



# **RUN FOR THE WALL**

## **Quarterly Newsletter**

### ***“We Ride For Those Who Can’t”***

### **January 2011**

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#### **THE EDITOR’S NOTES**



You will find an extraordinary story in this issue about seven brothers and their father who all served in the Navy at the same time.

The Patten brothers from rural Iowa began joining the Navy in 1934. During peacetime, they were allowed to serve on the same ship. When their father, Floyd, joined the Navy, the Pattens were recognized as the Navy’s largest family.

Six of the brothers were on the battleship USS Nevada on December 7, 1941 when Pearl Harbor was attacked.

Be sure to read this account, as well as the other good stories in this issue.

Sad news to include this issue—the deaths of three of our brothers with ties to Run For The Wall. They will be sorely missed, and our condolences go out to their families.

The next issue, in April, will contain all the information you could possibly need to prepare for RFTW 2011. Please be thinking of what you may be able to contribute to that issue. We all like to read personal stories, whether about when you were serving or recent experiences. Please share with us.

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.*

## ► **RFTW 2011 NEWS**

### **REGISTRATION FOR 2011 RFTW**

Online pre-registration is available on the RFTW website. Cost is \$20. If you pay through PayPal, be sure to bring your receipt with you to Rancho Cucamonga. Also bring your driver's license and proof of insurance and registration. You will sign the form in front of the registration team.

### **SOUTHERN ROUTE:**

Important information from Preacher about REGISTRATION CHANGES:

REGISTRATION in Terrell Texas will be by ONLINE registration only which will close May 1, 2011. So if you want to join in Terrell Texas, you MUST REGISTER before coming to Terrell as there will be NO on-site registration.

REGISTRATION in Tallulah, MS. There will be NO registration at the Love's Truck Stop. If you want to ride to Jackson you have to register in Monroe, LA the morning of May 24 at the Sam's Club parking lot exit #120. Registration Opens at 6:00 am.

## ► **OUR STORIES**

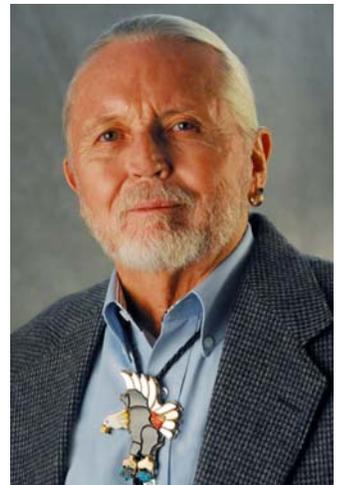
### **JACKIE MCKINNEY RUNS FOR MAYOR OF GALLUP**

By Sandra "LittleBit" McKinney

So many of you are used to seeing Jackie McKinney on a motorcycle, wearing a Road Guard arm band, hugging veterans at registration, or at the podium in Gallup when The Run For The Wall stops in our city. But in 2011, he could be wearing a new hat; that of Mayor of Gallup, New Mexico.

After retirement from his 30 year career in the lumber business, and mending from a motorcycle accident in April of 2010, he was reaching an idle point. At the urging of several city leaders, and after much soul-searching, Jackie entered his name to the list of nine candidates for the position of Mayor of Gallup. The election will be held March 8, 2011.

He will be the first to tell you he is not, repeat NOT a politician! He considers the position of mayor a job that unites council and the professional staff of the city to work efficiently and in the best interest of the citizens of Gallup. I think you will recognize that demeanor as the same way he has worked for Run For the Wall. Running with a slogan of "TOGETHER WE CAN"...he recognizes it to be a team effort.



Jackie has been involved in many events since he moved to Gallup in 1963, and has served on the County Juvenile Substance Abuse Council, the City Economic Development Committee, the City's Major Facilities

Task Force, and the Police Athletic League Committee, to name a few. He is also an honorary member of the Veterans' Committee for the construction of the Plaza Memorial at the Court House.

Jackie McKinney is not a veteran himself, but rather a patriot with a deep appreciation for those who have served or are currently serving our country. The plaques and letters of appreciation he has received for his volunteer work have come from the Gallup Police Department, the City of Gallup, the New Mexico State Senate, the Department of the Air Force, the Vietnam Veterans National Memorial, the Department of Veterans' Affairs, the Navajo Nation, American Legion Post 8, Gold Star parents Red and Jackie Cunningham, the Gallup Youth Law Enforcement Academy, and of course, numerous plaques from his Run For The Wall family.

