



# RUN FOR THE WALL

## Quarterly Newsletter

*“We Ride For Those Who Can’t”*

**April 2015**

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## **THE EDITOR’S NOTES**

There is more attention than ever on the effects of Agent Orange. Vietnam Veterans of America has an ongoing campaign to educate veterans on the many cancers and other diseases caused by exposure to Agent Orange. A vital part of that education is a series of Townhall Meetings being held by VVA chapters all over the country. I'm an Associate member of Chapter 975 of Mohave County, AZ, and we hosted a Townhall Meeting last month in Lake Havasu City. We had three speakers who offered information and answered questions, and we had much literature available, which is provided by VVA. More than 100 veterans attended, which was one of the largest groups at Townhall Meetings in Arizona. We're planning at least two more in other cities in the county during the next few months.



The VA recognizes that certain cancers and other health problems are caused by exposure to Agent Orange or other herbicides during military service, and more are being added to the presumptive list all the time. Find out more at <http://go.usa.gov/sNAd>.

If you were exposed to Agent Orange and have contracted cancer, the VA offers eligible veterans a free Agent Orange Registry health exam for possible long-term health problems related to exposure. See more at: <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/#sthash.VY5LeXih.dpuf>.

In order to get the help you need, print and read the VVA Self Help Guide for Exposure to Agent Orange for Veterans and their families (<http://www.vva.org/Guides/AgentOrangeGuide.pdf>). Every veteran should be in touch with a Veterans Service Organization (VSO), including VVA. They offer free assistance to help you present your claim to the VA and Surviving Family Members may be eligible for monthly VA compensation payments.

Visit [www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange](http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange) to find out more about Agent Orange and VA benefits.

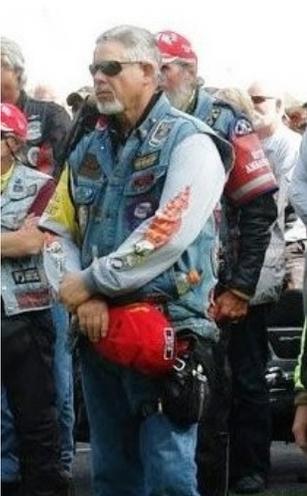
Many veterans have their claims drag on for year and get denied time after time, but advocates advise to file appeal after appeal and present any bit of new information that will help your claim. Their most important advice is to never give up. New diseases are added now and then—a bill to add “blue water Navy” vets to the presumptive list is now in Congress and is expected to approved soon.

Help is also available to spouses and children and grandchildren of veterans exposed to Agent Orange. Please fight for the treatment and compensation you deserve. And if you hear of an Agent Orange Townhall being held near you, please attend so you can receive the knowledge and direction that will help you file a claim.

Judy “Velcro” Lacey

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

## **PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE**



OMG! 33 days to Launch! RFTW 2015- Riders- START YOR ENGINES!

Before I get into the Ontario RFTW venue, please go over these “do’s” and “don’ts” with me:

DO be prepared to laugh, to cry, to have your breath taken away and to be humbled.

DO pack and re-pack your bikes at least twice over the next 4 weeks.

DO start hydrating NOW.

DO realize that there are volunteers ALL THE WAY across country who are anxiously awaiting and preparing for YOUR appearance and participation in the

venues, honors and tributes that they have worked diligently to provide YOU. DO give them the RESPECT to partake and pay attention to THEM. Thank you's are highly appreciated.

DON'T forget to 'ride your ride' be safe. Not only during, but 'to' and 'from' the Run.

DON'T be late to any scheduled event (such as morning meetings).

DON'T forget The Mission, this is not about YOU, This is about THEM.

More DONTs:

"No Politics" means no political speeches, arguments or debates, doesn't mean you cannot have a political point of view, we don't want to know about it!

"No Guns" means no one 'displays'- we don't want to see one, doesn't mean you cannot have one!

"No Attitudes" if you don't know what this means, you probably have one and need to check it at the door, doesn't mean you cannot have an attitude, just means we don't want to see it or hear it!

Here We Go—Ontario

Ontario Hotels still have some RFTW rate rooms available! Use this link to book your Ontario reservations to get the RFTW rate and make it easy on yourself; one click gives access to all RFTW hotels:

<https://aws.passkey.com/event/13054230/owner/8019/home>

The special rates at the Host Hotel and three other surrounding hotels will revert to standard rack rate and the 'block' will go off the rooms putting them back into their inventory, on April 21-24 (different dates for each hotel, due to different contract dates). Don't miss out; we have already met our 'reserve amount' so no danger there, but the rider booking after these dates will pay more and may have to go to hotels less convenient.

HOST HOTEL—Radisson Hotel—Ontario Airport

All planned Ontario events will take place at the Host hotel with exception of the launch date May 13th. That will start in the Convention Center parking lot 'D' next door to the Host hotel. The Radisson is going over and above to make this year memorable, aside from their extensive conference center amenities, they are also setting up a "Riders Lounge" in the Conference center with seating and tables and lots of space to chill in between meetings.

Lots of restaurants within a quarter mile of the Host Hotel—dozens of them within a mile. Several Veterans Memorials within a 10-mile radius to visit and the RNC (Riverside National Cemetery) ride, led by "Mayor" Jim Frost, is a special ride if you can work it into your Ontario schedule.

"Is it May yet?" ... it really almost IS!

See ya in Ontario!

Ken "Wish" Hargrove

*All Gave Some, Some Gave All*

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## ► RFTW 2015

### ONTARIO ITINERARY

#### SUNDAY, MAY 10, 2015

- 4:00 –5:30 pm BOD Executive Session-BOARDROOM -2015 RFTW BOD  
6:00 - 7:00 pm BOD, RC's, spouses Registration Meeting- REGISTRATION ROOMS  
SR/CR/MWR Registration Teams- BOD, RC's, ARC's, RGC's  
7:00 –9:00 pm Route Leadership Registration ONLY -REGISTRATION ROOMS EAST  
ENTRANCE - SR/CR/MWR Registration Teams

#### MONDAY, MAY 11, 2015

- 8:00 – 9:00 am BOD/Route Leadership Briefing -Salon 1&2 BoD, RC's  
9:00 – 10:00 am Finance Orientation -Salon 1&2 Ward, Brammer, RC/ARCs, Registration/ICO  
Teams, Route Finance Teams, Chase Drivers  
10:00-11:00 am Merchandising Meeting -Salon 1&2 Brammer, Merchandise Teams  
1:00 - 7:00 pm All Routes Registration –RADISSON REGISTRATION ROOMS- EAST  
ENTRANCE  
1:00 - 7:00 pm All Merchandise & Vendors Open -RADISSON FRONT Parking Lot  
1:00 –3:00 pm MR Leadership Meeting -Salon 1&2 RC/ARC, Staging/Fuel/MOH/Chase Teams,  
Leadership Support, Hydration, RGC  
3:00 –5:00 pm CR Leadership Meeting -Salon 1&2 RC/ARC, Staging/Fuel/MOH/ Chase Teams,  
Leadership Support, Hydration, RGs, Platoon Leadership (PL, APL, TGs),  
Ambassadors, MM Coord., Photographer, Steelman, Chaplains  
7:00 pm Registration & Merchandise Close

