Armistice, prisoners of war and war dead were exchanged. No further information on Jock was received from the Chinese and North Korean governments or Returning American prisoners of war, and a military review board declared Jock to be presumed dead, with an effective date of July 15, 1954. Between 1991 and 1994, North Korea turned over to the U.S. 208 boxes of human remains believed to contain 350 - 400 U.S. servicemen who fought during the war. North Korean documents, turned over with some of the boxes, indicated that some of the remains were recovered from the vicinity where Jock was believed to have died. To identify Jock's remains, scientists from the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) used circumstantial evidence and forensic identification tools, including mitochondrial DNA and radiograph comparison which matched his records.

Today, 7,882 Americans remain unaccounted for from the Korean War. Using modern technology, identifications continue to be made from remains that were previously turned over by North Korean officials or recovered from North Korea by American teams.

## **AIRMAN MISSING FROM WWII ACCOUNTED FOR**

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced August 6 that the remains of a U.S. serviceman, lost during World War II, have been identified and are being returned to his family for burial with full military honors. U.S. Army Air Forces Staff Sgt. Gerald V. Atkinson, 21, of Ramer, Ala., will be buried Aug. 16 in Chattahoochee, Fla. On April 10, 1945, Atkinson and eight other crew members aboard a B-17G, were assigned to the 303rd Bombardment Group (Heavy). Atkinson was assigned as a spot jammer aboard the aircraft that departed Molesworth, England on a bombing mission over Oranienburg, Germany. During the mission the aircraft crashed and Atkinson was reported missing. Atkinson's aircraft, along with 38 other aircraft from the 303rd Bombardment Group, were flying in a formation as part of a major allied bombing operation against targets in Germany. After successfully dropping their ordnance, Atkinson's aircraft was attacked by six to eight German ME-262 jets. The aircraft

crashed into the Glasgow Lake near Schonebeck, Germany. Of the crew of nine, only one crewmember survived. In 1946 and 1947, German nationals recovered remains from Glasow Lake believed to be the remains of American airmen and they were buried as unknowns in a local community cemetery. In August 1947, the remains were exhumed by the U.S. Army Graves Registration Command (AGRC) and reinterred as unknowns in Nueville en Condroz, Belgium. In December 1948, the remains were again exhumed for possible identification and it was determined the remains were members of Atkinson's crew; however, the AGRC could not conclusively establish individual identifications and the unidentified remains were reinterred as unknowns in the Brittany American Cemetery and Memorial in St. James, France in November 1951. In 2012, the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) re-examined the AGRC's records and concluded that the possibility of identification of the unknown remains now exist. To identify Atkinson's remains, scientists from JPAC and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) used circumstantial evidence and mitochondrial DNA, which matched Atkinson's cousin.

### **MARINE MISSING FROM WWII IDENTIFIED**

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced on July 21 that the remains of a U.S. serviceman, lost during World War II, have been identified and are being returned to his family for burial with full military honors. Marine Pfc. Randolph Allen, 19, of Rush, Ky., will be buried July 29, in Arlington National Cemetery, Washington D.C. In November 1943, Allen was assigned to the 2nd Marine Division, which landed on the small island of Betio in the Tarawa Atoll, in an attempt to secure the island against stiff Japanese resistance. Over several days of intense fighting approximately 1,000 Marines were killed and more than 2,000 were wounded. As a result of these attacks, Allen was reported killed in action on Nov. 20, 1943. In the immediate aftermath of the fighting on Tarawa, U.S. service members who died were buried in a number of battlefield cemeteries. During World War II, U.S. Navy Combat Engineers, "SeaBees," significantly restructured the landscape to convert the island for use by the military. In 1946 when U.S. Army Graves Registration Service personnel attempted to locate all of the battlefield interments, many of the burials could not be located. From Nov. 12-27, 2013 a private organization, known as History Flight, excavated what was believed to be a war time fighting position on the island of Betio. During this excavation History Flight recovered five sets of remains, personal effects and military equipment. Four sets of remains were determined to be Japanese service members and the fifth set was believed to be that of a U.S. Marine. Two sets of military identification tags which correlated to Allen were also found in the fighting position. In the identification of Allen's remains, the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) used circumstantial evidence and forensic identification tools such as dental and skeletal comparison, which matched Allen's records.

