



WE HONOR OUR KILLED IN ACTION AND WANT AN ACCOUNTING OR RELEASE OF OUR MISSING IN ACTION OR PRISONERS OF WAR.

Official Newsletter of... "Run For The Wall" ...April 2003

Quarterly Newsletter  
" We Ride For Those Who Can't "  
April 2003

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**QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER - APRIL 2003**

*We Ride for Those Who Can't*

**RFTW - WE WILL RIDE !!!**

By Terry "Doorgunner" Clevenger

Several people have written to ask me if Run For The Wall will be cancelled due to the war in Iraq.

The answer is a resounding: "NO!"

Now, more than ever, we will Ride In Freedom For Those Who Can't.

I suppose that if RFTW were a "fun run" there may be some chance of it being cancelled or curtailed, but RFTW is a Mission that's absolutely vital, and it will go on.

Our troops need our support now more than ever. We must be sure that those who return alive are welcomed home, and that their wounds, both physical and spiritual, are cared for. We must honor and remember those who sacrifice their lives on our behalf, and we must honor and care for their families. And we must remember that tonight the POW-MIA issue remains of utmost importance.

In March, seven American Soldiers and Marines, and an unknown number of our British allies joined the ranks of the POWs for whom we ride, and there were at least 17 American G.I.s and an unknown number of British troops in Iraq then listed as MIA, or "DUSTWUN" (Duty Status-Whereabouts Unknown.)

There is fresh evidence that Navy pilot Captain Michael Scott Speicher, shot down near Baghdad on January 17, 1991, is still alive after more than twelve years in Iraqi captivity.

Meanwhile, as we pray for those who are newly missing or captive, we cannot forget those still unaccounted for in Southeast Asia, Korea, and World War II. Our Mission to bring them ALL home remains essential.

I firmly and wholeheartedly support my Commander in Chief, and our military leaders. However, the US Government has repeatedly shown over the years that they may forget our Prisoners of War and Missing in Action unless pressure is kept up by people who care - people like those in our Run For The Wall family. We stand as a beacon of hope for a Soldier, Sailor, Airman or Marine who is captured, that they will NOT be forgotten; that they will be brought home. We must not let down these American Heroes.

If I have to ride alone, I'll do it. But I know that I won't have to, 'cause I know that hundreds of my RFTW Brothers and Sisters will be there with me. There will be hundreds of American Patriots on our bikes, and more following us in 4-wheelers. They'll stand on freeway overpasses with flags, and they'll bring their children and grandchildren along, to teach them what "selfless service," and "loyalty," and "commitment to comrades" really means. Now, more than ever, we WILL ride.

Artie Muller reports that Washington, DC is under tighter security than ever, and new procedures will probably affect the yearly Memorial Day Run in ways as yet undetermined. However, our brothers at Rolling Thunder are working closely with the Pentagon officials, National Park Services, the Metropolitan Police (Washington, DC), Arlington Police and Virginia State Police, to be ready for any necessary changes. As with Run For The Wall, the Rolling Thunder Mission will continue.

Start packing and service your vehicle. On May 14, we ride.

For excellent coverage of the POW-MIA issue, including photos and bios of those recently missing and captured, please visit the website sponsored by our brothers and sisters in the National Alliance of Families of POW-MIAs at: <http://www.nationalalliance.org>

Please pray for our troops and their families, and NEVER FORGET our POW-MIAs and ALL who have given their lives for our Republic.

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## **A PIECE OF HISTORY IN RFTW**

By Sandra "Littlebit" McKinney

The way I look at it, I have two families! I come from a very small birth family, but WOW! do I ever have a big family in Run For the Wall. I eased



into this RFTW family year by year. My husband, Jackie "BestMan" McKinney, started riding with the group in Arizona and New Mexico in 1998 and again in 1999. I did not ride with him, but I did meet the group at the KOA campground in Gallup, waving at them and holding up my flag and feeling pride in what these Vietnam Veterans and supporters were doing. In 2000, our motorcycle club, Sundance IronRiders, hosted our first RFTW dinner and ceremonies. I got further involved with the group through making banners, printing the dinner schedule and planning the dinner along side my husband. I greeted the riders as they came into the dinner that first night and heard many stories of the ride so far that year. My emotion and pride grew and I knew I was hooked. Jackie had met the group at Painted Desert, AZ and continued on to Cimarron, NM. When he got back home, he said he had to ride 'all the way' next year.

Well, in 2001 he became the New Mexico State Coordinator for RFTW and I was involved in the background; making notes, typing e-mails, writing letters, answering phone calls, and once again planning for the Gallup dinner. He rode from Painted Desert, AZ to Washington, DC, calling me each night to report the day's events. I was envious, I wanted the emotion he was feeling and the experience he was having. I hopped on a plane and flew to DC and a friend took me out to Toms Brook to meet the group as they rode in. I jumped on the back of Jackie's motorcycle and immediately got drenched in the rain...but I enjoyed every minute of that ride into Washington, DC and the many events throughout the weekend.

2002 and I was behind the wheel of a Yukon XL, pulling a support trailer from Ontario, CA to Washington, DC. Now THAT was an experience. There is a rubber-band effect created by 300 motorcycles that extends on back to the 'cages'. It was pretty stressful at the back of the pack...accelerate and brake, accelerate and brake and always watch the vehicle in front of you! There are many emotions that find you throughout the trip, but there was more than one night that the tears were ready to creep down my cheeks because of the responsibilities of driving. But I knew that others from our group had experienced much more in their times of service to our country. I formed the "stiff upper lip" and continued on!

Now, my husband Jackie, is not a Vet. He, unfortunately, was born with severe asthma and was classified 4-F when he was called to the draft board in 1968. He attended New Mexico Military Institute in High School, but was asked to leave because of his health. He spent too much time in the infirmary, unable to perform the rigorous routines. He was born into a military family; his father was in the Army for 13 years and Jackie spent the first three years of his life in Germany at an Army Base. Jackie had an uncle who was MIA in WWII, who was never brought home, and Jackie saw what that did to his grandparents and his mother as he was growing up. My father was in the Army and a Korean War Veteran, but stuffed it all inside and never talked about it. I graduated from High School in 1973; the Vietnam War was part of 'current events' in school. I was too young to have classmates that were called to fight. I was unaware of the protests that were happening during that era; I was too busy with homecoming, prom and SAT's. So WHY did we become involved with Run For The Wall? To give something back to those that did serve our country, that gave of themselves so that we can enjoy the freedoms we have today, to show our respect and fight for a full accounting of those who have not yet made it back home.

When IronMike asked me if I would be interested in working on the RFTW Newsletter, I only hesitated slightly. I asked him for time to discuss it with Jackie, but I knew my answer would be YES! Jackie was certainly in agreement with me and here I am creating my first publication for you, my RFTW Family. I am dedicated to doing my very best for you. Thank you for your support and confidence in me!

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## **ITINERARY CHANGES - VERY IMPORTANT**

Please note that there have been some changes made this year to the Daily Itinerary. Particularly note:

### Central Route

1. Day 1- Arrival in Williams, AZ: Run will parade through town and go directly to American Legion for dinner. Fuel

independently. Campers still welcome at KOA, but entire Run won't go there in the evening. Breakfast, morning briefing and staging will be at KOA in the morning.

2. Day 2 - Gas Stop, Winslow, AZ: Exit 257, Flying J Travel Center.

Mileage changes:

Williams - Winslow: 90 miles. Winslow - Painted Desert: 55 miles.

### Central Route and Southern Route

3. Day 10 - Gas & Lunch stop, Strasburg, VA, Exit 298. Mileage Changes:

Raphine - Strasburg: 93 miles. Strasburg - DC: 78 miles. (We will NOT be stopping at Toms Brook.)

4. Day 10 - Arrival in DC - Run will go directly to the Lincoln Memorial and The Wall. (We will NOT be stopping at Iwo Jima Memorial.)