#### TUESDAY MAY 12, 2015

- 7:30 - 8:45 am Limited Registration (RNC Run) REGISTRATION ROOMS EAST  
ENTRANCE  
8:00 – 9:00 am BOD/Route Leadership Briefing- Salon 1&2 - Board, RC's, McKee, Hargrove  
8:30 am Staging for Riverside National Cemetery Run -REAR\_ RADISSON Parking Lot.  
All wishing to participate  
9:00 am - 8:00 pm Merchandise Open (Closed from 5 pm to 7 pm)- RADISSON FRONT Parking  
Lot  
9:00 am - 8:00 pm (Closed from 5 pm to 7 pm) All Routes Registration -REGISTRATION  
ROOMS- EAST ENTRANCE  
9:00 –11:00 am SR Leadership Meeting- Salon 1&2 RC/ARC, Staging/Fuel/MOH/Chase Teams,  
Leadership Support, Hydration, RGC  
9:11-9:30 am Rider's Meeting for Riverside National Cemetery Run - Tennis Courts  
11:00-12:00 '4-Wheeler' mandatory meeting All Routes -Salon 1&2 - Hargrove, Steelman,  
McKee/ RC's  
12:00pm-1:30pm CR FNG Orientation meetings -Salon 1&2 - RC/ARC, RGC, Sr. Chaplin, Fuel  
Ldr, Staging Ldr, Steelman. Platoon Leaders.  
1:30pm-3:00pm MR FNG Orientation meetings -Salon 1&2 - RC/ARC, RGC, Sr. Chaplin, Fuel  
Ldr, Staging Ldr, Hargrove  
3:00 pm-4:30 pm SR FNG Orientation meetings Salon 1&2 - RC/ARC, RGC, Sr. Chaplin, Fuel  
Ldr, Staging Ldr, McKee  
4:30 pm Blessing of the Bikes- RADISSON Parking Lot- Chaplain Corps

4:30 pm	Presentation of Kia automobiles- RADISSON Parking Lot Hargrove, Steelman, Wormmeester, Kia Reps
4:50 pm	Presentations: RADISSON parking lot
5:00 - 7:00 pm	DINNER- Meet & Greet Main Ballroom ALL RIDERS attendance requested
5:45 pm	Presentation of the Colors Marine Corps Color Guard- MAIN BALLROOM
6:00 pm	Presentation of Combat Heroes Bike Build Project. MAIN BALLROOM
7:30 pm	Interdenominational Prayer Time RADISSON Parking Lot Chaplain Corps
8:00 pm	Registration & Merchandise Close

## WEDNESDAY MAY 13, 2015

### DEPARTURE SCHEDULE

#### ONTARIO CONVENTION CENTER Lot 'D'

5:45 am	Registration Opens
6:30 am	Registration Closes (Riders with clipboard "in hand" at 0630 may complete registration.)
6:45 am	ALL RIDERS Meeting and ceremonies led by Ken "Wish" Hargrove, President
7:20 am	Riders Dismissed to Platoon Leaders.

Briefings at platoon staging areas—15 minutes –Guaranteed!!!

7:35 am	Midway Route Departs
7:50 am	Southern Route Departs
8:05 am	Central Route Departs

### COMBAT HERO BIKE BUILD

This year's combat hero is SSgt Brian Mast, of Florida. His story was in last October's newsletter. Brian joined the Army in 2000 right out of high school. He was a Special Operations Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician (bomb tech), and on September 19, 2010 was struck by an IED while working with Army Rangers in Afghanistan. Brian lost both of his legs; a finger and a part of his forearm. He was flown to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington DC., where he had surgery and physical therapy. He continued to have PT every day until just recently, and is now able to walk with his prostheses. Brian hopes to complete his degree and is working on a Federal Internship program that may help to place him within the intelligence community.

Brian will be in Ontario to see his completed bike. RFTW arranged for a flag line when he gets off the plane in Ontario, and a Road Guard escort from the airport to the host hotel.



The bike RFTW had customized for him will be presented to Brian in Ontario at the dinner the night before the Run. He will ride his new bike with Midway Route as far as Albuquerque, and then he will fly home from there. After presentation in Arlington, the team will depart the host hotel on Sunday at 0500 for the 900-mile trip to Pensacola Florida for a final unveil at the Pensacola Harley Dealer on Monday, Memorial Day. Wes Alvarez will then deliver the bike to Brian's home.

The bike was built in the design that Brian requested, by Thunderstruck Custom of Medford Oregon.

## **RUN TO CAMP PENDLETON**

By Doug Lyvere

May 11 (Monday) Depart 0700 (staging at 0645 in front of the Radison). This is not an official RFTW run, but for those who wish, I invite you to join me for a ride down to Camp Pendleton to tour the Wounded Warrior Bn., an \$80,000,000.00 facility just for our Marine Wounded Warriors. See firsthand how our warriors are taken care of and prepare for their future. This is an "all morning" ride; straggle back (I have meetings to get back for). I need a rough count on numbers going. For those in SoCal—or if you're going down on your own—if you prefer, you can meet me at the Main Gate, at 0830. Email me for details/questions ([Doug@Lyvere.com](mailto:Doug@Lyvere.com)), and if you're planning on going, I need number of bikes and people. If we stay on schedule, you will have the time to go to the Main Exchange—anyone, including me, can use their military ID for you to make CASH purchases.

## **RFTW STORE CLOSING MAY 1**

By Ray Brammer, Director of Merchandise

The RFTW Web Store will close May 1 in preparation for the Run, and will reopen June 16, 2015. Your continuing support by purchasing Run For The Wall merchandise helps make the Run possible. Thank you.

## **LATEST NEWS FROM CENTRAL ROUTE**

Don "EZ" Burns, Coordinator

April 4, 2015

The Central Route is ready as is the Southern and Midway Routes. It's that time of year, our Mission before us. To complete this "Mission" we have assembled the very best Leadership Teams possible to lead the "Three Routes" across this beautiful country of ours. It has been my honor to be associated with Jim "Stoney" Stone and Billy "Tumbleweed" Smith this year as Route Coordinators. We will work together to ensure our "Three Routes" arrive in D.C. to complete our "One Mission" at the Vietnam Memorial Wall, Saturday May 23, 2015.

As the Central Route Coordinator, I would like to at this time thank my Leadership Team that has worked with me since last June putting together the "Teams" that get us across country. Dave "Papa Smurf" Klemme, my Assistant Route Coordinator, has stepped up and done everything asked of him and more. Again, it takes a lot of volunteer time to make this Mission possible and I thank all Team Leaders for being part of RFTW XXVII – 2015 Central Route Leadership. I also thank each and every member of each of those Teams who volunteer their time and support to the RUN.

I posted the Ontario Agenda in my news last month. I look forward to greeting Leadership and their Teams per our schedule and of course just walking around saying hello. Most importantly, I look forward to greeting the FNGs who will leave with us from Ontario. The Central Route as of April 2<sup>nd</sup> has 345 pre-registrations. This is some 15% or more than last year. We do look forward to a strong FNG presence this year and I want our Central Route Mission to fulfill the healing needs for all those who participate. It is important to remember why we do this "Mission," to promote that healing among ALL veterans, their families and friends, to call for the 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. This is why we do what “we” do.

Now it is time for the final preparations for our departure from Ontario on May 13th. You have seen it in the Forum, in all Route Coordinators News, about the importance of “Hydration/” Now is the time to start. Get your body moving, get out and exercise, ride as much as you can, have your bike properly serviced and in good repair. Be ready to ride! This Mission will change your life; you will never forget what you will see and experience as we parade across this beautiful country of ours.

I'll see you in Ontario and remember, when asked, “HOW FAR ARE WE GOING?” we will reply, “ALL THE WAY!”

Ride hard, ride safe/

## **LATEST NEWS FROM SOUTHERN ROUTE**

Jim “Stoney” Stone, Coordinator

Today is 2 April and there are still 1636 Warriors still Missing in Action from the war in Vietnam.

40 days and a wake up! How cool is this! That means I leave my home in Ft. Worth 35 days from tomorrow! 5 Weeks!!!

We have built the best team we can find. People from many different walks of life have volunteered to help us guide the Southern Route across this great nation. Over the last several weeks we have also had a couple of people drop out. We will miss our friends who won't be with us, but others have stepped in to fill the gap. As I write this tonight we have 327 riders signed up to ride Southern Route. We will have more than 100 FNGs with us. What an honor it is to welcome those 100 to the RFTW family and our Mission.

Beginning Monday and continuing into Tuesday, your leadership team's days in Ontario will be filled with meetings. The Southern Route Leadership meeting will be from 0900 to 1100 on Tuesday morning. The SR Road Guard meeting will be in lot D from 1200-1330 on Tuesday, and the SR FNG meeting will be from 1500 to 1600 Tuesday afternoon.