### **POW MISSING FROM KOREAN WAR ACCOUNTED FOR**

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced August 6 that the remains of a U.S. serviceman, missing from the Korean War, have been identified and will be returned to his family for burial with full military honors. Army Cpl. Alva C. Groves, 18, of Four States, W.Va., will be buried Aug. 7, in Prunytown, W. Va. In November 1950, Groves was assigned to Company D, 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment (IR), 2nd Infantry Division (ID), when his unit was attacked by a vast number of Chinese forces while occupying a defensive position northeast of the village of Kujang, North Korea. On Nov. 25, 1950, Groves' unit consolidated its defensive lines and continued its withdrawal east. Groves was reported missing in action on Nov. 28, 1950. On Aug. 8, 1953, Chinese forces reported that Groves was captured during the battle and died on April 14, 1951, from tubercular peritonitis in a prisoner of war camp

in Pyokdong, North Korea. Between 1991 and 1994, North Korea turned over to the U.S. 208 boxes of human remains believed to contain 350 - 400 U.S. servicemen who fought during the war. North Korean documents, turned over with some of the boxes, indicated that some of the remains were recovered from a North Korean prisoner of war camp in Pyokdong, where Groves was believed to have died. To identify Groves' remains, scientists from the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) used circumstantial evidence and forensic identification tools, including mitochondrial DNA

## **SOLDIER MISSING FROM WWII ACCOUNTED FOR**

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced August 18 that the remains of a U.S. serviceman, missing since World War II, have been identified and are being returned to his family for burial with full military honors. Army Pfc. Cecil E. Harris, 19, of Shelbyville, Tenn., will have a funeral Aug. 29, in Chattanooga, Tenn., and will be buried Oct. 22, in Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C. On Jan. 2, 1945, Harris and elements of the Company D, 179th Infantry Regiment, 45th Infantry Division were deployed to France. Harris was a member of the rifle platoon, whose mission was to hold a defensive position, near Dambach, France. During this mission, Harris' platoon was attacked by German forces and was forced to withdraw to a more defensible position. After the attack, Harris was reported missing. Between January 12 and May 20, 1949, the American Graves Registration Command (AGRC) conducted investigations on the loss of Harris, but were unsuccessful in locating his remains. On Sept. 3, 2013, the American Battlefield Monuments Commission (ABMC) contacted the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) to inform them a private citizen, while hiking near Dambach, found possible human remains and an identification tag with Harris' name. French authorities took possession of the remains. From Sept. 9-11, 2013, a JPAC recovery team excavated a burial site in Dambach recovering possible human remains, personal effects, and military gear that correlated to Harris. To identify Harris' remains, scientists from JPAC and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) used forensic identification tools such as dental comparison with his records and mitochondrial DNA, which matched Harris' sister and niece.

## **AIRMEN MISSING FROM WWII IDENTIFIED**

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced August 20 that two U.S. servicemen, missing from World War II, have been identified and are being returned to their families for burial with full military honors. The two servicemen are Army Air Force Staff Sgts. Robert E. Howard, 21, of Moravia, Iowa, and David R. Kittredge, 22, of Oneida, Wis. The individually identified remains of Howard will be buried on July 19, in Moulton, Iowa. The individually identified remains of Kittredge will be buried on Aug. 13, in Green Bay, Wis. The remains that could not be individually identified will be buried as a group in a single casket, at a future date at Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C. On April 16, 1945, three aircraft were flying in a formation on a bombing raid to Wittenberg, Sachsen-Anhalt, Germany, when the pilots of two other aircraft reported seeing Howard and Kittredge's aircraft hit by enemy fire. The B-26B descended into a deep dive and exploded upon ground impact. In 2007, a German aircraft researcher interviewed eyewitnesses, who reported seeing two deceased crew members buried near the crash site under an apple tree. He also reported the crew members as being exhumed in 1947 or 1948, by an allied recovery team. In June 2012, a German national informed the U.S. government that he found possible human remains in Muhlanger, which he believed to have been associated with an April 1945, B-26B crash, and turned them over to the local police. In July 2012, a JPAC team began