Gallup will finally have the opportunity to vote for a candidate that is not just a "none of the above" contender, a mayor that will be proactive as opposed to reactive, to what Gallup needs.

Jackie is a man who loves to work for the benefit of his fellow man. Having been a child of the '60s, he was quite capable of raising hell in the past and certainly created his skeletons, but through growth, maturity, and redemption, he is a man of God, a man of integrity, he believes in rigorous honesty, and when he gives you his word, you can bet he will keep it. He will make an excellent Mayor for the City of Gallup.

I am deeply proud of my husband, and I hope each of you will wish him the best in this latest endeavor. Many of you know his road name as "Best Man" and I believe it is very fitting in this instance—he is the BEST MAN for the job!

## ► OTHER STORIES

*Thanks to Duane "Roadthing" Maxey for steering me to the following article:*

### **SERIES OF EVENTS BRINGS TWO VIETNAM VETERAN FAMILIES TOGETHER AFTER 40 YEARS**

Published October 19, 2010, FoxNews.com

It's been 40 years since Kenny Joe Nolan died . . . 40 years since three young girls in Kentucky lost the only brother they ever had . . . and 40 years since Nolan's best friend, Fred Niles, set out to find them, hoping to tell them that Kenny Joe died a hero serving his country.

So it may have been just dumb luck, or it may have been fate, that a friend of Niles stopped in at Wild Bill's Army Navy Surplus Store in Gatlinburg, Tenn., and happened upon a flier advertising a "Welcome Home Vietnam Era Veterans" event and parade scheduled to be held in London, KY., on October 8.

The friend showed Niles the flier, and Niles, of Kingsport, TN., immediately recognized London as his war buddy's hometown.

And that set into motion an improbable and remarkable reunion that was four decades in the making—and one that Nolan's sister, Nancy Malin, now 49 years old, says was nothing short of a miracle.

The series of fortunate events began by a chance happening in Dallas, TX, where Buddy Butler, 34, from London, KY., happened upon a Vietnam veteran at the airport and immediately felt the need to thank him for his service. "The Vietnam vet was speechless," said Butler, an Iraq War veteran, who recalled that he had been given "a warm welcome home, unlike the one most Vietnam vets received."

Emotionally moved by the encounter, he said he dreamed up the veterans event in London to give Vietnam veterans recognition for their time served. A committee was formed, plans for the event were developed, and fliers were sent out.

One of them found its way to Wild Bill's Army Navy, and from there it found its way to Niles.

With the flier in his hand and hope in his heart, Niles called the number on the flier and “requested if there was any possibility that they could help find the family of Kenny Joe Nolan.”

The Nolan family had moved around a lot after Kenny’s death, which made them hard to find. But after an intensive search, Gil Russell, an employee of London's tourist bureau, found the sisters -- who weren't even aware of the event -- and put them in touch with Niles.

“Sometimes we think that one person's efforts can’t make a difference, but this really snowballed—Buddy’s efforts, fliers, Fred seeing it, contacting everyone, getting everyone together-- it all started with one person.” Malin said.

Niles and Nolan's sisters decided to meet in London, and they later said their reunion brought closure to all of them.

Niles said the emotional meeting allowed him to move forward. “It’s a great way to heal. It’s the most healing thing I’ve ever done, locating the family of my best friend. It helps the family and it helps the men and women who served with the deceased,” he said.

“You think about someone carrying something for 40 years, the same amount of time our family had," Malin told FoxNews.com. "But before now, I didn’t realize the impact Kenny’s death had on his fellow soldiers. I think Fred felt a lot of guilt for surviving when my brother did not.”

The Nolan family said they were especially thankful to Niles, because he cleared up the story of their brother’s death. They were originally told that he died as he got out of a helicopter, but Niles told a different tale of heroism.

“Kenny got hit in the chest by the propeller as he jumped from the copter, and Fred told us this didn’t slow him down. ‘He hit the ground running.’”

Niles said he, Nolan and six others, part of the 1/12 B Company, 4th Infantry Division of the U.S. Army, were pinned down in a ravine in Phu Bai in the Central Highlands of Vietnam for four days without food and water, receiving heavy fire from both sides.