Our state coordinators continue the unending job of putting everything in place to ensure our brief visits to their states will go off without a hitch. We have been in touch with police agencies across the country telling them when we will be there and what they can expect and how they can help us. Many local Law Enforcement Officers will assist us all the way from California to Virginia. Some of those police agencies will provide Motor Officers to escort us, and some of those Motor Officers will be here in Grand Prairie the weekend of 25 April at the Grand Prairie Police Spring Classic Motorcycle Rodeo. At last report officers from Louisiana and Mississippi as well as Texas are expected to demonstrate their skills at the rodeo!

Let me tell you about my conditioning ride last weekend ... 200 miles with good friends, rolling across North Texas up near the Red River. A quick stop for lunch and a two hour ride home. Great ride! Then as I was moving the bike to the spot in the garage, I felt some heat where I should not have. My header was cracked! Fortunately I found it almost 5 weeks prior to leaving. Can you imagine if I had not found it? My point here is we must be aware of our machine. Small, seemingly inconsequential changes in how it performs may be nothing ... my gas mileage has been poor for a while now ... the machine was telling me via backfires, and poor mileage that something wasn't right.

I am pleased to report that FullSac Performance of Lake Havasu, Arizona jumped through hoops to help me, even covering the delivery of a new header. Thank you Steve and Tammy. You make a great product, and your customer service rocks!

Back to conditioning: much has been written about hydration ... start early, drink water often ... yes I know what fish do in it, but drink it anyway! Your body needs it.

On the Run drink water and either supplement it with an electrolyte additive or drink Gatorade. (OBTW, both water and Gatorade will again be provided to us by PepsiCo. We are most fortunate to have M25 again this year leading our Hydration Team. Having all those wonderful donations from PepsiCo without a way to move them across the country would be pointless. Thank you M25! You have read it and heard it from other riders—hydration is critical to successfully completing The Mission. I cannot overemphasize that! Some of us have seen the result of a rider becoming dehydrated and passing out underway ... nothing is as frightening as watching a person pass out next to you and the motorcycle begin its death spiral ... it NEVER ends well! Hydrate!

Now back to conditioning ... most of us are older than we care to admit. With age comes experience, and ailments. With those ailments come necessary medications, taken grudgingly every day. Some of you may remember an ARC who did not check his glucose levels and ended up on a chase truck, unable to ride because he had taken a normal dosage of insulin, and eaten less bad stuff than normal. All that combined for a low blood sugar moment I was completely unprepared for. Fortunately, people around me recognized what was happening, and took care of me. PAY ATTENTION!!! Your body, just like your machine, will tell you things you NEED to know. Take your meds, monitor your health ... don't put yourself or others at risk!

Take care of each other! We are on a Mission. We cannot possibly complete that Mission if we do not take care of each other.

I am certain there were other things CJ wanted me to mention, but for the life of me, I can't remember them tonight! Remember the Forum is a good place to ask questions. Many experienced riders participate on the forum and everyone is willing to answer questions.

OK, enough lecturing! Take care, ride safe, and we will see you in Ontario soon!

## **LATEST NEWS FROM MIDWAY ROUTE**

Billy "Tumbleweed" Smith, Coordinator

April 6, 2015:

I have a couple of things to put out. If you haven't reserved your rooms in Ontario yet, do so before April 28 as the prices will go up \$20 to \$40 a night after that. Also the pre-registration will close on Apr 27. If you register after April 27 it will cost you \$10 more.

April 2, 2015:

Hello everyone. It's getting close to our trip. I know a lot of you are getting excited. I have been getting calls and e-mails from a lot of FNGs. As we get closer I need everyone to start making sure that their bikes are in tip-top shape. Also, you need to make sure you are in tip-top shape. A trip all the way across the

country can take a toll on you. The better shape you are in, the easier time you will have. I'm not saying you need to ready for a 10 mile run, but if you take a couple of walks around the block, it will help you in the long run.

I have a couple of leadership spot still open—a couple of Tailgunner spots and the ceremony coordinator. If have been on the run before and are interested, let me know.

We have added a couple of things and changed a few things from last year. Take a look at the itinerary. I am really looking forward to Oklahoma City and Ft. Lee, VA.

Hope to see you all real soon.

## **MANDATORY FNG BRIEFINGS**

All FNGs are required to attend special briefings for those riding with RFTW for the first time. These meetings are very important. You may have been riding for 40 years, but riding with RFTW is very different. It's important for your safety and everyone else's that you attend the briefing to learn how you're expected to ride in tight formation. FNG Briefings are on Tuesday, May 12 at the Radisson. Please make a special note of your route's time:

12:00pm-1:30pm	CR FNG Orientation meetings -Salon 1&2 - RC/ARC, RGC, Sr. Chaplin, Fuel Ldr, Staging Ldr, Steelman
1:30pm-3:00pm	MR FNG Orientation meetings -Salon 1&2=RC/ARC, RGC, Sr. Chaplin, Fuel Ldr, Staging Ldr, Hargrove
3:00PM-4:00PM	SR FNG Orientation meetings Salon 1&2=RC/ARC, RGC, Sr. Chaplin, Fuel Ldr, Staging Ldr, McKee

If you don't start with RFTW in Ontario, you will be at a disadvantage as an FNG, and therefore it's even more important that you attend all morning briefings, which ALL riders are required to do.

## **ROAD GUARDS NEEDED FOR MIDWAY**

The Midway Route is still in need of a few Road Guards. If you're interested, contact Mark Breland at 504-382-6250 or [diesel.mark.rftwrg@gmail.com](mailto:diesel.mark.rftwrg@gmail.com).

## **FNG'S FOR HONOR GUARD**

By Wizard

I am making Honor Guard assignments. Please notify known FNGs who are interested to text me at 409-460-0182 or by email at [rftw.wizard@outlook.com](mailto:rftw.wizard@outlook.com). I need name, road name, service, FNG status, cell phone, where joining. I really need Air Force, Navy, and Coast Guard FNGs.

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## ► WASHINGTON D.C. ACTIVITIES

### FRIDAY, MAY 23

- 6:00 p.m. RFTW BOD ceremony and Awards Presentation at Holiday Inn host hotel.
- 7:00 p.m. Evening Parade at 8<sup>th</sup> & I Marine Barracks
- 9:00 p.m. Rolling Thunder Candlelight Vigil at The Wall

### SATURDAY MAY 23

- 8:45 a.m. FNGs to Arlington National Cemetery. Staging may be behind Holiday Inn, as the Marymount University parking lot across from the Holiday Inn may be under construction. Verify staging location when you arrive in DC.
- 10:20 a.m. Arrive South Gate of Arlington, National Cemetery
- 9:40 a.m. Depart for Arlington National Cemetery
- 11:15 a.m. Arlington National Cemetery RFTW XXIV Wreath Laying
- 12:30 p.m. RFTW Group Photo Lincoln Memorial - begin to assemble at Lincoln Memorial
- 1:00 p.m. RFTW Group Photo: please follow photographer's instructions
- 1:30 p.m. RFTW Mission Accomplished Plaque presentation at the Vietnam Memorial Wall

### SUNDAY MAY 24

- 6:00 a.m. Rolling Thunder Participants may be behind Holiday Inn, as the Marymount University parking lot across from the Holiday Inn may be under construction. Verify staging location when you arrive in DC. Bring cameras, lots of water, and snacks.
- 6:30 a.m. Rolling Thunder Participants depart for the Pentagon North Parking Lot (staging for Rolling Thunder Parade).
- NOON Rolling Thunder Demonstration

*NOTE:* This schedule is subject to change - check schedule posted at the host hotel in Arlington.

### EVENING PARADE IN D.C.

By Doug Lyvere

The U.S. Marines Friday Evening Parade will be Friday night, May 22nd, in Washington, D.C. For the past seven years we have had reserved seating for RFTW. If you're not familiar with the Parade, you should google it. The Parade consists of the world-famous Marine Silent Drill Team, The Commandant's Drum and Bugle Corps, and the President's Own Marine Band. The performance is a major event in D.C. and well worth the time to attend it. I do not know at this time who the "Reviewing Officer/Official will be, but the Marine Officer will be a Flag Officer. Past civilian reviewing officials have been Gary Sinese, all sorts of politicians, some of civilian leadership from DoD, etc. It's a major event.