excavating the site recovering human remains, personal effects and aircraft wreckage. JPAC also took custody of the remains that the local German national had previously recovered. To identify Howard's remains, scientists from JPAC and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) used circumstantial evidence and forensic identification tools such as mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA). To identify Kittredge's remains, scientists from JPAC and AFDIL also used mtDNA and dental comparisons, which matched his records.

## **SOLDIER MISSING FROM WWII ACCOUNTED FOR**

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced September 24 that the remains of a U.S. serviceman missing since World War II have been identified and were being returned to his family for burial with full military honors.

Army Pfc. Richard N. Bean, 24, of Manassas, Va., was buried on Oct. 3, in Quantico, Va. On June 15, 1944, as part of an Allied strategic goal to secure the Mariana Islands, U.S. forces were ordered to occupy Saipan. After a month of intense fighting, enemy forces conducted a suicide assault, known as a banzai attack. This was designed to inflict as many casualties as possible against the 105th Infantry Regiment (IR), 27th Infantry Division (ID). During these attacks, elements of the 105th IR sustained heavy losses, with more than 900 soldiers killed or injured. Bean was reported missing in action on July 7, 1944.

On July 8, 1945, with no new information concerning Bean or 21 other service members of the 105th IR, investigators issued a presumptive finding of death. In November 1948, the American Graves Registration Services (AGRS) reviewed the circumstances of Bean's loss and concluded his remains were non-recoverable.

In Sept. 2013, several Japanese non-governmental organizations, with oversight from a private archaeological company, recovered human remains and personal effects belonging to American servicemen from an unmarked burial. The remains were turned over to the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC).

In the identification of Bean's remains, scientists from JPAC and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) used circumstantial evidence and forensic identification tools including dental comparisons and mitochondrial DNA, which matched Bean's nephew.

## **THREE AIRMEN MISSING FROM WWII IDENTIFIED**

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office announced October 10 that three U.S. servicemen, missing from World War II, have been accounted for and their remains were being returned to their families for burial with full military honors.

Army Air Forces **1st Lt. William P. Cook**, 27, of Alameda, Calif., **Staff Sgt. Maurice J. Fevold**, 21, of Chicago, and **Sgt. Eric M. Honeyman**, 21, of Alameda, Calif., have been accounted for and will be buried with full military honors. Fevold will be buried Oct. 20 in Badger, Iowa and Cook will be buried Oct. 25 in Oakland, Calif. Honeyman will be buried at a future date still to be determined.

On Dec. 23, 1944, Cook along with five other B-26G Marauder crew members took off from Saint Quentin, France, on a mission to bomb an enemy-held bridge in Eller, Germany. The aircraft was shot down by enemy anti-aircraft fire near Seffern, Germany, near the border with Belgium. Following World War II, the Army Graves Registration Command (AGRC) conducted extensive field investigations and was unable to locate the aircraft and the crew. In May 1949, AGRC concluded the crew members were unrecoverable.