Nolan was on as point man, he said, and took 20 rounds to the chest, killing him immediately. Niles was alongside him.

Niles also was shot -- eight times -- but he survived the ambush, as did only two others.

“It’s been a real relief to finally know what happened and to know that he had friends there like Fred,” Malin said.

Niles recalled “sharing a lot of close times” with his fellow soldiers, and that they became like brothers.

He told Nolan's family of the fun they had together, despite the circumstances they found themselves in.

He said he and Nolan met at Army basic training in Fort Polk, LA, in the spring of 1970. "We became good friends in Fort Polk, and I would say we became very good friends, became best friends in Vietnam," he said.

He told the Nolans of an encounter he recalled from the thick of the Vietnamese jungle.

He said one of the first warnings soldiers would give to new men in their company was, "Don't mess with the monkeys!"

While on patrol one day, he said, they stopped to eat C-rations, when an orangutan came out from the bush. Nolan said the new guy had made the mistake of putting his rations down. "The orangutan beat him up as he tried to get his food back, and so we told him again, 'You do not mess with the monkeys,'" And he laughed, recalling the moment.

"We were bonded always," he said.

And now he shares the same unbreakable bond with Nolan's survivors.

"Kenny was like a brother to me, a brother in my heart and always will be." Niles told Foxnews.com.

And just as Niles considered Nolan to be his brother, so now does Malin think of Niles.

"Fred has become like the brother that I lost." she said.

Niles gave his purple heart, bronze star, and his good conduct medal to Malin. She gave Niles a little Bible her brother had on him when he died. "There is some blood on the pages of the Bible," Malin said.

They talk almost every day now, and Niles is planning to spend Thanksgiving with the Nolan family.

"We have formed this really close friendship," Malin said.

"It's a weekend I'll never forget. I'm still in awe." Niles said.

## **LIVING THE AMERICAN DREAM**

From the Vietnamese Community of Houston and Vicinities website

On Saturday, July 24, the town of Prescott Valley, AZ, hosted a Freedom Rally. Quang Nguyen was asked to speak on his experience of coming to America and what it means. He spoke the following in dedication to all Vietnam Veterans.

"35 years ago, if you were to tell me that I am going to stand up here speaking to a couple thousand patriots, in English, I'd laugh at you. Man, every morning I wake up thanking God for putting me and my family in the greatest country on earth.

I just want you all to know that the American dream does exist and I am living the American dream. I was asked to speak to you about my experience as a first generation Vietnamese-American, but I'd rather speak to you as an American.

If you hadn't noticed, I am not white and I feel pretty comfortable with my people.

I am a proud US citizen and here is my proof. It took me 8 years to get it, waiting in endless lines, but I got it and I am very proud of it. Guess what, I did it legally and it ain't from the state of Hawaii .

I still remember the images of the Tet offensive in 1968, I was six years old. Now you might want to question how a 6-year-old boy could remember anything. Trust me, those images can never be erased. I can't even imagine what it was like for young American soldiers, 10,000 miles away from home, fighting on my behalf.

35 years ago, I left South Vietnam for political asylum. The war had ended. At the age of 13, I left with the understanding that I may or may not ever get to see my siblings or parents again. I was one of the first lucky 100,000 Vietnamese allowed to come to the US . Somehow, my family and I were reunited five months later, amazingly, in California. It was a miracle from God.

If you haven't heard lately that this is the greatest country on earth, I am telling you that right now. It is the freedom and the opportunities presented to me that put me here with all of you tonight. I also remember the barriers that I had to overcome every step of the way. My high school counselor told me that I could not make it to college due to my poor communication skills. I proved him wrong. I finished college. You see, all you have to do is to give this little boy an opportunity and encourage him to take and run with it. Well, I took the opportunity and here I am. This person standing tonight in front of you could not exist under a socialist/communist environment. By the way, if you think socialism is the way to go, I am sure many people here will chip in to get you a one-way ticket out of here. And if you didn't know, the only difference between socialism and communism is an AK-47 aimed at your head. That was my experience.

In 1982, I stood with a thousand new immigrants, reciting the pledge of allegiance and listening to the National Anthem for the first time as an American. To this day, I can't remember anything sweeter and more patriotic than that moment in my life.