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## **RIDING WITH RFTW**

By Howard "Duck" Kirkpatrick

As I sit here in my small office, I just got through talking to one of my best friends and the "Best Man" at my wedding, whom I met through RFTW.

I think of the time when I first started thinking about the Run For The Wall. I was living in California and thought I had everything in life ahead of me. Yeah, a couple of divorces and a lot of really meaningless relationships and a lot of different jobs. All part of life, right? I found out that this was not the case with "normal" people. I had bought my Harley the year before and was looking for a great ride somewhere, anywhere, didn't matter. I just wanted to ride, and not look back. I found an article on the internet about the Vietnam Veterans making a Run for the Wall to Washington D.C. and thought "Great, a bunch of Party Animals I can hang with for a few days." I wandered out to the starting point on the evening before the Run. No room, just my bags and me. After walking around and seeing all of those Party Animals, I said what the heck are all of these old men doing here? Must be playing "Bad Guys" with all of their leather and patches and "Brotherly Love for the Vets". I met a guy who asked if I had a room for the night. His name was Fox and he offered to share his room with him for that night. I looked in the mirror and found that I was one of those "old guys" I had, in my mind made fun of being there.

The ride started the next morning after a prayer for our safety and to remember what the Run was all about. A prayer, what was that all about? A penny jar for the kids in Rainelle, West Virginia for their school and for clothing and for equipment and for their happiness. OK, donate a couple of dollars and that would be that. Not so, but we all knew that didn't we?

We rode and it was hotter than blazes through Needles and out into the desert. Stop after stop there was something about this Run that didn't make sense to me. Men, women, and children were actually standing on the freeways, waving American Flags and saluting and cheering for us, we the bastards that had been spit upon when we got back from Nam. I was scared. No one had ever said anything to me about Nam and what I did there. They actually were cheering for us. This scraggly group of old Vietnam Vets. They were thanking us for our service to Our Country. The third day out, I called my girlfriend of 10 years and told her we no longer were going to be dating. The fifth day out, I called my company and told them I would not be going back to work for them. I couldn't stop crying. I didn't know why. I just couldn't stop. Men kept coming up to me and asking "are you OK?" I told them no and their answer was, "We understand and we are with you my brother." I didn't drink and didn't smoke and yet I was invited to an AA meeting just to have some companionship and understanding.

We handed out certificates of appreciation to Vets that helped us along the way. At an airplane hanger in the middle of Kansas, I was standing next to a man, his wife and son and daughter. When Milo called his name out and presented

him with a certificate of appreciation, he took it and walked back to his family. He very quietly said to them "Look, it has my name on it" and started crying. It was not until that moment that I realized that that certificate was probably one of the most important documents he had ever received in his entire life, military or civilian. You know that it is probably sitting on his mantle or wall, in a place of prominence. He may not look at it every day, but it will always be there in his mind, and in his heart.

In Rainelle, the kids were let out of school to greet us along the main street, lined from one end to the other with American Flags. They were having us sign their T-shirts and I asked one little boy why he wanted our autographs. He said, "because you guys are heroes". Us!!! This scraggly bunch of misfits. We were heroes to this little boy. He thanked me, and I thanked him. Both of us were speechless.

What does the Run For The Wall mean to me? I cannot describe what it has done not only for me, but to me. I was wearing a hand painted leather jacket with the 4th Infantry Division logo on the back, 1968-69 and Vietnam across the top. I had hand painted that jacket with love and I cherished it. When I got to the Wall for the first time, I left it there to honor the men and women that had given their lives for our Country. Their lives!!! They gave their lives because they loved this country more than anything else in the world. They are on the other side of the Wall now, watching us and praying for us just as we pray for them. Rest in Peace my brothers and sisters. We may be old but we carry your memory with us at every turn of our lives. We never really forget. We may smile and we may laugh, but the smile is somehow bittersweet. We carry the scars of what was done to us and what we did to them. We carry a burden that can never really be lifted from our shoulders. We hurt, and we love you for the sacrifice you made for our Country, for us, and yes, even the ungrateful ones who take our freedom for granted. They died so that you can burn our Country's flag in protest. I don't like war, I like peace, and yet I would give my life for my loved ones and my Country without a second thought

For those of you who are reading this, I send you Peace and love. You are my brothers and sisters, and you are my family. You are what life has dealt us. The pain you feel, I feel also. God Bless you and God Bless our Country. We are the men and women that still suffer the ravages of war. We are trying to heal, with the help of our brothers and sisters, with the help of our Country, and with the help of God.

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## **VANCE'S STORY**

From: Eleven Days In May - True Stories of Run For The Wall  
By Trash Haley

I was having dinner in Williams, Arizona at the end of the first days ride on Run For The Wall 2000 (RFTW). I heard a couple RFTW riders at the next table talking about the idiot FNG (Fing New Guy) kid that dropped his bike coming out of the parking lot in Ontario, California at the start of the run that morning. They were taking turns cutting this rider down, and after listening for a little while I had to politely cut in. My usual opening line in this sort of situation is something like "It's one hell of an operation pulling a dining room table out of your asses my good friends, so please quit talking disrespectfully about a friend of mine when you know nothing about the man!" But this was Run For The Wall 2000, and being an FNG myself I let something change inside of me. A change for the better, I think. Instead of picking a fight, I asked them if I could say something in defense of the idiot they were talking about and maybe they wouldn't judge him so harshly.

The kid's name is Vance Scott. You couldn't see his face because of his full-face helmet, but this kid is 66 years old! This Run For The Wall 2000, this coming together of old warriors is the first run he has been on since 1957! He is a veteran of the Korean War and *he did three tours in VietNam*. Now he and Shirley, his wife of 24 years is engaging the enemy in yet another life and death battle, another test of courage and will, a battle they are fighting against a formidable foe. Four years ago Vance was diagnosed with prostate cancer with metastasis to the bones (agent orange related), and he has undergone three years of chemotherapy and radiation treatments. Now, though he is weakened, weary and balding .. but *still* living (He was given just a few months to live .. four years ago!), he wanted to go on this

RFTW, this warrior's ride of healing to share his secret of surviving a terrifying battle against this awesome killer. Riding a Valkyrie donated by Billy Robertson of Honda of North Hollywood (people who know and respect Vance), this old warrior brings a message: "Don't give up on life! Said Vance. The more of a positive attitude you have, the better off you'll be. Even though you might not feel good, you have to con yourself into thinking you do. That way, nothings eating away at you. A positive attitude is the only thing I can think of that works every time." His last Chemo treatment was to be on the 16th of May, but he played hooky on that session to go on RFTW 2000!

The men and women who fought the Gulf War fought with a resolve to win, and win quick. They also fought with the total support of the American people. The Gulf War was a magnificent victory. The Welcome Home given to our returning warriors put the word "great" back into a grateful nation. The well deserved adulation for our Gulf warriors has also brought a long overdue healing light to shine upon the wounds of shame inflicted upon the returning Veterans of Korea, VietNam and the Cold War by the Jane Fondas of those dark times. Run For The Wall helps lift the curtain of pain from the hearts of Americas lost Veterans of those unpopular wars. It was Vance's hope that he may add something to the healing power of RFTW. He knows that this healing power works its magic best when it is given to others. His leg was swollen and painful from the fall that morning, which was caused by another rider cutting him off, but he didn't give up. Vance may have dropped his bike at the start of Run For The Wall 2000, but during the 11 days that followed, he picked up much more than just himself. The man lifted the spirits of everyone he rode with, everyone he met and, I think, everyone who reads this story. Other than that, he doesn't really mind being called a kid!

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## **WHY I RIDE**

BY Keith "Gator" Midkiff

I was on active duty in the Navy from 1969 to 1971. I served abroad the U.S.S. Newport News (heavy cruiser) and U.S.S. Jonas Ingram (destroyer) as a snipe. You Navy guys know what that means.