In 2006, a group of aviation researchers located the wreckage of a B-26G near Allmuthen, Belgium and notified the U.S. Army Mortuary Affairs Activity – Europe. In 2007, a Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) team investigated the site and recommended it for excavation. In 2012 and 2013, JPAC teams excavated the crash site and recovered human remains and non-biological material evidence. To identify Cook's remains, scientists from JPAC and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) used circumstantial evidence and forensic identification tools, including, mitochondrial DNA, which matched Cook's maternal-line cousins. To identify Fevold's remains scientists from JPAC and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) used circumstantial evidence and forensic identification tools, including, mitochondrial DNA, which matched Fevold's maternal-line niece. To identify Honeyman's remains, scientists from JPAC and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) used circumstantial evidence and forensic identification tools, including, partial Y-Chromosome Short Tandem Repeat (Y-STR) DNA, which matched Honeyman's paternal-line cousins.

## **KOREAN WAR POW ACCOUNTED FOR**

Sgt. Lee H. Manning, U.S. Army, Medical Company, 9th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, was lost December 1, 1950, in North Korea. Sergeant Manning was taken Prisoner of War while tending his wounded comrades in North Korea and died while a prisoner on May 31, 1951. His name is inscribed on the Courts of the Missing at the Honolulu Memorial.

Manning was awarded the Combat Medical Badge, the Prisoner of War Medal, the Korean Service Medal, the United Nations Service Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Korean Presidential Unit Citation and the Republic of Korea War Service Medal. He was accounted for Aug. 26, 2014 and was buried with full military honors.

## **WWII MARINE REMAINS RECOVERED**

Pvt. Robert J. McConachie, U.S. Marine Corps, Company G, 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marines Division, was lost June 15, 1945 in Okinawa, Japan. He was accounted for Aug. 19, 2014, and was buried with full military honors.

## **SEVEN WWII AIR FORCE MEMBERS RECOVERED**

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office announced October 6 that the remains of seven U.S. Air Force servicemen, missing in action from World War II, have been accounted for and were returned to their families for burial with full military honors.

Army Air Forces 1st Lts. **William D. Bernier**, 28, of Augusta, Mont., **Bryant E. Poulsen**, 22, of Salt Lake City, Utah, and **Herbert V. Young Jr.**, 23, of Clarkdale, Ariz., and Tech Sgts. **Charles L. Johnston**, 20, of Pittsburgh, Penn., and **Hugh F. Moore**, 36, of Elkton, Md., Staff Sgt. **John E. Copeland**, 21, of Dearing, Kan., and **Sgt. Charles A. Gardner**, 32, of San Francisco, Calif., all of the 321st Bombardment Squadron, 90th Bombardment Group, 5th Army Air Forces, have been accounted for and will be buried with full military honors. They were accounted for July 18, July 16, Aug. 19, July 31, Aug. 2, Aug. 21, and Sept. 5, 2014, respectively. Bernier was buried on Sept. 19 in his hometown. Young was buried Oct. 15 in Prescott, Ariz. The other service members were to be buried at dates and locations still to be determined.

On April 10, 1944, Bernier, along with 11 other B-24D Liberator crew members took off from Texter Strip, Nazdab Air Field, New Guinea, on a mission to attack an anti-aircraft site at Hansa Bay. The aircraft was shot down by enemy anti-aircraft fire over the Madang Province, New Guinea. Four of the crewmen were able to parachute from the aircraft, but were reported to have died in captivity. Following World War II, the Army Graves Registration Service (AGRS) conducted investigations and recovered the remains of three of the missing airmen. In May 1949, AGRS concluded the remaining nine crew members were unrecoverable. In 2001, a U.S.-led team located wreckage of a B-24D that bore the tail number of this aircraft. After several surveys, the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) teams excavated the site and recovered human remains and non-biological material evidence. To identify Young's remains, scientists from JPAC and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) used circumstantial evidence and forensic identification tools, including, mitochondrial DNA, which matched Young's sister.

## **WWII SOLDIER LOST IN SAIPAN**

PFC Bernard Gavrin, U.S. Army, Company D, 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry Regiment, 27th Infantry Division, was lost June 15, 1944, in Saipan. He was accounted for July 29, 2014. He was buried September 12 at Arlington with full military honors.