Fast forwarding, somehow I finished high school, finished college, and like any other goofball 21-year-old kid, I was having a great time with my life. I had a nice job and a nice apartment in Southern California. In some way and somehow, I had forgotten how I got here and why I am here.

One day I was at a gas station, I saw a veteran pumping gas on the other side of the island. I don't know what made me do it, but I walked over and asked if he had served in Vietnam. He smiled and said yes. I shook and held his hand. The grown man began to well up. I walked away as fast as I could and at that very moment, I was emotionally rocked. This was a profound moment in life. I knew something had to change in my life. It was time for me to learn how to be a good citizen. It was time for me to give back.

You see, America is not a place on the map, it isn't a physical location. It is an ideal, a concept. And if you are an American, you must understand the concept, you must buy into this concept, and most importantly, you have to fight and defend this concept. This is about Freedom and not free stuff. And that is why I am standing up here. Brothers and sisters, to be a real American, the very least you must do is to learn English and understand it well. In my humble opinion, you cannot be a faithful patriotic citizen if you can't speak the language of the country you live in. Take this document of 46 pages - last I looked on the Internet, there wasn't a Vietnamese translation of the US Constitution. It took me a long time to get to the point of being able to converse and until this day, I still struggle to come up with the right words. It's not easy, but if it's too easy, it's not worth doing.

Before I knew this 46-page document, I learned of the 500,000 Americans who fought for this little boy. I learned of the 58,000 names scribed on the black wall at the Vietnam Memorial. You are my heroes. You are my founders.

At this time, I would like to ask all the Vietnam veterans to please stand. I thank you for my life. I thank you for your sacrifices, and I thank you for giving me the freedom and liberty I have today. I now ask all veterans, firefighters, and police officers, to please stand. On behalf of all first generation immigrants, I thank you for your services and may God bless you all.

## **“KILROY”**

Did you ever wonder where the slogan originated? It was during World War II that Jim Kilroy started chalking his slogans at the shipyard near Boston.

Jim Kilroy was a 39 year old Bethlehem Steel Company shipyard worker from Halifax, Mass., at the Fore River Shipyard in Quincy. His job was to carefully survey every-inner bottom and tank before issuing a contract. He became very upset when the Test Leaders always wanted him to look over the job with them and when he explained to them that he had already checked the job and could not spare the time, they would accuse him of not having looked the job over.

He got sick of being accused of not looking the jobs over so he started marking the manhole on top of the tank, where the tester could see it, "KILROY WAS HERE!"

After that, Kilroy started chalking the message everywhere he went aboard ships under construction at the shipyard. Normally these slogans would have been covered with paint before the ships went to sea. But, during the Second World War, they were dispatched to sea without being painted; so they could be used to transport troops and much needed war materials to various parts of the globe.

The servicemen spotted the "KILROY WAS HERE!" logos on the overheads, decks, and bulkheads of the ships and quickly adopted the slogan as their own. In short order "KILROY WAS HERE!" was written on walls in every corner of the world. The slogan even inspired a Hollywood Movie called "KILROY WAS HERE!"

## **THE SIX PATTEN BROTHERS**

December 7, 1941 was a Day of Infamy for Six Patten Brothers. Veterans should be proud to know that six Patten brothers were there that fateful day on the battleship USS Nevada.

The Patten brothers from rural Iowa began joining the Navy in 1934. During peacetime, they were allowed to serve on the same ship. By January 1941, seven brothers, Gilbert, Marvin, Bick, Allen, Ted, Ray and Bruce, were serving in the engine room of the Nevada. In September, their father, Floyd, joined the Navy and the Pattens were recognized as the Navy's largest family. In October, Ted's enlistment was up and he returned to civilian life working in Long Beach, California.

On the weekend of December 7, the Nevada was coming into port, but was directed to wait until the aircraft carrier Lexington cleared the entrance to Pearl Harbor as she left port. When the Nevada reached its docking place on Battleship Row, the Arizona was moored where the Nevada normally docked. For that weekend and eternity, they traded places.

The disaster that caused the death of 1,177 sailors and Marines on the Arizona has deservedly been well documented. The story of the six Patten brothers on that day also merits remembrance.