We have blocks of seats reserved for RFTW. This is the only announcement that will be made. If you wish to attend, you must send me an email with first and last names for each person like a check list as I forward to Protocol when requested. If you come up with more names, please send an additional email with ONLY their names (don't add to an existing email, as I need an easy head count). This is not limited to RFTW or riders riding only all the way. Nor is it only for first-time riders or first-time attendees. Please send an email, don't just give me a list in person as I then need to type it myself. If you don't have a computer, odds

are that a friend does. EMAIL to [Doug@Lyvere.com](mailto:Doug@Lyvere.com). I will send a simple "Good to Go" back to you so you know I've received it. The cut-off date is when the seats are gone (sorry, no way to set a date). Although I have 400 seats, they go fast. PLEASE, if you decide to cancel for whatever reason, let me know.

This following information is important. We will stage as a group to go in, BUT it doesn't have to be one group. I will start sending riders in groups of 25 to 50 IF the Barracks is ready in order to get better seating. We will meet at the corner of 8th & I Streets, SE (South East) regardless of how you get to the Marine Barracks. We will not have a RFTW convoy going to and from, or any assigned RGs, leaders, or guides of any type. Mapquest or GPS works fine IF YOU PUT IN THE CORRECT LOCATION. My recommendation is to get a cab unless you're familiar with DC. The actual address is 8th & I St SE (South East - if you do not include south east in your GPS, cab driver, whatever, you will go to the WRONG place). IF you are coming by motorcycle (I think most do), please do not be "yahoo's"—this is a sound-restricted area. Don't gun your engines or have blaring music. Normal motorcycle engine noise is fine. The Barracks Marines respect our mission and go out of their way to accommodate us.

Parking for bikes—there is a park at the corner of 8th & I St SE (South East). Literally a park. BUT we are allowed to put our bikes in this park ON the grass. If any part of the bike is on concrete or anything besides grass, you will PROBABY get a ticket. DO NOT park in the normal parking lot. Park RFTW tight, please; limited space and you will all leave at the same time. It is possible to go through the parking lot and then into the park. From past experience I can tell that non-RFTW will park in the same area when they see us park there. It's not restricted to just us. Staging to go in is NLT 1900 (7:00 p.m.) at the corner. Please be patient. (I WILL BE THERE by 6:30 p.m. (1830).

Some strong suggestions: DO NOT bring weapons—you will be going through metal detectors. Leathers, the way we ride, are fine but hopefully clean and void of inappropriate comments (we all agree with what Jane Fonda is; it's just not the time and place, as there will be women and children). I would leave any metal you don't need (coins, nail clippers, etc.). Bring water. Bring a rain suit as it occasionally rains. Rain by itself DOES NOT mean it will be cancelled. Decision is made by the Marines just before the event starts. LIGHTNING storms will PROBABLY be a cancel—think lots of rifles spinning through the air and antennas. Best bet, be there and see what happens. Get there early; there are some food/snack places along the street that welcome the business. Bring your cameras.

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## ► OUR STORIES

### **THIS IS MY YEAR!**

By Cindy Roundtree

About 7 years ago, I was in Delta, LA to get a lottery ticket. I noticed hundreds of bikes passing under the bridge. I returned to Jackson, MS to see them all at the Harley Dealership. I discovered RFTW and dreamed of going. I figured my 1987 Harley 883 could not make it the whole way but I could join up in Monroe, LA and ride to Meridian, MS. While I have been waiting, I would go to the bridge over I 20 and wave flags at the bikes. I would scream "next year I will be down there."

This is MY year. My Harley got too old and was in the shop more than home. I gave up and sold her. My son traded a car for me for a Honda Shadow 1100. He just happens to live in San Diego, CA. I am counting the days till I fly out and pack up to join RFTW 27.

I have moved over 50 times since 1974--from AZ, CO, UT, AK, NV, and MS. but I just discovered my POW-MIA bracelet. I will be riding for him and all the military men and women in my family.

Did I mention I can't wait? Wish it was tomorrow!

## **BEST RIDE OF MY LIFE**

Greetings to all from Hoover, AL. For those of you that were on the Central Route last year, you will remember me at SSG David Lee from California. I was the soldier that rode in uniform "All the Way!"

Since the ride I have accepted a new assignment in Hoover, AL. I just want to let everyone know that last year's ride was a life-altering event for me. The friends I made and the places we rode will forever be tattooed in my mind. I made a pledge last year that I would get more active duty personnel involved this year, and I am already spreading the word. We may not be able to go "All the Way." but my goal is to ensure that we have Active Duty representation for each leg of all three routes.

Though I now live in the south, I plan on meeting my Central Route buddies up in Indiana (sorry, just a participant this year) and ride with y'all into DC. Look forward to seeing y'all there.

Your battle,  
"Two Arrows"  
SSG David Lee  
US Army Recruiter

## **AN FNG'S THOUGHTS**

By "Mr. Wonderful"

After 21 years in the military, 17 years with Lockheed Martin, 6 years as a Deputy Sheriff, and 3 years as an Air Force Consultant, I finally decided to retire for good. Everyone has a bucket list and the RFTW was the first thing on mine. Due to a few limitations, I couldn't start in Rancho, so I joined the run at the end of day 2 in Las Cruces, NM. My first impression was a little reserved, because I knew no one. Even the guys, who joined with me in Las Cruces, were from other areas, Santa Fe, Rio Rancho, Denver, and even San Antonio, Texas. We were signed up and told to report in the morning for the briefing. I left that night feeling a little apprehensive, but very excited.

The next morning I was assigned to Platoon 5 and given my FNG briefing. So far everyone was very nice and welcomed me to the family, telling me I was in for a real experience. My Platoon Leaders and Tail Gunners were my main source of information, as I assume is part of their role.

Pulling out of Las Cruces was an adventure. I had ridden in a pack before, but it's usually with guys I already knew and trusted. Everyone around me was an unknown entity. After a while, riders seem to settle in a little. As we drove through El Paso, we were greeted by my friends from the local Rolling Thunder chapter with plenty of flags, as they lined the Lee Trevino overpass. That was special.

The next amazing thing was the first fuel stop. I have to admit, I really have a lot of respect for the Advance Team and all the hard work they do to fuel as many as 400 bikes at one time.

Each day brought new experiences as we visited the various places. One of the biggest thrills was going through all the small towns along the way. It started with Colorado City, Texas and just kept going from there. Visiting

the VA hospital, the schools, and the various sponsor locations was great. The people welcomed us all with open arms, thanking us for our service and defending our freedoms.

The emotions and caring that was poured out on us was unending. I am a Vietnam ERA Vet, so my problem was, even though I served from Sep 67 to Sep of 88, I never served a day in Vietnam. I was enroute to Da-Nang Air Base in January of 1973, but when the peace treaty was signed, I was redirected and spent the next year in Korea. This left me with an enormous feeling of guilt (why was I spared?) While I received the same indignation from the public at large, I was now receiving praise and thanks for something I had no part in.

Don't misunderstand; I worked hard and served our country with pride for 21 years, protecting our nation in ways that many people will never know about, but never in a combat theater. My son (an AF O-6) has at least served in Kuwait, Iraq, and is now deployed to Qatar. My only claim to some any similar experiences is, I've spent 6 years as a Commissioned Deputy Sheriff and continue as a Reserve Deputy, but that's a whole different AOR.

I did develop a few friendships on the run, but they were mostly FNGs like me. Problem is, I couldn't tell you very many names. I know road names are the norm, but I would still like to have known a few of them better. It was very evident that there were several regular participants and the camaraderie for them was intense, but have you ever been in a huge group of people and felt totally alone? Unfortunately that's the way I felt throughout most of the Run. I was asked by one of the board members how I felt, being an FNG. I told her I was sort of lost and if I had any suggestion, it would be to try and assign a "Run Veteran" to mentor the FNGs on how things worked and what to expect day-by-day.