## **POW/MIA STATS**

**AMERICANS ACCOUNTED FOR:** There are still 1,641 personnel listed by the Department of Defense as missing and unaccounted-for from the Vietnam War, a number that has not changed for several months. The number of Americans announced by DoD as returned and identified since the end of the Vietnam War in 1975 is now 942. Another 63 US personnel, recovered by the US and ID'd before the end of the war, bring the official total of US personnel accounted for from the Vietnam War to 1,005. Of the 1,641 total, 90% were lost in Vietnam or in areas of Cambodia and Laos under Vietnam's wartime control: Vietnam-1,275 (VN-469, VS-806); Laos-306; Cambodia-53; PRC territorial waters-7. Over-water losses on DoD's list of No Further Pursuit cases number well over 600.

The number of Americans who remain missing from conflicts in this century are: World War II (73,539) Korean War (7,822) Cold War (126), Vietnam War (1,642), 1991 Gulf War (0), and OEF/OIF (6).

**JPAC OPERATIONS:** On 26 AUG, JPAC hosted POW/MIA Consultations with the Lao that were underwhelming in terms of results achieved, but important in that views were exchanged, and the US request for renewed cooperation by Laos on archival documents was not rejected. Little progress was made on other requests by both governments. The lack of positive Lao responsiveness was somewhat predictable, based on uncertainty within the Lao leadership brought about by the recent untimely death of the Lao

Ministers of Defense and Public Security. Another probable reason was the lack of US dependability with on-again, off-again field operations due to budget fluctuations, sequestration and revised JPAC operational plans. Field operations are now ongoing with a larger team, but not yet the full number allowed of 53 US personnel operating in-country at the same time.

Operations in Cambodia have been sporadic at best, and only one field operation occurred in 2014, postponed twice in 2013. The Stony Beach Cambodia specialist is permanently in-country and conducts investigations when and where needed. There are no identified sites currently awaiting recovery; therefore, no JFAs are scheduled in Cambodia until early 2015. For the first time in over 20 years, technical level talks are not being held with Cambodia in FY2014, but plans are being considered for senior level discussions with Cambodia's POW/MIA Committee leadership before the end of the calendar year.

Another series of field operations took place in Vietnam from August 5th to September 7th that included a Joint Forensic Review (JFR), and it was a busy year in Vietnam with regularly scheduled, implemented joint operations. DIA's Stony Beach is still engaged, but on a rotating TDY schedule that is unacceptable and needs to be made permanent, especially with the ever-increasing, broadening military-to-military cooperation. On September 23rd, JPAC hosted annual Technical Talks with Vietnamese counterparts.

UPDATE ON JPAC SHAKEUP: The longtime scientific director of the problem-ridden Pentagon agency charged with identifying the remains of service members missing from past wars is out of a job. At a recent Korean War family update meeting in Washington, Dr. Tom Holland announced he would soon be leaving as head of the laboratory at the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, or JPAC. "You've heard about the reorganization, and I found out last week that I'm not a part of the reorganization," Holland told the group in August. Holland's impending departure is the first leadership change to come to light as part of the major overhaul of the mission announced by Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel last spring in response to increasing criticism. JPAC and a second agency involved in the effort will be consolidated starting January 1 in an effort to streamline the inefficient process. An investigation by ProPublica and NPR in March found the agency's efforts to be rife with outdated science, duplicative bureaucracy and poor leadership.

Holland, who led the lab for nearly 20 years, was the focus of ProPublica's story, which found he served as an arbiter of identifications and established procedures that set an exceedingly slow pace at the lab. With 9,400 service members still buried as unknowns around the world, his restrictive policies were seen as overly cautious. Under his leadership, only one out of every 10 cases considered was ever approved for disinterment to attempt identification. Pentagon spokeswoman Cmdr. Amy Derrick-Frost wouldn't comment on personnel moves. Under the new organization, a medical examiner will oversee identifications and scientific operations, but that person has not yet been named. Derrick-Frost said they expect someone to be in place by late 2014 or early 2015. The appointment of a medical examiner to the lab's top leadership position has been met with protest by some of the scientific staff, who claimed in a letter to the Pentagon that a medical examiner isn't qualified to oversee their work.