Gilbert was standing in line to purchase toiletries from the ship's store waiting for it to open at 08:00. He counted the sailors ahead of him and decided to come back later. He was never known to have a great deal of patience! Allen had finished night duty and was eating breakfast. Marvin was in a skiff going ashore for duty. Bick, Ray and Bruce were below deck.

Allen's recollection of that morning was later published in their hometown newspaper, the Lake City Graphic. "I got up and showered about 7 a.m. and at about 7:45 a.m. I sat down to breakfast. I remember it was a 'dog' sandwich and beans. Then some of the other B Division sailors and I sat around drinking tea and coffee and discussing the Rose Bowl and who would win the football game Duke or Oregon. Then something strange started happening and we couldn't figure out what was going on. It was just past 8 a.m., we were three decks down and the Nevada started shaking like a three or four scale earthquake. The porthole was open and I heard a rat-a-tat-tat sound like a machine gun. We were all very confused; it had been such a nice serene morning. We thought it odd that someone might be practicing with their guns. Then the B Division mess cook, Henry, he was just a kid, 18 years old yelled down to us. 'Hey, you guys, we're being attacked.'"

Years later, Bruce recalled the beginning of the eventful day to a Battle Ground, Washington newspaper, the Reflector. He was a Boiler Tender; three decks down on the Nevada, when general quarters sounded before 8 a.m. "All hands man your battle stations!" ordered a voice on a loudspeaker. "On the way to my battle station, I found one of my brothers arguing with a Chief Petty Officer," said Patten. His brother was insisting to the Chief that Japanese planes were overhead. The Chief was yelling that he was tired of all the rumors about an attack. "Then the first bomb hit and ended the argument," Bruce said.

The first wave of Japanese planes attacked at 0753. They bombed and torpedoed the Arizona anchored near the Nevada. A bomb struck near Marvin's boat that was leaving for the shore. Bodies flew in every direction. A bomb exploded where Gilbert had been standing at the ship's store. All those who were still in line were killed.

At the stern of Battleship Row, the Nevada's gun crews were marginally faster than other ships in getting into action and had beaten off all but one of the low-flying Japanese Kate torpedo bombers. Nonetheless, the last Kate sent a single torpedo into her bow opening up a 40- by 30-foot gash.

With a large hole blown in the Nevada's side, Lieutenant Ruff, the officer in charge, ordered the Nevada to prepare to get underway. Due to its proximity to the Arizona, he feared the explosions and fires would spread to the Nevada.

Again, Allen recalled. "Part of the crew was on liberty, and only one of the ship's six boilers was lit and on line. Thick ropes held the ship tightly in place. An axe cut through the hemp mooring lines, and by 8:18 a.m., we had all six boilers off in ten minutes – record time. The Nevada was underway in 18 minutes, steaming through billowing smoke, which was pouring from the Arizona."

Lieutenant Ruff directed the Nevada to proceed and she steamed toward the open sea to escape further attacks by Japanese planes. The sailors on the other ships cheered as they witnessed the Nevada pull out of its berth in Battleship Row. It was a morale boost for them to observe one of their ships underway.

Allen continued. "Our skipper was making a run for the channel at 18 knots, but when the Japs spotted us we really took a pounding. The first of three 500 pound aerial bombs struck the Nevada mid-ship. It sounded like a big stick of dynamite going off with a thundering noise, and then a torpedo struck the portside and the Nevada came out of the water two feet just like somebody lifted it up."

Lieutenant Ruff soon realized the Nevada's foray to escape would fail due to her additional damage. He ordered the ship to run aground before she sank. Except for his quick decision and action; crewmen below deck, including the Patten brothers, would have suffered the same fate as the sailors trapped below deck on the Arizona when she sank. Lieutenant Ruff saved their lives and the lives of all the crewmembers below deck.

Later, Allen recalled the scene. "I went topside for the first time an hour after the Japanese attack began and I couldn't believe my eyes. We had been tied up next to the USS Arizona and as I looked across Pearl Harbor to Battleship Row, the sight was incredible. Ford Island was engulfed in fire and smoke. I saw a nightmare. The Arizona had sunk, the California was ablaze and sinking, the Pennsylvania was in dry dock and burning, the Oklahoma and Utah were capsized. The Japs had left and the fleet was in ruins."

The Patten brothers' sister Martha Sporleder and her husband lived on an Iowa farm. They had a battery-powered radio and that afternoon, they were gathered in the kitchen. The fall harvest was completed and the family was listening to WHO when the Des Moines radio station announced the attack on Pearl Harbor. They did not have a telephone.