I have been a mission-oriented individual all my life (ride for the brand), so accepting the RFTW as a mission was second nature. I don't think one could label this experience as fun, although there were some humorous times. This run was hard work, especially the pack riding, but mission success was accomplished. Several of the RFTW veterans asked me if I was coming back next year (10 Bears even said he would love to have me as a road guard). I will do the run again and next time it will be "All The Way," but that will have to wait, due to some family medical issues.

I applaud the leadership and board of director of RFTW. This is not an insignificant undertaking. The logistics and coordination has to have been monumental.

All in all, this was an incredible experience, one I am very grateful to have participated in. I will be back.

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## ► OTHER STORIES

### COMBAT VETS FACE 'CRUEL' STRUGGLE TO PROVE THEIR SERVICE TO VA,



Stanley Friedman was shot at. The ship he was on was attacked by enemy bombers. He saw a landmine blow apart a truck carrying two dozen of his fellow soldiers. One of them died in his arms.

But after he came home from World War II, he found himself embroiled in another battle -- this time, with the Veterans Administration, as he tried to get his benefits. In the decades

that followed the war, Friedman suffered from anxiety, depression and nightmares which lasted his entire life, affecting his job and his family.

Yet, as he sought treatment and benefits, the Veterans Administration told him the military records documenting his service couldn't be found. Despite the fact Friedman knew very specific details of the dates and places he experienced the most traumatic events, there was no proof, so he wasn't entitled to benefits, the VA said.

"I have a huge box of letters that he sent to the VA over the years in his attempt to get benefits," said Friedman's wife of 61 years, Minna Rae. "He tried over and over and over again to get help, but they just kept turning him down."

Friedman—who, as he would later learn, suffered from Posttraumatic Stress Disorder—was not alone.

Veterans of all wars, from World War II to the present, are fighting similar battles to this day against the VA—now called the Department of Veterans Affairs—to prove their service and obtain benefits they believe they deserve, and finding out that the VA's records are woefully incomplete.

The John Marshall Law School's Veterans Legal Support Center and Clinic, which works to assist vets with legal and other issues, has lists of former soldiers wrangling with the VA system.

"It's an issue many, many vets have been suffering through for a long time, including recent veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan," said attorney James Garrett.

Garrett had been a lawyer with the firm DLA Piper Global, in San Diego, which has a division that takes on pro bono work assisting veterans. The veteran support clinic emailed him in 2009 appealing for help for Friedman. Garrett said he was stunned to learn that six decades after the war ended, a soldier was still locked in battle.

"I couldn't believe that after all this time, a WWII veteran was still having trouble getting benefits," he exclaimed.

Friedman was 89 years old at that time.

Garrett and his team began making calls, sending letters, searching the Internet, digging through documents and wading through reams of microfilm, just trying to find anything that would prove Friedman's claims.

"Frustrating does not even begin to tell you the truth of the matter. I've found it incredibly unbelievable as a taxpayer the amount of bureaucracy and ineptitude that was occurring, not only in Stanley Friedman's case, but in other cases," Garrett said.

Brian Clauss, who is executive director of the clinic at John Marshall, said missing records are especially a problem for veterans who served before 1973, when a fire destroyed millions of files at the National Personnel Records Center in suburban St. Louis, Mo.

"No duplicate copies of these records were ever maintained, nor were microfilm copies produced," said Clauss. "Neither were any indexes created prior to the fire."

A person would need to be a very good detective to come up with proof of service or experiences.

"It can be particularly cruel -- an elderly veteran has to reconstruct their service record. They're forced to prove their qualifications," Clauss said.

In addition to the fire, Clauss said records may not have been well kept during combat situations, especially if a person was injured and then evacuated. "It is emergency treatment under extreme conditions," he explained. "It is war, people are rushing through the chaos. They don't keep detailed records."

Critics also claim the VA is antiquated and behind the times technologically, and there's still a great deal of material on paper -- and not enough staff to deal with it all.

The VA did not respond to requests from Fox News for comment for this report.

Since Friedman's case came to light, there's been more attention paid to the problem of lost veteran records, but it continues to be a serious issue for many.

Garrett said veterans told him, "Everyone thought we were lying about things we said we had seen and experienced."

One Vietnam veteran, who didn't want his name used, said "the more publicity we get for this problem, the better ... Americans need to know about it."

In 2012, Garrett was able to locate some of Friedman's lost records. And after three more years of legal wrangling with the VA offices, Friedman was finally able to obtain benefits, at the age of 92.

"This validated him. It completely changed our lives," said Minna Rae.

Once he got benefits, Friedman had greater access to care, which included long-awaited therapy for PTSD.

"We're very fortunate he lived long enough to get verification for his service because many other World War II vets died before that happened," Minna Rae said.

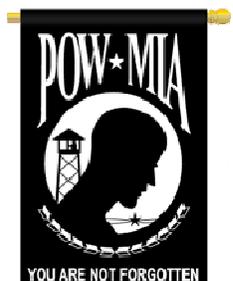
In the final years of his life, Stanley Friedman was eventually able to move to a veterans' residence not far from his suburban Chicago home, called the Green House homes at the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center.

He found peace among the caring staff and his fellow veterans.

Friedman died in his sleep there at the age of 94.

## **POW/MIA REMEMBRANCE ACT**

United States Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) and Senator Marco Rubio (R - Fla.) introduced legislation in the Senate and House to honor American service members who are Prisoners of War (POW) or Missing in Action (MIA).



The National POW/MIA Remembrance Act will honor these approximately 91,662 service members by establishing a permanent commemorative chair on the grounds of the United States Capitol. These chairs are known as either the “Empty Chair Project” (Rolling Thunder) or the “POW/MIA Chair.”

The legislation is co-sponsored in the Senate by Senators Robert Menendez (D - N.J.), Sherrod Brown (D - Ohio), Jeanne Shaheen (D - N.H.), Pat Toomey (R - Pa.), Kelly Ayotte (R - N.H.), and Edward J. Markey (D - Mass.). Companion legislation was introduced in the House of Representatives Massachusetts Congressman Stephen F. Lynch.

“All three of my brothers served in the military, and I understand the sacrifices our service members and their families make to keep our country safe every single day,” Sen. Warren said, in a press release. “We must honor those who have served our nation courageously, including those who have not made it home. I am proud to introduce the National POW/MIA Remembrance Act to establish a commemorative chair on the Capitol grounds in recognition of these brave men and women.”

“I am proud to support this commemorative act to honor the thousands of POW/MIA service members and their families, all of who have made great sacrifices for the protection and freedom of our nation,” said Sen. Rubio, in a written statement. “While this can’t fully express our gratitude to these brave men and women, this small act will serve as a reminder to everyone who visits the U.S. Capitol to never forget the service and sacrifices of our armed forces and their families.”

“Our Prisoners of War and Missing in Action service men and women have served our country with bravery and honor. A commemorative chair in the United States Capitol will stand as a permanent reminder to their families and our nation that we will never forget their heroic service and sacrifice,” said Rep. Lynch, in a press release. “The U.S Capitol is a symbol of our nation’s history and enduring spirit, so it is appropriate to recognize those who remain unaccounted for under its dome.”

“We owe our men and women in uniform a tremendous debt of gratitude and we can never forget the sacrifice of those who have been prisoners of war or are missing in action,” Sen. Sheehan, of New Hampshire in a written statement. “The POW/MIA chair would serve as an enduring reminder of the bravery and selflessness of all POW and MIA service members.”

“We must do all that we can to ensure that our nation’s POW-MIAs are never forgotten” Massachusetts Sen. Markey. “This bipartisan bill reflects that commitment and will remind Americans visiting the nation’s capital of the incredible sacrifice made by those brave Americans whose fate is still unknown and the strength of the families that are left behind. I am very grateful for the work of President Joe D’Entremont and the members of the Massachusetts Chapter of Rolling Thunder to make sure that our service members receive the recognition they earned through their noble and courageous service to our nation.”