What does RFTW mean to me? I told Sandra that I couldn't remember exactly how I became involved with RFTW (something to do with age). I joined RFTW in 1999 at Nitro, West Virginia on my way to DC. I was really worried about what I was getting into (too many motorcycle gangs), however, it was just a few hours before my mind was placed at ease. I registered at Rainelle and got my FNG button. I met a gentleman by the name of Tom, whom upon seeing my FNG button took me under his wing. We camped together at DC and he helped me get through my first trip to The Wall.

Upon returning home I found that my life had changed. I understood more about the POW/MIA issues, veteran issues and the healing power that exists in the RFTW family. I also learned that each and every one of us (vet or non-vet) who lived during the Vietnam War era needs some type of healing. I tell every FNG that I talk with...RFTW will change your life forever and they are about to become a member of a wonderful family. I have written articles about RFTW for my corporate newsletter, gotten people to greet RFTW when it comes through Nitro/Winfield, WV and I've spread the word about RFTW, but it's the time with the family that I love the most.

There have been three moments during RFTW that I remember the most. The first one was in 1999 at DC. During our walk along The Wall, brother after brother would stop and ask me if I was okay. I became a member of the family at that time. The love and caring was overwhelming. The second one was this past year RFTW 2002. I became friends with another gentleman from Illinois who rode with us to Salina. We went to the Traveling Wall in Salina, KS. Being a Vietnam vet he was a little hesitant about going, but then we were standing in front of a name he knew...I gave him a hug and he told me, "Thanks, it doesn't seem strange for men to hug". No it doesn't, so you FNG's out there....get ready for a lot of hugging. Third, this past year I had a non-vet FNG ride along with me. It was my turn to pay Tom back and do my duty. I really don't think this young man realized what RFTW was about. However, as each day passed, I could see him mature and understand what RFTW means. Mission accomplished, for the time. That mission will never be over until all POW/MIA's are accounted for from all wars. See ya'll in May and God Bless Our Troops.

REMEMBER WHY WE RIDE !

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## A NEW OUTLOOK WITH RFTW

By Mike "Tanker" McDole

When Sandra McKinney asked us to write an article on our feelings for RFTW we thought it would be a breeze. Where to "start" and "stop" then became a problem. We could go on forever. Our names are Mike and Delores McDole, and we've been involved with Run For The Wall since 2000. I was in the U.S. Army from 1967-1970 and stationed in Germany, Vietnam and Colorado Springs. In Vietnam ('68-'69) I was a tanker with the 3rd Squadron, 4th Armored Cavalry, which was part of the 25th Infantry Division at Cu Chi. I survived the war, and upon returning home stuffed all the pain, grief, emotions and memories as far inside as I could. I had no desire to talk about my experience in Vietnam, and Delores ran interference with family and friends to ensure the subject never came up. Fast forward nearly 30 years and we are living near Houston, TX, raised our two daughters, have grandchildren, living a good life and now riding a motorcycle. We met and became very close friends with Wylie and Jacque Wilson, who also ride a motorcycle. Wylie met up with RFTW in Salina KS in 1998. He went again in 1999, this time accompanied by Jacque. Each year, upon returning home, he would tell Delores and me about his experiences. He, also, began to engage me in conversations about my Vietnam experiences, which oddly enough, became easier for me to share. They also began to encourage Delores and me to attend RFTW. After much discussion we agreed, and began making plans for 2000. I advised Delores that I would like to go all the way ONE TIME, and that I had no plans to make this our annual vacation (so much for my feeble proclamation). When we agreed to make this trip, we had no idea that our lives would be changed forever!! The first few days of the run brought many emotions and much excitement. I picked Delores up at the Denver airport Saturday morning (she didn't have enough vacation to make the entire trip) and rejoined the group at the Pinion Truck Stop lunch stop. This was Delores' first experience with the Run and will remain etched in her memory forever. One of the speakers was a lady whose pilot husband had been missing, and presumed dead, for more than 30 years. Just recently his jaw bone had been recovered at an excavation site in Vietnam, and thus allowed her to reach closure after decades of wondering. That was all it took for Delores to begin her journey to becoming one of the most committed supporters of RFTW. As we traveled across this great country we experienced America in a way few people will ever have the opportunity to. From the very special participants on the Run, to the gracious patriotic people in the small towns along the way, to the veterans in the V.A. hospitals who have sacrificed so much for all of us, to the special children of Rainelle, every day was filled with emotion and pride. The Run culminated at the end of the Rolling Thunder parade and we headed home with a thousand great memories, many new friends, and plans to go again in 2001. We have now been All The Way two more times, and anxiously awaiting May to arrive this year. We have NO plans of discontinuing our annual pilgrimage across our great country with some of the finest people there are. We consider ourselves very privileged to ride next to the Chaplain (R.C. Busha) as part of the Missing Man Formation. Delores began taking photos of all riders who ride in the MMF and mails copies to each of the riders. It has become one of her contributions to making the event special and memorable to the participants.

Another one of her contributions is being a "Gas Girl" at the fuel stops. She loves meeting and greeting the riders. RFTW has provided an environment that promotes emotional healing, helps keep the POW/MIA issue alive, provides an opportunity to travel across our great nation, and most importantly has allowed us to come in contact with so many people that have CHANGED OUR LIVES and become lifelong friends. RFTW 2003 will be even more special for us because our daughter, Paula, who was born while I was in Vietnam, will be joining us. R.C. has offered to let her ride as his passenger most of the way. As you read this, if you are one of the people who have already blessed our lives, we want to say "Thank You" and we consider it an honor to ride with you.



If we haven't yet met you, we want you to know we are looking forward to the opportunity, and hope we can help make your journey as special for you as it has been for us. Take care and never forget that "FREEDOM ISN'T FREE".

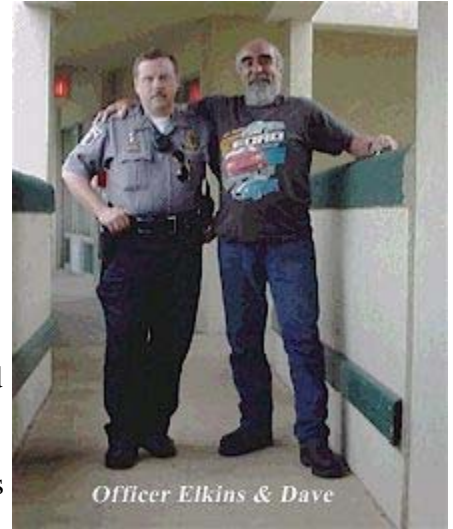
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## DAVE'S STORY

From Eleven Days in May - True Stories of Run For the Wall  
By Trash Haley

There is a power in the universe that makes things happen, good things. From the moment I first decided to go on Run For The Wall 2000, I could feel this power at work. RFTW has it aplenty. I offer Dave's story as proof.

Dave Martin and I are neighbors, and we were both FNG's on Run For The Wall 2000. We were also bucks down, pinching pennies and sharing expenses trying to make it all the way to DC. I had the honor of riding the oldest Harley ('69 Shovel) to make it all the way from Ontario to DC, and Dave rode the only duct tape covered, oil dripping rat Goldwing, which didn't quite make it all the way. In Toms Brook (about 85 miles short of runs end) he dropped a bearing in the drive train and Fox, who drove one of the support trucks, brought Dave and his wounded Goldwing into DC. The first stop in DC is the Iwo Jima Memorial. This is a very powerful, very emotional place for anybody to experience. It is especially so for a combat wounded VietNam Veteran who carries the physical scars of combat on his body .. and the mental scars .. the unseen wounds of war .. somewhere deep inside of him. Dave was so moved by this Memorial that when most of us were ready to leave, he couldn't pull himself away .. not yet. He told Fox and I to go ahead to the motel, he would catch another ride. Fox told him where he would be staying, as did I. Whether it was the power of the Iwo Jima Memorial at work, or the war born turmoil raging within him .. whatever .. he didn't hear us.