In Long Beach, Ted Patten entered a café with his lunch bucket and sat next to his fellow workers. There, he first heard about the attack on Pearl Harbor. He immediately left for the nearest Navy station to seek news about his brothers. He also reenlisted in the Navy.

Since December 8, Martha's husband, Ernest, trekked daily to the Western Union office at the railroad station seeking a message on her brothers. On December 10, a telegraph from Ted simply announced, "All okay."

In June 1942, the eighth Patten brother, Wayne, joined the Navy and they continued to serve their country during World War II. They served aboard ships that were involved in the Battle of the Coral Sea, Battle of Leyte Gulf and Battle of the Philippine Sea (the "Marianas Turkey Shoot"). The eight brothers and their father's Navy careers totaled 124 years of service to their country. Today, the two youngest brothers, Bruce and Wayne, survive.

Bruce shares a special status with few remaining World War II sailors. He was aboard the Nevada during the attack on December 7, 1941 and Bruce was aboard the destroyer USS Wren within 300 yards of the battleship Missouri when the Japanese surrendered on September 2, 1945.

*This article was authored and contributed by Clarence Floyd (VJ) Patten, III (Col., U.S.M.C., retired) and Dale E. Sporleder, nephews and grandsons of the Patten brothers and their father. VJ and Dale have also published a book, 124 Years Before The Navy Mast - The Patten Family, which details the Patten brothers' Naval experiences during World War II. The book may be ordered over the Internet at [www.lulu.com/content/438110](http://www.lulu.com/content/438110) or [www.Lulu.com](http://www.Lulu.com) or from Huntington Publications, 5089 Huntington Drive, Carmel, IN 46033. Dale may be contacted at [Patten124@aol.com](mailto:Patten124@aol.com) or 317-508-7761. Other information on the Patten family is available at [www.rootsweb.com/~iaohms/military/patten\\_brothers.html](http://www.rootsweb.com/~iaohms/military/patten_brothers.html) and [www.pattenpending.com](http://www.pattenpending.com).*

## **THE TWENTY-ONE GUN SALUTE**

*Author unknown*

Guns were fired as salutes in early times, but a twenty-one gun salute is an American Expression according to an official U.S. Navy publication. Guns could not be loaded quickly then, so that firing one in a salute indicated that the saluter had disarmed himself in deference to the person being saluted.

Later as ships became larger, twenty-one guns was the greatest number found on one side of one of the larger ships of the line. Firing all of them became the highest mark of respect, reserved for heads of state. Fewer numbers of guns were fired in salutes to people of lesser importance; but for any salute only odd numbers are used, reflecting the old seagoing superstition against even numbers. This form of saluting was first recognized in the U.S. in 1875. As Commander-in-Chief, the President is accorded the highest salute of twenty-one guns.

One of our Pearl Harbor Survivors asked the Sergeant of the burial detail why he referred to the honors bestowed as a twenty-one gun salute. As he would have it no other way, and because of his lack of knowledge as leader of the Honor Guard, we sought other authority. Our State Department and the Army advise that "Final Honors" for a veteran include seven riflemen, each firing three shots. Even though these three volleys total 21 shots, it is not a 21 gun salute! It is three volleys, period! The 21 gun salute consists of artillery pieces (or Navy/Marine Corps equivalent) firing a series, one gun at a time at precisely timed intervals. This honor is reserved exclusively for our President and visiting heads of state.

Traditionally, in the military a rifle is not a gun. Since the Air Force doesn't include gunners-mates, gunnery sergeants, artillery, etc., they may be excused for their lack of knowledge. However you swabbies, jarheads, and grunts should know better. We veterans get three volleys when final honors are rendered, not a twenty-one gun salute.

### **What Is the Origin of the 21-Gun Salute?**

The use of gun salutes for military occasions is traced to early warriors who demonstrated their peaceful intentions by placing their weapons in a position that rendered them ineffective. Apparently this custom was universal, with the specific act varying with time and place, depending on the weapons being used. A North African tribe, for example, trailed the points of their spears on the ground to indicate that they did not mean to be hostile.