## **MARY EDWARDS WALKER: THE ONLY WOMAN TO RECEIVE THE MEDAL OF HONOR**

By Daniel Arkin

In 1916, a high-ranking U.S. military board revoked Medals of Honor from nearly 1,000 recipients, a move that sent shockwaves across the country as former service members suddenly found themselves stripped of their hard-won awards.

A former Army surgeon who had braved some of the most harrowing years of the Civil War was among the many veterans ordered to return their honors. But the physician, who was partial to wearing the glinting Medal with a top hat and bow tie, refused to part with the prize.

It was not the first time Mary Edwards Walker refused to play by the rules.

"She wore the Medal every day of her life, from the moment she received it to the day she died," said Sharon Harris, author of "[Dr. Mary Walker: An American Radical, 1832-1919](#)" and a professor at the University of Connecticut.

Walker — [the first and only woman](#) to receive the Medal of Honor — was a tough, tenacious iconoclast who stood firm before her foes, be they Confederate soldiers or Army bureaucrats, Harris said.

Walker had ruffled feathers from an early age, attracting jeers and insults as she walked the streets in men's trousers and starched collared shirts, according to Harris.

"Boys chased her and threw rocks at her," Harris said. "She once said that nobody would ever know what she had to go through just to step out the door each morning."

And yet Walker was relentless. She pushed her way to a degree from Syracuse Medical College, the nation's first medical school, and later set up an independent medical practice in Rome, N.Y., with a husband she later divorced after 13 years of unhappy matrimony.



*Mary Walker wearing her Medal of Honor*



She met her greatest challenge at the outbreak of the Civil War. As the republic broke on ideological fault lines, Walker descended on Washington, D.C., and demanded a spot in the Union Army. Her bid for a commission as a medical officer was rejected, but she volunteered anyway, earning a spot as an acting assistant surgeon — the first of her kind in the U.S. Army.

"She was virtually always an unpaid volunteer. She was a civilian contractor. But she was incredibly ambitious," said Dr. Allen Guelzo, the director of the Civil War Era Studies Program at Gettysburg College.

Walker stood on the Union frontlines for nearly two years, including at Chattanooga, Tenn., in the wake of the bloody Battle of Chickamauga, according to Guelzo.

War Department records cited by Harris showed that Walker was also a Union spy who dug out Confederate secrets and ferried them back to her Army superiors. Walker was ultimately captured in 1864 by Confederate troops, who regarded her with suspicion and imprisoned her in Richmond, Va., for nearly half a year.

After the war subsided, Walker was still intent on securing an Army commission. She was repeatedly denied. But in November 1865, President Andrew Johnson signed a bill that awarded her the Medal of Honor for Meritorious Service.

The citation said that Walker had "devoted herself with much patriotic zeal to the sick and wounded soldiers, both in the field and hospitals, to the detriment of her own health. She has also endured hardships as a prisoner of war for four months in a Southern prison."

But nearly half a century later, Walker's Congressional Medal was rescinded after Congress tweaked the Medal of Honor criteria to include only "actual combat with the enemy." (A military board reinstated Walker's honor posthumously in 1977.)

"She absolutely refused to send it back," Guelzo said with a laugh. "She insisted on wearing it until her dying day."

She also refused to give up her trademark men's clothing. In her later years, as a tireless advocate for women's rights, dress reform and temperance issues, Walker was arrested repeatedly for dressing in men's clothing and even charged with impersonating a male, Guelzo said.

In the 95 years that have passed since Walker's death in 1919, fashion styles and gender norms may have changed, but at least one basic fact about Walker's life hasn't.

"It's shocking that she's the only female Medal of Honor recipient," Harris said.

Last year, the Pentagon agreed to allow women to serve alongside men in combat roles, a policy shift many advocates hailed as groundbreaking.

The influx of female combat troops could mean an increase in official commendations for their service, Guelzo said.

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## ► VA NEWS

*The following press release was distributed on April 16 by Vietnam Veterans of America..*

### **VA TURNS BACK ON C-123 CREWS**

**(Washington, D.C.)**—Today, the US Department of Veterans Affairs turned their back on reservists who suffer from disabilities as a result of their exposure on contaminated C-123 aircraft following the Vietnam War. Despite their legal authority to grant disability compensation to these reservists, the agency went against its own binding legal opinions and instead asked Congress to pass legislation. The US Department of Veterans Affairs has taken the stance that these reservists do not qualify as “veterans” under 38 U.S.C. § 101 (2) and (24). Vietnam Veterans of America and the C-123 Veterans Association denounced the policy. Vietnam Veterans of America calls upon VA Secretary Bob McDonald to overturn the erroneous legal opinions of the

VA Central Office attorneys and immediately grant these beleaguered veterans their overdue benefits, effective from the date they filed their first claim.

Since we have defeated the VA on its claim of junk science, now they are throwing junk law at us to prevent justice to those harmed by their exposure on these contaminated aircraft. The VA's position is unconscionable. These men and women worked, slept, and ate in toxic planes for years. Waiting for congressional action on this issue is an affront to these elderly, dying reservists," said John Rowan, National President of Vietnam Veterans of America.

Today's announcement came after an Institute of Medicine (IOM) report in January 2015 concluded that exposure to these re-used C-123 aircraft put approximately 1,500-2,100 personnel and reservists at greater risk of adverse health consequences. After the IOM report, the agency faced mounting pressure to formally change its policy towards this group of reservists whose claims have been denied for decades. In February 2015, six senators, including the top-ranking Democrat on the Committee on Veterans Affairs, Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut, sent an open letter to VA Secretary Robert McDonald, urging the administration to give these reservists the compensation they deserve.

"These reservists are immediately eligible for service-connected disability based on the VA's binding legal opinions, court cases, and statutes," said former Marine Rory Minnis, a law student intern in the Veterans Legal Services Clinic at Yale Law School, which represents VVA and C-123 Association. "The Secretary is hiding behind his lawyers, who themselves disapprove of binding agency guidelines."

## **MILITARY PAY AND BENEFITS**

From the DoD: The push to reform military pay and benefits picked up steam 30 MAR when the White House signaled support for the slate of controversial proposals that call for changing the military retirement and health care systems. But President Obama stopped short of endorsing the 15 specific recommendations that the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission sent to Capitol Hill in January. The recommendations would shrink the size of military pensions by 20 percent and create new investment accounts for all troops. They also call for ending Tricare in its current form and instead offering military families insurance policies similar to those available to civilians. "I believe the recommendations are an important step forward in protecting the long-term viability of the all-volunteer force, improving quality-of-life for service members and their families, and ensuring the fiscal sustainability of the military compensation and retirement systems," Obama wrote in a letter to the compensation commission. The White House backs the "underlying objectives" of the recommendations, but will continue to review the details and "to adopt or refine the specific proposals in as many instances as possible," according to the letter. White House and Pentagon support for the proposed changes will be an important political factor on Capitol Hill, where any changes would need approval from lawmakers. The White House will offer more details by 30 APR about whether Obama supports the details of the recommendations or will seek to revise them, the letter said. The changes to military retirement would for the first time offer a retirement benefit to troops who serve less than 20 years. The Defense Department would offer to match troops' own retirement savings up to 5 percent of basic pay. Troops would own that investment account regardless of when they leave the military. The proposal would also give troops who reach 12 years of service a lump-sum retention bonus in exchange for a new four-year service commitment. The amount would likely vary by service and career field.

## **VET ADVOCATES UNHAPPY WITH NEW MANDATE**

Beginning 24 MAR veterans filing or appealing claims must now use standardized forms, a controversial move that the VA says will streamline the process, but some advocates say it will cost tens of thousands of veterans their benefits. “This change is largely unnecessary and it’s been made solely for the convenience of the VA,” said Gerald Manar, Veterans of Foreign Wars National Veterans Service deputy director. Until now, veterans have been able to begin the claims or appeals process by submitting a letter or even a scrap of paper. That informal system preserved the initial date of their claim, meaning any benefits awarded would go back to the date that the VA received the note. According to numbers the VA used to get the rule change approved, about half of all veterans filing claims or appeals used the informal system. Under the new system, benefits will still go back to the date of claim or appeal, but the clock starts only when a veteran files standardized VA paperwork. If the VA receives a handwritten note, department officials will send back a response informing the veteran of the proper paperwork and where to find it, though they will not send the paperwork itself.