It was 11 P.M. when Dave finally found his bike, still on the trailer in the parking lot of the Comfort Inn where Fox was staying. I was next door at the Days Inn where many other RFTW riders were staying. Dave didn't know what name Fox was registered under, nor did he know where I was. Besides being almost broke, every room in DC was booked solid months before. He started to pull his tent and sleeping bag off his bike to make a place to sleep under the trailer. Then the rains came. Hard rains! In an instant Dave was hit with thunder and lightning, rain and .. the bright spotlights of an Alexandria Police Department patrol car driven by Officer Rick Elkins. Officer Elkins wanted to know what Dave was doing! Soaked, shivering and miserable, Dave told him what had brought him to this moment. It was then, in a moment unique that the healing power of Run For The Wall joined forces with patriotism and karma to shower not rain, but honor upon this old warrior who made his bed under a trailer on a cold dark rainy night at runs end.

Dave asked Officer Elkins to arrest him so that he could get a good nights sleep in a dry jail cell. Officer Elkins told Dave to sit tight, he'd be right back. He walked over to talk to Miguel Gonzalez, the General Manager of the Days Inn. Between the two of them, they made a deal (after juggling some reservations) to get Dave a room for three days at the employee room rate of just \$25 per day (normal rate, with RFTW discount, is \$79) using Mr. Gonzalez's employee discount, paid for by Officer Elkins out of his own pocket! Dave was hoping to be taken to jail. Instead, Officer Elkins helped him move his things to his own room. Near tears, Dave put out his hand and said "Thank You." Officer Elkins shook his hand with enthusiasm and said "No Sir, *thank you* instead! You VietNam Veterans have done so much for our country, and have received so little thanks for doing it, that it is an honor and a pleasure to be able to give a little something back." Officer Elkins and Miguel Gonzalez, you have helped all of us by doing what you did for Dave. You are part of the healing power that rides with Run For The Wall. Thank You.



## **PREPARING FOR THE RUN - GAS STOP ADVICE**

It will be helpful if you bring lots of one dollar bills for when you make gas stops. At each stop, all the pumps are turned on, and stay on until we gas the last bike. A Road Guard or Run Gas Pump Assistant will "man" (or "woman") each pump. When you get to the pump, have your gas money out and ready. If you need to root around in your pack for cash, do it before you get in the gas line. The Run has grown far too large to have several hundred bikes waiting in line for gas while one person fools around. If the person manning the gas pump does not see your cash out and ready, they will ask you to leave the line, and to get back in line (at the end of the line,) when you are ready to gas up.

When the person manning the pump hands you the gas nozzle, note the amount on the pump, and pump your gas. When you're done, hand the nozzle back to them, and hand them the money you owe. We ask that you round up to the next dollar, and do not give, or ask for, change. Hand over the loot, and move out smartly so the next bike can be gassed.

The reason we ask you to "round up" is not only to save time, but also to help pay for Chase Trucks. The few cents' difference between the actual amount you owe for the gas in your bike and the amount that you pay is the money that buys gasoline for the official Run Support Vehicles, also known as Chase Trucks. These are the guys and gals who will be there for you if you break down on the highway during the Run, and when you consider the amount of time they spend helping riders, and the wear-and-tear they put on their trucks and trailers on the riders' behalf, the contribution of a few cents per tank of gas to help keep them on the road with us is a real bargain.

If you want to pay by credit card, use the ATM, or are too broke or too stingy to pay via the "round-up" method, please avail yourself of the pumps which are not open and dedicated to RFTW quick fueling. While the Run does dominate most pumps, we always leave a couple open for use by those not associated with the Run, and those who don't want to participate in cash-only, round-up, mass gassing.

As soon as your bike is gassed, leave the pump area and park in the line-up, and head for the restroom ASAP. The restrooms are a weak link in the gas stops. There are more gas pumps than restrooms, and there's always a line. Be thoughtful of your fellow riders, and take care of your business quickly - the folks who are waiting will really appreciate it!

Later, *J.R.*

## **FORMATION RIDING**

This article was received from Pokey. He has some good suggestions for the formation riding.

2001 was my first RFTW, and I made it all the way.. and back..no more FNG pin! As a senior captain for a major airline with 30 plus yrs flying experience, I've managed to do a fair bit of formation work. Your comments about practicing were right on, but I'd like to add a couple thoughts to maybe get passed on.

First, folks need to anticipate what the throttle needs..eg. when the group starts up a hill, or even a slight grade, give it some gas. If they wait until they notice that they're slowing down, they're already behind and out of sync. The same logic applies when going down a hill or grade, only now they'll need less gas. Also, paying attention to the tendencies of the riders immediately around them after each stop helps from getting surprised.

I'd also suggest that folks should practice getting back in formation. Pick a car on the interstate and practice closing to

a "staggered" position, not in their blind spot and holding it there. You can also then practice making slight changes to the amount of stagger and holding the new position.

My wife just started riding a little over 3 years ago, and these are some of the things I had her doing to get up to speed. The HOG Chapter we usually ride with typically has 20 to 40 bikes on a ride so she had to learn quickly. She did the ride with us to Needles last year and frankly, I think she did a better job of riding "two-up" than some of the folks did after 2000 miles. (She wants to go all the way this year!)

Finally, I know that "2 seconds" is the politically correct briefing, but in the real world if you get more than about 1 second back, there's a road guard telling you to close it up. I found that using a "One Mississippi" count was about right. I started when the bike in front of me crosses a shadow, or an oil spot or..whatever.. and if I got to "...Two Mis..." I was too far back, and knew that a Road Guard was in my immediate future. At "One Mississippi..." that was about as close as I wanted to get. In other words, somewhere between "One Mississippi.." and "One Mississippi, Tw.." was about right.

You still have about 2 to 2 1/2 sec's of visibility, diagonally, thru the formation to see if something is happening, and that's what the "PC" 2 seconds is trying to accomplish.

Last year I brought up these thoughts to a couple of folks who were struggling, and it seemed to help them out, so I thought I'd pass them on.

We'll see you in May. - *Dan Cole, aka "Pokey"* (don't ask)

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## **RFTW PACKING CHECKLIST**

Lots of FNG's have asked for suggestions on what to bring on Run For The Wall. When we thought about it, we decided that a lot of RFTW "old timers" might also find this information helpful. We went through our email and RFTW Bulletin Board posts from the past several years and brainstormed to compile this list. Tailor the checklist to your own personal needs - you may want to bring additional items, you may want to leave some things at home:

- Motorcycle
- American & POW-MIA Flags for bike
- T-bag and/or saddle bags
- Water bottle ("sport" bottle or "Camelback")
- Bungee Cords (lots of 'em)
- Duct Tape
- Tool kit
- Regular & allen wrenches
- Screwdrivers
- Spark plugs & wrench
- Wire ties, zip ties
- Shop rags
- WD 40
- Clamps
- Rope
- Jumper cables
- Funnel
- Can of Fix-a-flat
- Tire repair kit
- Replacement light bulbs
- Fuses
- Long-sleeved T-shirt (for the Mojave desert)
- Warm sweat shirt
- Underwear & Socks (at least 6 pair)
- Thermal underwear
- Jammies (or shorts or sweat pants)
- Hankies
- Shower shoes
- Bath towel
- Wash cloth (in zip-lock bag!)
- Toilet Kit
- Toothbrush
- Toothpaste
- Soap
- Deodorant
- Shampoo
- Comb and/or brush
- Roll of TP in ziplock bag (be prepared!)
- Sun block (Don't leave home without it!)
- Chapstick
- Personal first aid kit
- Medications in marked containers

- Super glue
- 6' of 1/4" plastic hose or turkey baster (to siphon gas)
- Motorcycle oil (however much your bike needs!)
- Helmet (DOT legal)
- Helmet (not-so-legal)
- Bandanna or "do-rag"
- Warm knit cap for under helmet and/or sleeping
- Ski mask
- Heavy jacket
- Light weight jacket
- Chaps
- Warm gloves
- Summer gloves
- Rain Gear (Jacket, pants and galoshes)
- Padlock
- Trash Bags for covering T-Bag in rain, laundry, etc.
- Zip-lock bags (all sizes) organizes & keeps stuff dry
- Extra pair of boots
- Jeans (2-3 pair)
- T-shirts (at least 5)