The MIA effort will be in flux until January 2016 when the new, as-yet-unnamed agency is fully operational. Some advocates, families of MIAs and politicians are concerned the reorganization will be little more than reshuffling of bureaucracy and are watching carefully to see what meaningful change is enacted.

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## ► REUNIONS

### ANGEL FIRE REUNION

By Don “EZ” Burns, CR Coordinator

On the weekend of August 29, 30 and 31, Labor Day Weekend, the Central Route once again hosted its annual reunion in Angel Fire NM. It's a great ride from anywhere in the country and a very meaningful reunion/event. Not only is it a time for us to get together after the Run, it is a time we as a group can respectfully give back to those who served by our support and participation in the annual “Brick Laying Ceremony” at Vietnam Veterans Memorial State Park in Angel Fire NM for the David Westphall Foundation. This reunion and ceremony would not be possible without the planning and coordination of Barbara “Happy Feet” Montoya, Central Route New Mexico State Coordinator and Bill “Rocket” Rager, Central Route Assistant State Coordinator. Their hard work and dedication along with those who participated in the weekend cannot be thanked enough.

The weekend started a little early on Thursday this year with the “Trike Presentation” at Thunderbird Harley Davidson in Albuquerque NM for Medal of Honor Recipient MSGT Leroy Petry, who also participated in the weekend events riding his “own” trike. A number of us who were able to attend the presentation on Thursday had the honor to ride with and escort Leroy to Angel Fire and Eagle Nest on Friday where a “meet and greet” was scheduled at 5 p.m. at the Laguna Vista Restaurant and Saloon Courtyard. This was a new location for our “meet and greet” and worked out well. A great start to our weekend.

Saturday proved to be very busy and worthwhile. Over 400 bricks were laid again this year, and thanks to those who helped prep the ground, the Brick Laying Ceremony went very smoothly and was completed ahead of schedule. It was a great honor once again to lay bricks myself and to be a part of the entire day. The Angel Fire Memorial is a special place. The riders' forum and dinner Saturday evening went very well. We had a “full” house and actually had more in attendance than expected. Harry “Attitude” Steelman brought the riders up to date with a brief BOD report and all enjoyed a dinner catered by Jane Solois and the hospitality of Eagle Nest Mayor Richard Cordova and wife Terry.

The weekend ended Sunday morning with a service at the Angel Fire Memorial Chapel given by our Senior Chaplin for 2015, Curtis Hubbell. After goodbyes at the Memorial, some of us participated in a planned “Lunch Ride” to Questa NM, with MOH Recipient MSGT Leroy Petry. It also turned out to be a special day as we participated in a ceremony at the Veterans Memorial in Questa to recognize two of their own who survived the Bataan “Death March” of WWII: Tony Reyna and Valdamar Deherrera. Lunch then followed and the group split up, some heading for Colorado and others, including Leroy, back to Albuquerque NM. It was truly a memorable way to end a very special weekend. Again, thank you all who were able to attend.

*Thanks to Skip Hetterscheidt for these photos.*





*Thanks to Alfredo Gomez for these photos of MOH recipient MSGT Leroy Petry:*





MSGT Petry gave a beautiful thank you speech. You can watch it here:

<https://plus.google.com/115771586433600754514/videos?cfem=1&pid=6070888570726906514&oid=115771586433600754514&authkey=CKXT7Lu65PXHeg>

## **KERRVILLE REUNION**

By: Dutch, Road Guard, Southern Route

Wow, what a great Texas size Reunion. As in years past this turned out to be one of the best with some changes blowing in the autumn winds. Janice Wentworth handed over the reunion reigns to Cowboy and Sam who now lives in Kerrville. I believe we all know who will be doing the work, and it isn't Cowboy. In any case, Janice will be around to assist. Janice has done an excellent job and I'm sure Cowboy and Sam will continue that tradition.