The tradition of rendering a salute by cannon originated in the 14th century as firearms and cannons came into use. Since these early devices contained only one projectile, discharging them once rendered them ineffective. Originally warships fired seven-gun salutes--the number seven probably selected because of its astrological and Biblical significance. Seven planets had been identified and the phases of the moon changed every seven days. The Bible states that God rested on the seventh day after Creation, that every seventh year was sabbatical and that the seven times seventh year ushered in the Jubilee year.

Land batteries, having a greater supply of gunpowder, were able to fire three guns for every shot fired afloat, hence the salute by shore batteries was 21 guns. The multiple of three probably was chosen because of the mystical significance of the number three in many ancient civilizations. Early gunpowder, composed mainly of sodium nitrate, spoiled easily at sea, but could be kept cooler and drier in land magazines. When potassium nitrate improved the quality of gunpowder, ships at sea adopted the salute of 21 guns.

The 21-gun salute became the highest honor a nation rendered. Varying customs among the maritime powers led to confusion in saluting and return of salutes. Great Britain, the world's preeminent seapower in the 18th and 19th centuries, compelled weaker nations to salute first, and for a time monarchies received more guns than did republics. Eventually, by agreement, the international salute was established at 21 guns, although the United States did not agree on this procedure until August 1875.

The gun salute system of the United States has changed considerably over the years. In 1810, the "national salute" was defined by the War Department as equal to the number of states in the Union--at that time 17. This salute was fired by all U.S. military installations at 1:00 p.m. (later at noon) on Independence Day. The President also received a salute equal to the number of states whenever he visited a military installation.

In 1842, the Presidential salute was formally established at 21 guns. In 1890, regulations designated the "national salute" as 21 guns and redesignated the traditional Independence Day salute, the "Salute to the Union," equal to the number of states. Fifty guns are also fired on all military installations equipped to do so at the close of the day of the funeral of a President, ex-President, or President-elect.

Today the national salute of 21 guns is fired in honor of a national flag, the sovereign or chief of state of a foreign nation, a member of a reigning royal family, and the President, ex-President and President-elect of the United States. It is also fired at noon of the day of the funeral of a President, ex-President, or President-elect. Gun salutes are also rendered to other military and civilian leaders of this and other nations. The number of guns is based on their protocol rank. These salutes are always in odd numbers.

Source: Headquarters, Military District of Washington, *FACT SHEET: GUN SALUTES*, May 1969.

*Thanks to Tom Hanlon, Chaplain for VVA Chapter 975, Mohave County, AZ, for bringing the following article to my attention. This is an article that should be of special interest to all who served in Vietnam. Former Secretary of the Navy James Webb writes an outstanding article about the facts surrounding the Vietnam War. He articulates how the media elite have chosen to ignore (and slight) the role of real American patriots during the Vietnam years.*

## **HEROES OF THE VIETNAM GENERATION**

By James Webb

The rapidly disappearing cohort of Americans that endured the Great Depression and then fought World War II is receiving quite a send-off from the leading lights of the so-called '60s generation. Tom Brokaw has published two oral histories of "The Greatest Generation" that feature ordinary people doing their duty and suggest that such conduct was historically unique.

Chris Matthews of "Hardball" is fond of writing columns praising the Navy service of his father while castigating his own baby boomer generation for its alleged softness and lack of struggle. William Bennett gave a startling condescending speech at the Naval Academy a few years ago comparing the heroism of the "D-Day Generation" to the drugs-and-sex nihilism of the "Woodstock Generation." And Steven Spielberg, in promoting his film "Saving Private Ryan," was careful to justify his portrayals of soldiers in action based on the supposedly unique nature of World War II.

An irony is at work here. Lest we forget, the World War II generation now being lionized also brought us the Vietnam War, a conflict which today's most conspicuous voices by and large opposed, and in which few of them served. The "best and brightest" of the Vietnam age group once made headlines by castigating their parents for bringing about the war in which they would not fight, which has become the war they refuse to remember.

Pundits back then invented a term for this animus: the "generation gap." Long, plaintive articles and even books were written examining its manifestations. Campus leaders, who claimed precocious wisdom through the magical process of reading a few controversial books, urged fellow baby boomers not to trust anyone over 30. Their elders who had survived the Depression and fought the largest war in history were looked down upon as shallow, materialistic, and out of touch.