#### **Campers:**

- Tent with pegs
- Waterproof Ground Cloth/Tarp
- Sleeping Bag
- Sleeping Mat or Cot
- Folding chair or camp stool
- Flashlight with extra batteries

- Prescription glasses
- Sun glasses or goggles (2 pair)
- Ear plugs
- Laundry detergent (in heavy zip-lock bag)
- Small sewing kit
- Money
- Credit Cards/Traveler's Checks
- Driver's License
- Insurance information
- Dog tags for emergency identification
- Emergency info: Next of kin, home and work phone numbers, doctors' phone numbers, list of prescription medications, glasses prescription, bank information
- Cell phone and/or pager
- Road Maps and Run Schedule
- Business cards (to exchange with new friends)
- Note pad & pencil
- Camera and film
- Items you want to leave at The Wall
- List of names you want to locate on The Wall

#### **Your Own Stuff:**

[Click here for a printable online checklist](#)

*Thanks to: Pup, Ghost (The Idaho Original), Iron Mike, Doorgunner, Duct Tape, Deekin, Nuguyabe, Spook, Shadow, Suzanne S., Little Mac, Dragonrider, and others who contributed to this list.*

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## **HISTORY OF THE POW/MIA FLAG**

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In 1971 Mrs. Michael Hoff, an MIA wife, recognized the need for a symbol representing our Prisoners of War and Missing in Action. Prompted by an article in the Jacksonville, Florida TIMES-UNION, Mrs. Hoff contacted Norman Rivkees, Vice-President of Annin & Company who made a banner for the newest member of the United Nations, the People's Republic of China, as a part of their policy to provide flags to all United Nations member nations. Mrs. Hoff found Mr. Rivkees very sympathetic to the Prisoner of War/Missing in Action issue and he, along with Annin's advertising agency, designed a flag to represent our missing men and women.

Since its inception this stark black and white flag, which was designed on behalf of American POW/MIAs from the Vietnam War, has come to represent our missing countrymen and women from all wars. The POW/MIA flag has been ruled legally to be "public domain" - as is the American flag; therefore, it cannot be claimed as the sole property by any organization or individual.

The POW/MIA flag flew over the White House for the first time on National POW/MIA Recognition Day, 1988. On 9 March 1989, it was installed in the United States Capitol Rotunda. This occurred as a result of legislation passed overwhelmingly during the 100th Congress and, additionally, in an extremely rare demonstration of bipartisan

congressional support, the leadership of both Houses hosted the formal installation ceremony.

Further, by joint Congressional Resolution, the POW/MIA flag - the only flag ever to be displayed in the United States Capitol Rotunda - stands as powerful symbol of our national commitment to American Prisoners of War and Missing in Action.

On 10 August 1990, the 101st Congress passed US Public Law 101-355, which recognized the POW/MIA flag and designated it "as the symbol of our Nation's concern and commitment to resolving as fully as possible the fates of Americans still held prisoner, missing and unaccounted for in Southeast Asia, thus ending the uncertainty for their families and the Nation.

The POW/MIA flag's importance lies in the continued visibility of this symbol as a constant reminder of the plight of America's prisoners and missing. Other than "Old Glory," the POW/MIA flag is the only flag to fly over the White House, and has flown in this place of honor on every POW/MIA Recognition Day since 1982. In addition, the POW/MIA flag flies over our nation's capitol on Veterans Day and Memorial Day.

This very distinctive and special flag also flies over the National Vietnam Veterans Memorial, as well as other military memorials across the country; on Federal and State buildings, at each National Cemetery, and at military installations worldwide. It also flies at countless additional locations throughout the nation every day of the year.

Those Americans who fly the POW/MIA flag do so to demonstrate their loyalty and sincere dedication to all Prisoners of War and Missing in Action, and to their safe return - both alive and dead.

Flag etiquette specifies that the POW/MIA flag may be flown below the American flag and/or a state flag. However, its size must be equal to or smaller than the flag that is flying above it. The correct order for three flags being flown on the same flagpole is the national flag, the state flag, and then the POW/MIA flag.

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## **IT WAS SMOKIN' !**

By Michelle Henry

For those of you who missed it...it was a great party for D.C. "Smoke" Murphy. Hard to believe this WWII Veteran turned 80 years young. Joe "Harley Joe" Wyatt put on quite a fiesta Saturday, February 8th at the American Legion Hall in Escondido, CA. The food was outstanding and the company even better. Quite a few of the RFTW family was there to support "Smoke" as well as many other friends from his HOG group. After dinner the microphone was opened and everyone had a chance to tell their favorite story about "Smoke"...RFTW member CHP Motor Sgt. Rich Henry related a story about pulling "Smoke" over and nearly scaring him half to death!...Heck all he wanted to do was say "hello" and give him a big hug. You know a cop hugging a biker is an unusual sight! What wasn't unusual was the generosity of Spirit expressed at his "Harley Birthday Party". An Olympus Camera and \$800.00 cash was presented at the end of the evening as well as many good wishes for health and happiness from near and far.



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## **THE LOSS OF RFTW FRIEND DAWN LINDSEY**

It is my very sad duty to inform you that Dawn Lindsey, passed away early March 4, 2003. She died peacefully at her home in Florissant, Colorado, where she wanted to be, after a long struggle with terminal heart and lung diseases.

Born on August 22, 1950, in Houston, Texas, she was adopted by Leland and Monnabelle Deschene, who preceded her in death. "She is survived by a host of beautiful friends from sea to shining sea".

Dawn was a member and past secretary of Task Force Omega, Colorado. She was a long time activist supporting our POW/MIAs. Dawn would greet RFTW in Hugo, CO whenever she could. Her touching and compassionate attention in awareness activities and commemorations showed her beautiful heart throughout. Her love for people was matched by her love for animals. We will miss her for the friend she was to all.

Mary Lee Gardner is putting together a Memorial Book about Dawn Lindsey. Mary Lee can be reached at [mlgeeyore@worldnet.att.net](mailto:mlgeeyore@worldnet.att.net). Copies will be available to Dawn's friends. Please contact Mary Lee if you are interested in participating.

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## **A MEMORIAL HEADSTONE FOR RACHEL "RATCHET" JULIAN**

By Phil (Cap') Moss

In the last newsletter, sad news was reported of the tragic death of Rachel "Ratchet" Julian.

The Julian family are truly rich in terms of family values, beliefs, and a love of country. They are, though, at times, hard pressed economically. Rachel's burial plot and funeral services were graciously donated by members of the surrounding community. Faced without the immediate financial means for Rachel's casket, the family built their own. As Joe would say the weekend of his sister's funeral, "the experience of having done so was very therapeutic..."

Missing is the presence of a headstone to mark Rachel's grave, though eventually insurance monies will be paid to the Julians. In that the "Run For The Wall" family represented so much to Rachel and her family, and that she in turn brought so much joy and delight to our lives, I wish to propose that we assist with donations toward an appropriate headstone of the family's choosing. I do so with the blessing of Ron and Kay Julian who expressed how appreciative such a gesture would be.

A new RFTW memorial fund for Rachel's headstone has been established at a bank in the neighboring community of Walsenburg, Colorado (Aguilar has a population of 600 ). The signatories on the account are Barbara Stroh, a family friend of the Julians, who was largely responsible for attending to the details of Rachel's funeral, and myself. Donate what you can . . . a dollar or ten or whatever . . . Checks may be forwarded to:

The Rachel Julian Memorial Fund  
Community Banks of Southern Colorado  
501 Main Street  
Walsenburg, Colorado 81089.  
Account number 8033245.

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## **RFTW Chat Room**

There is a growing group of "chatters" in the RFTW Chat Room on Sunday Evenings. The chatting usually starts around 6:00pm PDT. We talk about experiences on previous Runs. We discuss new or ailing motorcycles. We find out what our friends have been doing around the country. We extol the level of friendship that is generated within the RFTW family. There are several FNG's that have joined the group and they say that it has been a great tool for

learning about the Run. Come join in the fun and camaraderie. Information for sign up and use are available on the website: [www.rftw.org](http://www.rftw.org).