Our run from the Dallas/Ft Worth Metroplex was made through Cleburne, Hico and of course a stop in Llano to experience some Texas beef at Coopers Bar-B-Q. We were led by "Ghostrider" and had about six riders from DFW area. Departing Llano we were off to Kerrville traveling through Fredericksburg.

Friday evening Cowboy arranged a dinner at his local VFW. The food was great and the drinks were cold. The VFW put out a fine dinner, and we cannot thank them enough for their hospitality. I was told that Kerrville had been without a drop of rain for months, but the drought ended that night in spectacular fashion with a torrential downpour. It was so bad that several of us waited and picked up our bikes the next day. Thanks to all those who were kind enough to furnish rides back to the YO.

Saturday things begin to settle in with visiting and fellowship, which is what we came for in the first place. "Raven" had planned a ride Saturday but it continued to rain so she made the executive decision not to chance a ride. Most of the ride went through low flooded areas. Maybe next year "Raven"! The day was mostly filled with registration and just trying to dry out.

The Saturday night banquet began with a toast to Virginia State Motor Officer Sergeant Dan Jessee. Better known as "Dan-The-Man". Sergeant Jessee passed away July 31 from pancreatic cancer. He was a long-time supporter of RFTW, Southern Route and worked tirelessly to smooth our path to Washington, DC. "Airborne" donated a bottle of Sergeant Jessee's favorite bourbon and afterwards we all toasted Dan one more time. We shall him a lot.

“Stonewall” received a new red (cardboard) saddlebag for her awesome 2014 Harley-Davidson CVO from the group, and was presented to her by Mike “Tenbears” Dobson. Cowboy reinstated the “BP” award for anyone NOT riding their bike to the reunion. I know, you are asking what does “BP” stand for? Ask “Cowboy”. Guess this will continue for a few years now, so be sure to ride your bike to Kerrville or expect to receive the “BP” award second class. I believe the first class rocker, awarded in 2006 belongs to yours truly.

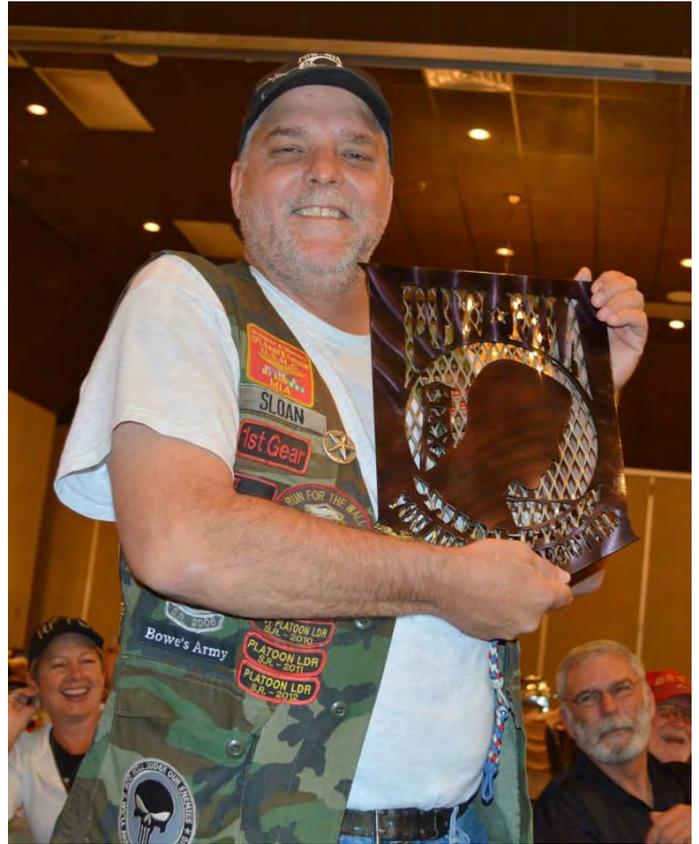
The Texas Reunion means a lot to all who ride with Run For The Wall. The love shown toward our fellow riders was exceptional, and it is truly “FAMILY”.