Replacing the informal claim is an “intent to file” form, for those who want to file a claim but still need to gather more information or documentation. VA officials have said the new process will reduce confusion and make it easier to file claims. Thomas Murphy, VA’s director of compensation service, said inaccurate information in informal claims often led to delays in compensation for veterans. “It was difficult to keep track of and veterans often had wrong dates of claim as a result,” he said.

Veterans advocates, however, are incensed by the mandate, and several veterans advocate groups have filed a lawsuit to stop the VA from changing the way veterans file disability claims and appeals. The lawsuit was joined by American Legion, AMVETS, Military Order of the Purple Heart, the National Veterans Legal Services Program and the Vietnam Veterans of America. “Our nation’s promise to care for its injured and disabled veterans is being diluted by this new VA rule,” said Ron Abrams, joint executive director of the National Veterans Legal Services Program. Some concerns were:

Older veterans, who may not own a computer, could be disproportionately affected, along with those suffering from brain injuries who may have difficulty navigating the formal site and keeping track of user names and passwords, Disabled American Veterans’ National Service Director Jim Marszalek said. “Those are the people we’re leaving behind, those most in need,” he said.

Another worry is that tens of thousands of veterans could potentially lose months of benefits in the confusion over the new rules and the wait for the VA to respond to them. That’s because the clock won’t start on benefits until the date a veteran submits the proper intent-to-file form — meaning many who mistakenly file informal claims will have to wait for the VA to respond and start over.

The VA has no deadline to respond and will not send the claim forms with their letter, another sticking point for advocates. “That’s unfairly penalizing veterans,” Marszalek said.

Murphy points out that the VA announced the deadline six months ago and even created a new avenue to file informal claims — a call center 800 number. He added that the change in the VA simply brings it in line with other federal agencies, such as Social Security and Medicare, and that it’s unnecessary to send veterans forms when responding to improperly filed claims. “I believe we’re at such a place in society that we don’t need to be sending you a form,” he said. Among the many controversies swirling around the VA is a backlog of hundreds of thousands of disability claims that has dogged the department for years. The change could help the VA with the backlog, because veterans who have trouble with the new system or mistakenly file an informal claim will delay or give up on filing their claim, Manar said. “Thousands of veterans who haven’t when a veteran files standardized VA paperwork got the word or who haven’t

understood what they saw in the newspaper or magazine ... are going to do what they've always done," Manar said.

## **PENDING LEGISLATION**

The Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act was introduced in the House by Rep. Chris Gibson (D-NY) along with the signatures of 131 strongly bipartisan original co-sponsors on February 13, 2015. This legislation will return the presumption of exposure to herbicide to Navy and Marine veterans who served in the off shore waters of Vietnam. HR-969 now replaces HR-543, which was the number used in the previous 113th Congress. The bill has already progressed to the Senate, which is a good indication of possible passage. In the Senate, the bill is S.681: Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2015.

*The following bills currently in Congress are of interest to veterans. Of particular interest is a bill, H.R. 1509, to reinstate the draft under certain conditions. Also of interest is a bill to revoke bonuses paid to employees involved in electronic wait list manipulations.*

*To follow these bills, go to*

<http://beta.congress.gov/search?q=%7B%22source%22%3A%22legislation%22%7D#>

### **House Bills:**

H.R.245: VA Claim Effective Dates. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to codify certain existing provisions of law relating to effective dates for claims under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes

H.R.252: Comprehensive Homes for Heroes Act of 2015. A bill to provide housing assistance for very low-income veterans

H.R.294: Long-Term Care Veterans Choice Act. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into contracts and agreements for the transfer of veterans to non-Department medical foster homes for certain veterans who are unable to live independently.

H.R.303: Retired Pay Restoration Act. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to permit additional retired members of the Armed Forces who have a service-connected disability to receive both disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs for their disability and either retired pay by reason of their years of military service or combat-related special compensation.

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

H.R.675: Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2015. A bill to increase, effective as of December 1, 2015, the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the

rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans, and for other purposes.

H.R.677: American Heroes COLA Act of 2015. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for annual cost-of-living adjustments to be made automatically by law each year in the rates of disability compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for survivors of certain service-connected disabled veterans.

H.R.941: Non-VA Department Health Care. A bill to amend the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 to extend the requirement of the Secretary to furnish hospital care and medical services through non-Department of Veterans Affairs entities to veterans residing in certain locations.

H.R.993: Veterans' Independent Living Enhancement Act. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to repeal the limitation on the number of veterans authorized to be enrolled in programs of independent living services and assistance administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

H.R.1302: VA Appeals Backlog Relief Act. A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a deadline for the certification of certain forms by regional offices of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

H.R.1414: Pay As You Rate Act. A bill to direct the Secretary to make interim payments of disability compensation benefits for certain claims for such compensation prior to the adjudication of such claims, and for other purposes.

H.R.1509: Reinstate Draft. A bill to amend the Military Selective Service Act to require the reinstatement of the draft whenever an authorization on the use of military force or declaration of war is in effect and to provide for the registration of women with the Selective Service System, and for other purposes.

H.R.1594: Repeal SBP DIC Offset. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to repeal the requirement for reduction of survivor annuities under the Survivor Benefit Plan for military surviving spouses to offset the receipt of veterans dependency and indemnity compensation.

#### **Senate Bills:**

S.41: Veterans Travel Tax Relief Act of 2015. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a deduction for travel expenses to medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs in connection with examinations or treatments relating to service-connected disabilities.

S.136: Gold Star Fathers Act of 2015. A bill to amend chapter 21 of title 5, United States Code, to provide that fathers of certain permanently disabled or deceased veterans shall be included with mothers of such veterans as preference eligible for treatment in the civil service.

S.207: Veterans Access to Community Care Act of 2015. A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to use existing authorities to furnish health care at non-Department of Veterans Affairs facilities to veterans who live more than 40 miles driving distance from the closest medical facility of the Department that furnishes the care sought by the veteran, and for other purposes.

S.241: Military Family Relief Act of 2015. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the payment of temporary compensation to a surviving spouse of a veteran upon the death of the veteran, and for other purposes.

S.271: Retired Pay Restoration Act of 2015. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to permit certain retired members of the uniformed services who have a service-connected disability to receive both disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs for their disability and either retired pay by reason of their years of military service or Combat-Related Special Compensation, and for other purposes.

S.603: Rural Veterans Travel Enhancement Act of 2015. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to make permanent the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to transport individuals to and from facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs in connection with rehabilitation, counseling, examination, treatment, and care, and for other purposes.

S.627: Revoke VA Wait List Manipulator's Bonus. A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to revoke bonuses paid to employees involved in electronic wait list manipulations, and for other purposes.

S.681: Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2015. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify presumptions relating to the exposure of certain veterans who served in the vicinity of the Republic of Vietnam, and for other purposes.

S.695: Dignified Interment of Our Veterans Act of 2015. A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct a study on matters relating to the burial of unclaimed remains of veterans in national cemeteries, and for other purposes.

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## ► OTHER NEWS

### **RAYTHEON BBQ RFTW 2015 CANCELLED**

After eight years of having the honor and pleasure of hosting the Raytheon sponsored RFTW and Veterans BBQ fundraiser, the time has come to say that unfortunately due to financial situations there will NOT be a BBQ fund-raiser for 2015. There has been lots of restructuring at Raytheon and that's just the reality of the times. However, Raytheon still believes in our Mission and HAS made a donation to RFTW 2015. So a big OORAHHH goes to Raytheon.