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## **BAND OF BROTHERS**

"Super Bowl Battle is dwarfed by what Band of Brothers faces"  
by Bryan Burwell  
Louis Post Dispatch  
1/22/2003

SAN DIEGO - It was just around midnight Tuesday night, and the outdoor courtyard at Dick's Last Resort was throbbing with the rowdy energy of a spring break bacchanal. There was loud rock music blaring out of the stereo speakers, and the air was filled with the distinct and somewhat revolting aroma of deep-fried bar food, cigarette smoke and spilled beer.

Dick's is the sort of bar-restaurant ideally suited for Super Bowl week mischief, because it has a down-and-dirty roadhouse feel to it. The waiters, waitresses and bartenders are charmingly rude, and the wood floors are covered with sand and all sorts of indistinguishable debris. The clientele on this evening is a fascinating mix of twenty-something college kids, thirty-something conventioners and 40-something Super Bowl high-rollers.

Yet there was one table in Dick's courtyard Tuesday night that was noticeably different from the others. There were six young men at the table and one young woman, and while they were drinking like everyone else in the room, there was something all too serious going on at this table that let you know that their thoughts were a long way from the mindless frivolity of Super Bowl week.

Maybe it was the close-cropped "barracks haircuts" that gave them away. All the men's heads were cut in that familiar look of a professional soldier, skin-close on the sides, and on top a tight shock of hair that resembled new shoe-brush bristles.

"We're Marines," one man told me. "And tomorrow we're boarding a ship for .... well . . . I really can't tell you where, but you know."

Of course we knew. In less than an hour, they would report back to a ship docked along the Southern California coast, then on Wednesday head across the Pacific Ocean, bound for a potential war in Iraq. So this was no Super Bowl party for them. This was their last night out on the town. One Marine was saying goodbye to his wife. The others were not so lucky. They all just sat around the table, throwing back beers and wrestling with the sobering uncertainty of the rest of their lives.

"We're going to war and none of us knows if we're ever coming back," said another Marine, a 28-year-old from Southern Illinois. They all requested that I not use their names. "Just tell 'em we're the men of (Marine Aviation Land Support Squad 39)," they said.

On Super Bowl Sunday, the men of MALS 39 will be watching the game from the mess hall of their ship. "That is, if we're lucky and the weather is good and it doesn't interfere with the satellite signal," said the Marine with the bald head and burnt-orange shirt. "But I gotta tell you, I'm not that big a sports fan anymore. It's going to be the first pro football game I've watched in . . . I can't even remember."

Why is that?

"Well, here's my problem with pro sports today," he said. "I don't care whether it's football, basketball or baseball. Guys are complaining about making \$6 million instead of \$7 million, and what is their job? Playing a damned game."

You know what I made last year? I made \$14,000. They pay me \$14,000, and you know what my job description is? I'm paid to take a bullet."

When he said those words, it positively staggered me.

Fourteen thousand dollars to take a bullet.

Not a day goes by that I am not reminded of what a wonderful life I lead.

I am paid to write about sports and tell stories on radio and television about the games people play. But sometimes, even in the midst of a grand sporting event, something happens to put the frivolity of sports into its proper perspective, and this was it.

Fourteen thousand dollars to take a bullet.

As I sit here writing from my hotel room, I can look out my balcony window and I see a Navy battleship cutting through the San Diego Bay, heading out to sea. I can see the sailors standing on the deck as the ship sails past Coronado Island, the San Diego Marina and the downtown Seaport Village, and I wonder if any of the men from MALS 39 are aboard.

It was only 12 hours ago that I was sitting at the table with my guys, buying them beers, and listening to their soldier stories.

The Marine from Southern Illinois who sat to my right pointed to the bald Marine in the orange shirt who was seated to my left. "You know, I don't even know this guy, can you believe that? We just met a few hours ago when we came into Dick's. Oh, I've seen him on the base, but I've never met him before tonight. But here's what's so special about that man, and why I love that man. He's my brother. Semper Fi. I know a guy back home, and he is my best friend. I'm 28 years old and we've known each other all our lives. But today, that friend is more of a stranger to me than that Marine sitting over there, who I've never met before tonight. That's why they call it a Band of Brothers."

The little Marine in the orange shirt lifted his glass toward the Marine from Southern Illinois and nodded his head. "That's right," he said. "That's my brother over there, and I'm gonna take a bullet for him if I have to."

He said it with a calm and jolting certainty. There was a moving, but chilling, pride in his words.

All around them, people were drinking, shouting and laughing. The college kids and the conventioners and NFL high-rollers were living the good, carefree life. Across the street, a storefront that was vacant two weeks ago was now filled with \$30 caps, \$400 leather jackets, \$40 mugs and \$27 T-shirts with the fancy blue and yellow Super Bowl XXXVII logo embroidered on it.

From every end of the streets of downtown San Diego's fabled Gaslamp Quarter, Super Bowl revelers toasted the Raiders and the Buccaneers with grog-sized mugs filled with beers and rums. But just around midnight in the middle of the courtyard of Dick's Last Resort, a far more deserving toast was going up to the men of MALS 39. We clicked our glasses together, and a few minutes later, they quietly slipped out the courtyard gates.

Suddenly, the Super Bowl didn't seem so important anymore.

God bless them all. They don't do it for the money. They do it for us. No matter what your feelings about the events that are unfolding, thank those that serve & protect us.

Please pray for our brothers and sisters serving our country and keep praying to bring them home safely.

## **BLUE STAR SERVICE BANNER**

The Blue Star Service Banner was designed and patented in 1917 by World War I Army Capt. Robert L. Queissner of the 5th Ohio Infantry who had two sons serving on the front lines. It quickly became the unofficial symbol of a child in the service.

On Sept. 24, 1917, an Ohio congressman read the following into the Congressional Record: "\*The mayor of Cleveland, the Chamber of Commerce and the governor of Ohio have adopted this service flag. The world should know of those who give so much for liberty. The dearest thing in all the world to a father and mother - their children."

During World War II, the Department of War issued specifications on the manufacture of the banner as well as guidelines indicating when, and by whom, the Service flag could be flown or the Service Lapel button could be worn. The banner can be seen hanging in the front window of Mrs. Ryan's house in the movie Saving Private Ryan.

The Blue Star Service Banner is an 8 by 16-inch white field with a blue star(s) sewn onto a red banner.

Today, Blue Star Service Banners are displayed by families who have a loved one serving in the armed forces, including activated members of the National Guard and Reserves, whether the family member is a son, daughter, brother, sister, wife, husband, cousin, grandchild, etc. The banner displayed in the front window of a home, shows a family's pride in their loved one serving in the military, and reminds others that preserving America's freedom demands much.

The blue star represents one family member serving in the armed forces. A banner can have up to five stars, signifying that five members of that family are currently in military uniform on active duty.

A gold star replaced the blue star if that relative was killed or died in service. If more than one star appears on the flag, the gold star takes the place of honor nearest the staff.

Blue Star Mothers and Gold Star Mothers organizations were established during World War I and remain active today, although with a reduced membership.

Blue Star Service Banners, while widely used across America during World Wars I and II, were not embraced during the Korean or Vietnam wars with nearly the same enthusiasm.

The American Legion is rekindling the tradition and spirit of pride in our military men and women following the horrific terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The American Legion is providing banners to families in communities across the nation. Free color downloads of the banners are also available at The American Legion Internet Website at [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org) <<http://www.legion.org>> and poster and static cling versions for home and automobile, as well as lapel pins, are available from The American Legion National Emblem Sales, 1-888-453-4466.



For more information, contact The American Legion at (317) 630-1253.