In closing I want to offer congratulations to Jim “Stoney” Stone who was elected Route Coordinator, Southern Route for 2015, and “Chicken Joe” who was appointed Assistant Route Coordinator. “Ghostrider” deserves a big “Thank You” for jumping into the fire one more time as Road Guard Captain. He said he wants to keep doing it until he gets it right.

If you have not attended the Texas Reunion please make plans now for next year. You will not regret it!!

*Thanks to Raven for these photos:*





► **SICK CALL**

**Code Talker Kee Etsicitty**

Navajo Code Kee Etsicitty was taken by helicopter to the hospital in Flagstaff, AZ after falling and breaking his leg. He was scheduled for surgery October 13. He also has an infection. Our prayers go to this hero, that he will make a good recovery.

**Don "9-Ball" Morris**

Don had a mild stroke last month and went to the VA in Phoenix where he was admitted. By the time tests were run he was back to normal with no ill effects and was released the next day. He thanked everyone for their prayers and well wishes and said he was still on this side of the dirt!

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## ► TAPS

### **Fernando Aguilar**

Fernando was a Marine who fought in Korea and Vietnam and a big supporter of RFTW. He volunteered his time, gas and truck as well as two-bike trailer as a chase vehicle on the Southern Route for three years before his fight with cancer no longer allowed him to be physically involved. Our sympathies go to his family.

### **Richard “Spaz” Cripe**



RFTW riders traveled from all over to a Las Vegas hospital to say goodbye to “Spaz,” who suffered from Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD), a rare, degenerative, invariably fatal brain disorder. He was transferred to St. Joseph’s Transitional Center in Las Vegas, where he passed away October 31. Spaz joined RFTW in about 2000 and was a road guard for a long time. He was buried at Southern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Boulder City, NV November 20. A RFTW escort with Missing Man Formation took him to his final resting place. Rest in peace, Spaz; we’ll miss you.

### **Greg Hoover Delong**

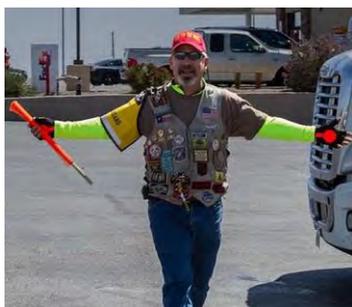
Greg Hoover Delong died October 8 in a motorcycle accident in Idaho. Hoover was an FNG this year on the midway route and was planning to go again next year. He was a good friend of the Dan Smith family and will be greatly missed.

### **Ken “Casper” Jones**

Ken rode with the Southern Route on a Silver Goldwing trike and was a Platoon Leader in the past. He had a heart attack on his way to join RFTW in Grand Prairie, Texas this past May. He had a fellow rider with him who was able to get medical attention. Ken was taken to a hospital where he died two days later. Ken will be laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery on November 12th at 3 p.m. Rest in peace, Casper—you have served well.



### **Russ “Hazmat” Martin**



Hazmat passed away on October 12. He was a Road Guard and on the Advance Team for the Southern Route for several years. He served in the Army as an officer and an aviator for 12 years. He flew in the 15th M. I. and also in the First Cavalry Division, the same division that his father served under prior to his retirement. He will be missed by many and never forgotten. Prayers go out to his family and friends.

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## ► CLOSING THOUGHTS

The states with the highest number of veterans are California (1,795,455), Texas (1,667,740), and Florida (1,520,563). The states with the lowest number of veterans are DC (31,166), Vermont (48,812), and Alaska (74,994).

### *You Are Not Forgotten*