I want to thank RAYTHEON for their continued support and belief in RFTW over the years, What started out as a simple little idea turned into one great event with plenty of great times honor and remembrance for all of our veterans and POWs/MIAs. The BBQ fundraiser would never have been as good as it was without the help from Raytheon's Leadership. Thank You again.



I want to thank all of you who were my "Boots on the Ground"—Our Blue Star Moms, David "Pegger," Nacho, and the Raytheon "Events" Crew. You folks are the backbone and helped make my life waaaayyyy easier with the BBQ. I can't thank you enough. (I hope I didn't forget anyone.) I also want to thank all the vendors, Redondo Beach JROTC, El Segundo Choir, Hot Rods, food vendors, and last but not least ALL OF YOU who have attended the fundraiser over the years. Thanks for your support, good smiles and hugs. You people are the BEST.

*Raytheon BBQ Fundraiser in 2012*

Finally. This does not mean that maybe I can't put something together for 2016. I already have a few ideas and as always I will keep you all posted. RFTW 2015 is coming up quick, Get yourself and your gear ready to go. Looking forward to seeing all of you soon.

THANK YOU & WELCOME HOME

Daniel Lopresto  
Fire Prevention  
Raytheon SAS El Segundo CA

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## ► BRINGING THEM HOME

### REMAINS OF TWO FROM VIETNAM IDENTIFIED

The Department of Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced March 31 that the remains of two U.S. servicemen missing from the Vietnam War have been identified and will be buried with full military honors.

Army Staff **Sgt. Bunyan D. Price Jr.**, 20, of Monroe, N.C., and **Sgt. Rodney L. Griffin**, 21, of Mexico, Mo., assigned to 2nd Battalion, 34th Armor Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, were passengers aboard an UH-1H Iroquois (Huey) helicopter that was en route to Fire Support Base Katum, South Vietnam, when it was diverted due to bad weather. After flying into Cambodian airspace, the aircraft came under heavy enemy ground fire causing the pilot to make an emergency landing in Kampong Cham Province, Cambodia. The Huey's four crewmen and its four passengers survived the landing. One crewman was able to evade being captured by enemy forces and later returned to friendly lines. The other three crewmen and one passenger were captured. Two of the captured crewmen were released by the Vietnamese in 1973, and the remains of the other two captured men, were returned to U.S. control in the 1980s and identified. Price and Griffin died at the site of the crash during a fire fight with enemy forces. Their remains were not

recovered after the fire fight. Price will be buried, April 11, in Belmont, N.C. Griffin will be buried, April 25, in Mexico, Mo.

From 1992 through 2008, joint U.S./Kingdom of Cambodia (K.O.C.) teams investigated the site without success. On Feb. 18, 2009, a joint team interviewed witnesses in the Memot District of Cambodia who claimed to have information on the loss. The witnesses identified a possible burial site for the two unaccounted for servicemen. The team excavated the burial site but was unsuccessful locating the remains.

From Jan. 16, 2010 to March 11, 2011, joint U.S./K.O.C. teams excavated the area, but were unsuccessful recovering the crewmen's remains. In February 2012, another joint U.S./K.O.C. team re-interviewed two of the witnesses. The witnesses identified a secondary burial site near the previously excavated site. The team excavated the secondary burial site and recovered human remains and military gear from a single grave.

In the identification of Price, scientists from DPAA and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) analyzed circumstantial evidence and used forensic identification tools, to include mitochondrial DNA, which matched his brothers and sisters.

The following have been recovered since January:

3/10/2015: **2nd Lt. Harry B. McGuire** U.S. Army Air Forces 718th Squadron, 449th Bomber Group, 15th Air Force 1/30/1944 Italy

3/7/2015: **Sgt. Wallace J. Dawson** U.S. Army Company L, 3rd Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division 2/14/1951 South Korea

3/4/2015: **Chief Master Sgt. Edwin E. Morgan** U.S. Air Force 6252nd Combat Support Group 3/13/1966 Laos

3/4/2015: **2nd Lt. Edward F. Barker** U.S. Army Air Forces Headquarters Squadron, 8th Air Service Group 9/30/1944 Papua New Guinea

2/26/2015: **Pfc. Lotchie J.R. Jones** U.S. Army Company B, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division 2/28/1951 North Korea

2/25/2015: **Staff Sgt. Bunyan D. Price Jr.** U.S. Army 2nd Battalion, 34th Armor Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division 5/2/1970 Vietnam

2/20/2015: **Pfc. John R. Bowers** U.S. Army Company L, 3rd Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division 2/14/1951 South Korea

2/19/2015: **2nd Lt. John W. Herb** U.S. Army Air Forces 1st Air Division, 359th Fighter Group, 368th Fighter Squadron 4/13/1945 Germany

2/3/2015: **2nd Lt. Stephen V. Biezis** U.S. Army Air Forces 575th Bombardment Squadron, 391st Bombardment Group, 9th Air Force 12/23/1944 Germany

1/28/2015: **Sgt. Arnold V. Andring** U.S. Army Company L, 3rd Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 8th Army 2/4/1951 North Korea

1/28/2015: **2nd Lt. Alvin Beethe** U.S. Army Air Forces 393rd Fighter Squadron, 367th Fighter Group, 9th Air Force 11/26/1944 Germany

1/27/2015: **Sgt. Floyd J.R. Jackson** U.S. Army Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division 12/12/1950 North Korea

1/26/2015: **1st Lt. James F. Gatlin, Jr.** U.S. Army Air Forces 575th Bombardment Squadron, 391st Bombardment Group, 9th Air Force 12/23/1944 Germany

1/26/2015: **Cpl. Lindsey C. Lockett** U.S. Army Medical Detachment, Headquarters Battery, 503rd Field Artillery Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division 12/1/1950 North Korea

1/17/2015: **Capt. David Chorlins** U.S. Air Force 602nd Special Operations Squadron, 34th Tactical Group 1/11/1970 Laos

1/16/2015: **Cpl. C. G. Bolden** U.S. Army Company C, 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division 1/5/1951 North Korea

1/13/2015: **Sgt. 1st Class Donald R. Strum** U.S. Army Company C, 19th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division 11/4/1950 North Korea

1/10/2015: **Sgt. 1st Class James W. Holt** U.S. Army Company C, 5th Special Forces Group 2/7/1968 Vietnam

1/6/2015: **Cpl. Robert Higgins** U.S. Army Battery C, 15th Field Artillery Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division 2/13/1951 South Korea

1/5/2015: **Sgt. Joseph M. Snock, Jr.** U.S. Army Heavy Mortar Company, 31st Infantry Regiment 11/30/1950 North Korea

## **DNA SAMPLES NEEDED FOR ID**

There are 83,000 missing and unaccounted for Americans from World War II forward, yet many families of the missing have yet to provide a family reference sample to assist in DNA identifications. Currently, 89 percent of Korean War families have provided samples, as well as 83 percent of Cold War families and 81 percent of Vietnam War families, but only 4 percent of WWII families have. The government last year identified 107 MIAs, but more could have been identified—and faster—if more family reference samples were on file. Please forward the following service casualty office contact information to MIA families in your hometown, as well as to local newspapers:

Army: 800-892-2490

Marine Corps: 800-847-1597

Navy: 800-443-9298

Air Force: 800-531-5501

State Department: 202-485-6106

The number of Americans who remain missing from conflicts in this century are: World War II (73,515), Korean War (7,855), Cold War (126), Vietnam War (1,656), 1991 Gulf War (5), and Libya (1).

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## ► 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 had surgery October 13 and also developed an infection. Last word is that he is recovering nicely. Our prayers go to this hero, that he will make a good recovery. UPDATE: on February 15 Kee attended an Honor Ride in Gallup to honor him and celebrate his remarkable recovery from the fall.



### **Roland "Pegleg" Marcharnd**

Roland is recovering nicely from his April 15th surgery.

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## ► CLOSING THOUGHTS

For the biker who has everything!



Vietnam POWs - 40 years later

[http://www.youtube.com/watch\\_popup?v=LemllfcAY8A&sns=em](http://www.youtube.com/watch_popup?v=LemllfcAY8A&sns=em)

## ***You Are Not Forgotten***