## 'CASE 1000' - MIA VIETNAM

By Donna "iz" Elliott

Like a moth to a flame I seek out news coverage of the war in Iraq. When the body counts began it was de'javu and the announcements of American soldiers being held prisoners-of-war (POW) and so many missing-in-action (MIA) triggered flashbacks of a different war in a foreign land... Vietnam.

President George W. Bush has pledged to the families that the United States will "Get the POWs out," but his words seem stale with familiarity to my ears.

For instance, 'Case 1000' was determined MIA on 21 Jan 68. Seven UH-1 choppers from the 282nd Blackcat's out of Danang were called in by the Senior CIA Advisor in Dong Ha to do a troop insert of the 258th Regional Forces in an attempt to relieve the besieged Army MACV in the village of Khe Sanh. This was the same day that the ammo dump blew up at the Marine Khe Sanh Combat Base (KSCB).

Blackcat 027 did a crash and burn after the NVA 66th Reg blasted the chopper with a B-40 as it lifted off from the 'Old French Fort', approximately 1000 to 1200 meters east of the Huong Hoa HQ. Two slicks attempted rescue of the downed fliers and were ambushed by the NVA 304th, but the pilots managed to pull out of the firefight and save their crews.

The South Vietnamese "Ruff Puff" soldiers and six U.S. servicemen remained unaccounted for on the ground. CIA Deputy Advisor LTC Joseph Seymoe, WO Gerald McKinsey, Capt. Tommy Stiner, SSGT Danny Williams, SSGT Billy Hill, and PFC Jerry Elliott.

Hill's position in the crashed chopper was hit by the rocket; Seymoe died in the crash; McKinsey was shot in combat; Stiner, pilot of 027, and Williams, doorgunner from rescue one, escaped and evaded through the jungle at night to the KSCB. Elliott was last seen passing through tall elephant grass in front of rescue two, the chopper where his duty was doorgunner. Out of approximately 70 of the RF troops that disembarked, 45 of the ARVN troops managed to navigate to the safety of the KSCB, and two were sheltered by the nearby French coffee plantation owners, the Poilane family.

A declassified document from the Library of Congress POWMIA Database, dated 21 Jan 68, and indexed as "Untitled," consists of one readable paragraph on an entire page of still classified information. It is a live sighting report of the transit of approximately 30 POWs through the village of Khe Sanh on 21 Jan 68 by the NVA. The source of information is redacted, but the grid coordinates listed are those of the FOB-3 at the KSCB.

However, the former CO of FOB-3 insists that his unit did not make the report. Two other known intelligence units were operating in the Khe Sanh village prior to the siege, the JTAD (covert operations) and the 19th MACV Det. The two members of the JTAD wisely departed the area on 18 Jan 68 and the former CO of the MACV unit also denies any knowledge of this POW live sighting report. A theory would be that the US had a homegrown operative in the village who called the live POW sighting in to an unknown counterpart.

On 7 Apr 68 the 2/5 Cav pushed the NVA back across the border into Laos and retook the 'Old French Fort'. The next day Seymoe and McKinsey's remains were recovered and "The Report of Recovery" states that the soldiers of the 2/5 searched the area for two hours and there were no other remains to be found. That left one man unaccounted for, Elliott, a 19 year-old Pathfinder who had been "in-country" since May 1967.

In 1987 Hanoi published the war history of the North Vietnamese Army, "Su Doan 304" (304th Division) and in 1991 "Chien dich Tien cong Duong so 9-Khe Sanh, Xuan He 1968" (Highway 9-Khe Sanh Offensive, Spring and Summer 1968). From these books we learn that Tran Dinh Ky, platoon leader of Unit 11, 9th Div, became a Vietnamese war hero for shooting down the first helicopter of the Tet Offensive. Vietnamese historians wrote, "a few survived ran toward Lang Khoai (Sweet Potato Village) and were taken (live POWs) by our soldiers of Unit 9. Among them was the head of Unit 258 (the ARVN passengers on the Blackcat choppers), Lt. Nguyen Dinh Hiep."

Elliott is coded by the Department of Military Personnel (DPMO) as Category 2, which means that it is assumed that the Provisional Revised Government (PRG) of Vietnam has knowledge of his fate.

In 1998 I decided to research 'Case 1000' AKA Jerry W. Elliott and prove that he had indeed been killed-in-action (KIA). I began to track down military documents which only generated more questions. That led to interviewing members of the 282nd AHC convoy who were aboard any of the choppers, in the air or on the ground, on 21 Jan 68 when the Blackcat's were attempting to rescue the soldiers trapped in the village of Khe Sanh. Like a carpenter remodeling an old house, I pulled off one old board to reveal two rotten boards underneath.

The point-of-beginning, the actual chopper crash location, was in question due to several grid coordinates listed in various documents filed in Elliott's records, so I decided to travel to Vietnam in an attempt to determine the exact location where Elliott was last seen alive. Location is the key to any search.

In 1999 Mike Teutschman, an old Army buddy of Elliott's, and I walked to a location near Khe Sanh and was told by the 55th Joint Task Force (JTF) Team that this was the crashsite of Blackcat 027. I was not satisfied that we were in the correct location of the crash because the site did not fit the stories regarding the loss incident that I had been told by men who were there during the attack.

Even the local Vietnamese were confused when asked about an 'Old French Fort' that wasn't at Lang Vei, the Special Forces camp about 14 kilometers west of Khe Sanh that was a well-known abandoned French fort. That mystery was solved when I discovered the 'Old French Fort' was a misnomer that the Marines had given to the abandoned Special Forces Camp known in the early 60's as 'The Alamo'.

In July 2001 I accompanied four Marines' who survived the Hill Battles of 1967 and the Siege of 1968 to Khe Sanh. I was in pursuit of a Montagnard living in the bush with his family. This man had been in a position of power as a Bru chief and a ARVN soldier during January 1968 and served many years after the war in a Vietnamese 'Re-education Camp.' It was an adventure, but I found him, and we sat on the rice mat floor of his bamboo hooch and talked.

He stated through an interpreter that he had no information to offer. No doubt a wise move on his part since our passports were later confiscated and we were all placed under house arrest in Dong Ha and questioned by local officials for going into restricted areas.

A third trip to Vietnam is currently in the planning, this time with one of the two U.S. survivors of that black Sunday, 21 Jan 68, when so many American soldiers died fighting for each other and Elliott was last seen alive. This combat veteran was on the scene when Elliott disappeared and he will know if the JTF team was investigating the correct location in 1999.

Recently I was on the telephone with one of the jarhead's I was arrested with during the 2001 trip to Vietnam, discussing plans for my return trip in 2003 to continue the search for information regarding Elliott. He suddenly got very agitated and began to shout, "He's toast! He's dead, you know that don't you? He's toast!"

"No, I don't know that for sure," I replied. Able to hold my tongue only because I understood, to some degree, his pain. If I could say to my battle traumatized buddy, "Yes, he's dead and I'm going to let it go and get over it," his feelings of guilt at our government's abandonment of U.S. soldiers in Southeast Asia, on some level, could somehow be relieved.

But I couldn't do that, even for a friend. I have the courage to face the truth, but as long as there is doubt, the search will continue, because 'Case 1000,' SSGT Jerry W. Elliott is not toast, he is my brother!

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## TAPS

We in the United States have all heard the haunting song, "Taps." It's the song that gives us that lump in our throats and usually tears in our eyes.

But, do you know the story behind the song? If not, I think you will be interested to find out about its humble beginnings. Reportedly, it all began in 1862 during the Civil War when Union Army Captain Robert Ellicombe was with his men near Harrison's Landing in Virginia.

The Confederate Army was on the other side of the narrow strip of land. During the night, Captain Ellicombe heard the moans of a soldier who lay severely wounded on the field. Not knowing if it was a Union or Confederate soldier, the Captain decided to risk his life and bring the stricken man back for medical attention.

Crawling on his stomach through the gunfire, the Captain reached the stricken soldier and began pulling him toward his encampment. When the Captain finally reached his own lines, he discovered it was actually a Confederate soldier, but the soldier was dead.

The Captain lit a lantern and suddenly caught his breath and went numb with shock. In the dim light, he saw the face of the soldier. It was his own son. The boy had been studying music in the South when the war broke out. Without telling his father, the boy enlisted in the Confederate Army.

The following morning, heartbroken, the father asked permission of his superiors to give his son a full military burial, despite his enemy status. His request was only partially granted. The Captain had asked if he could have a group of Army band members play a funeral dirge for his son at the funeral. The request was turned down since the soldier was Confederate. But out of respect for the father, they did say they could give him only one musician.

The Captain chose a bugler. He asked the bugler to play a series of musical notes he had found on a piece of paper in the pocket of the dead youth's uniform. This wish was granted. The haunting melody, we now know as "Taps" ... used at military funerals was born.

The words are:

Day is done ... Gone the sun ... From the lakes ... From the hills..  
From the sky ... All is well ... Safely rest ... God is nigh...  
Fading light ... Dims the sight ... And a star ... Gems the sky...  
Gleaming bright ...From afar ... Drawing nigh .. Falls the night...  
Thanks and praise ... For our days ... Neath the sun ... Neath the  
stars... Neath the sky ... As we go ... This we know ... God is nigh...

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## HOUSE PASSES RESOLUTION AFFIRMING PLEDGE

Good News! The U.S. House of Representatives overwhelmingly approved a resolution affirming the Pledge of Allegiance with the phrase "under God." The vote was 400-7 in favor of the nonbinding resolution. The resolution says that reciting the phrase "one nation under God" is a patriotic act, not a statement of religious faith.

I Pledge allegiance to the flag  
Of the United States of America.  
And to the Republic for which it stands,  
One Nation Under God  
Indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all.

## A POEM BY A U. S. MARINE IN KUWAIT

### WISH YOU WERE HERE

By Corporal Joshua Miles

and the boys from 3rd Battalion 2nd Marines, Kuwait

For all the free people that still protest. You're welcome.

We protect you and you are protected by the best.  
Your voices are strong and loud, but who will fight for you?

No one standing in YOUR crowd.  
We are your fathers, brothers, and sons,  
wearing the boots and carrying the guns.

We are the ones that leave all we own,  
to make sure your future is carved in stone.

We are the ones who fight and die,  
we might not be able to save the world,  
but at least we try.

We walked the paths to where we are at  
and we want no choice other than that.  
So when you rally your group to complain,  
take a look in the back of your brain.

In order for that flag you love to fly  
wars must be fought and young men must die...

We came here to fight for the ones we hold dear.  
If that's not respected, we would rather stay here.

Please stop yelling, put down your signs,  
and pray for those behind enemy lines.

When the conflict is over and all is well,  
be thankful that WE chose to go through hell.



## CAMPBELL VOWS TO BRING HOME POWS

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Today Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell (R-CO) received confirmation from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) that the Persian Gulf War POW/MIA Accountability Act of 2002, which he authored last Congress, also applies to Operation Iraqi Freedom. The law offers to grant refugee status in the United States to nationals of Iraq or the Middle East region who bring forth information that helps bring home an American POW/MIA.

The DHS's confirmation means that Mohammad, an Iraqi man who brought crucial information to the Marines that

resulted in the return of American POW Jessica Lynch, is covered under Campbell's law, as well as any others who bring forth crucial information to bring home American POW/MIAs. Currently Mohammed has received temporary refugee status and is in the custody of the Marines.

The Voice of America broadcasting service has complied with Campbell's Bring Them Home Alive Act by regularly broadcasting news that all Iraqi's who provide information to bring an American home will be protected under the law and receive asylum, pending extensive background checks.

Campbell said of the developments:

"All the pieces are here. Voice of America has complied with my law and has been broadcasting regularly, some of the brave Iraqi people are willing to help, and at least one has even come forward with crucial information already.

"I will work with the Bush Administration and my colleagues in Congress to see that Mohammed is given asylum. As we all know, he has risked his life by coming forward and temporary refugee status obviously only protects him temporarily. And I will work with VOA to make sure that the message specifically mentions that an Iraqi citizen has actually received asylum because of this law. I want the Iraqi people to know that they do not have to be afraid to come forward, I want them to know we are good to our word when we said we would protect them if they brought forth crucial information.

"Now is the time to try our hardest to bring Americans home, not months from now, not ten years from now. I will do all I can to make sure this law is fully utilized. The goal of bringing Americans home is too important to let go."

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## **NATIONAL PERSONNEL RECORDS CENTER NOW ACCEPTING REQUESTS FOR RECORDS ONLINE**

The National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) has informed us about an improved method of requesting documents from the NPRC. As you know, the NPRC provides copies of documents from military personnel records to authorized requesters. Their new web-based application will provide better service on these requests by eliminating their mailroom processing time. Also because the requester will be asked to supply all information essential for NPRC to process the request, delays that normally occur when NPRC has to ask veterans for additional information will be minimized. You may access this application at: <http://vetrecs.archives.gov>.

Please note there is no requirement to type "www" in front of the web address. Additionally, this improved on-line request process should be used INSTEAD OF Standard Form 180 from veterans or the veteran's next of kin. Please give this information the widest dissemination.

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## **THE MOVING WALL IN NEW MEXICO**

New Mexico is a big state to cross, so there are several stops in this fair state mixed with many strong emotions. Just before New Mexico, we are received by the Navajo Nation with celebrations and recognition at Window Rock, AZ. The dinner on Thursday evening in Gallup is always eventful with a tradition of honoring New Mexico Veterans. Then on Friday, we have a great time at Chick's Harley Davidson for lunch (last year, we even celebrated a wedding). Departing Chick's, we begin to prepare for our visit to the Angel Fire Vietnam Veterans National Memorial. This is a somber visit filled with strong emotions...a beautiful memorial built by a father to honor the memory of his son and other Vietnam era Vets. Dr. David Westphall built this memorial in memory of his son who was KIA in Vietnam. To conclude our visit to New Mexico on Friday, May 16, added to the usual hospitality of Cimarron, the VFW and the community of Cimarron will have the emotion level at an all-time-high, with the presence of The Moving Wall for RFTW XV.

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## **PICTURES FOR THE WEB-SITE**

We all look forward to viewing the pictures on the website after the Run. It helps us relive the wonderful memories and emotions! When taking pictures, concentrate on getting a close-up of the people in your pictures with less emphasis on background. If you are an FNG, you will likely suffer from the "all-stops-run-together-syndrome". Keep in mind that your picture will need a caption, so take notes on who or what the subject matter is and make a note of where you were at the time of the picture. Those pictures will be wonderful memories for years to come. When you arrive home with your collection, put them in a scrap-book. Your friends will not believe the stories you tell, so you will have the pictures as proof! For info on how to send pictures, format to send, etc., see:

<http://www.rftw.org/Photos.htm#send>

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## **ALL THE WAY PATCHES**

There are various patches you can purchase to sew to your jacket or vest. You can currently order those from the website: [www.rftw.org](http://www.rftw.org) - Merchandise. Print a copy of the orderblank, check your item choices, add postage, write out your check and mail it in to "Bandit". Keep in mind, that all items will be for sale during the Run, as well.

There have always been questions about the "ALL THE WAY" patch. These patches are meant for the riders that begin the journey in Ontario, CA and travel the full route to Washington, DC. If you start in Colorado (ex.) and ride to DC, you are a PARTICIPANT, you did not travel "all the way". Be sure to purchase the appropriate patch for your level of participation.

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## **THANKS TO SALLY SIZZMO' DOWN**

Sally SizzMo' Down has retired as RFTW Newsletter Editor. SizzMo' has done a fantastic job of editing, publishing and mailing the RFTW Newsletter to almost 1500 participants over the last two and one half years.

We know you will join the RFTW Board in extending our deep and heartfelt thanks to SizzMo' for her dedication to this important job.

Sandra "Littlebit" McKinney is the new Newsletter Editor. Sandra enthusiastically welcomes any contributions, comments, suggestions, constructive criticism and help.

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