Those of us who grew up on the other side of the picket line from that era's counter-culture can't help but feel a little leery of this sudden gush of appreciation for our elders from the leading lights of the old counter-culture. Then and now, the national conversation has proceeded from the dubious assumption that those who came of age during Vietnam are a unified generation in the same sense as their parents were, and thus are capable of being spoken for through these fickle elites.

In truth, the "Vietnam generation" is a misnomer. Those who came of age during that war are permanently divided by different reactions to a whole range of counter-cultural agendas, and nothing divides them more deeply than the personal ramifications of the war itself. The sizable portion of the Vietnam age group who

declined to support the counter-cultural agenda, and especially the men and women who opted to serve in the military during the Vietnam War, are quite different from their peers who for decades have claimed to speak for them. In fact, they are much like the World War II generation itself. For them, Woodstock was a side show, college protestors were spoiled brats who would have benefited from having to work a few jobs in order to pay their tuition, and Vietnam represented not an intellectual exercise in draft avoidance, or protest marches but a battlefield that was just as brutal as those their fathers faced in World War II and Korea.

Few who served during Vietnam ever complained of a generation gap. The men who fought World War II were their heroes and role models. They honored their father's service by emulating it, and largely agreed with their father's wisdom in attempting to stop Communism's reach in Southeast Asia.

The most accurate poll of their attitudes (Harris, 1980) showed that 91 percent were glad they'd served their country, Seventy-four percent enjoyed their time in the service, and 89 percent agreed with the statement that "our troops were asked to fight in a war which our political leaders in Washington would not let them win." And most importantly, the castigation they received upon returning home was not from the World War II generation, but from the very elites in their age group who supposedly spoke for them.

Nine million men served in the military during Vietnam War, three million of whom went to the Vietnam Theater. Contrary to popular mythology, two-thirds of these were volunteers, and 73 percent of those who died were volunteers. While some attention has been paid recently to the plight of our prisoners of war, most of whom were pilots; there has been little recognition of how brutal the war was for those who fought it on the ground.

Dropped onto the enemy's terrain 12,000 miles away from home, America's citizen-soldiers performed with a tenacity and quality that may never be truly understood. Those who believe the war was fought incompletely on a tactical level should consider Hanoi's recent admission that 1.4 million of its soldiers died on the battlefield, compared to 58,000 total U.S. dead.

Those who believe that it was a "dirty little war" where the bombs did all the work might contemplate that it was the *most costly war the U.S. Marine Corps has ever fought*—five times as many dead as World War I, three times as many dead as in Korea, and more total killed and wounded than in all of World War II.

Significantly, these sacrifices were being made at a time the United States was deeply divided over our effort in Vietnam. The baby-boom generation had cracked apart along class lines as America's young men were making difficult, life-or-death choices about serving. The better academic institutions became focal points for vitriolic protest against the war, with few of their graduates going into the military. Harvard College, which had lost 691 alumni in World War II, lost a total of 12 men in Vietnam from the classes of 1962 through 1972 combined. Those classes at Princeton lost six, at MIT two. The media turned ever more hostile. And frequently the reward for a young man's having gone through the trauma of combat was to be greeted by his peers with studied indifference or outright hostility.

What is a hero? My heroes are the young men who faced the issues of war and possible death, and then weighed those concerns against obligations to their country. Citizen-soldiers who interrupted their personal and professional lives at their most formative stage, in the timeless phrase of the Confederate Memorial in Arlington National Cemetery, "not for fame or reward, not for place or for rank, but in simple obedience to duty, as they understood it." Who suffered loneliness, disease, and wounds with an often-contagious elan. And who deserve a far better place in history than that now offered them by the so-called spokesman of our so-called generation.

Mr. Brokaw, Mr. Matthews, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Spielberg, meet my Marines. 1969 was an odd year to be in Vietnam. Second only to 1968 in terms of American casualties, it was the year made famous by Hamburger Hill, as well as the gut-wrenching Life cover story showing pictures of 242 Americans who had been killed in one average week of fighting. Back home, it was the year of Woodstock, and of numerous anti-war rallies that

culminated in the Moratorium March on Washington. The My Lai massacre hit the papers and was seized upon by the anti-war movement as the emblematic moment of the war. Lyndon Johnson left Washington in utter humiliation.

Richard Nixon entered the scene, destined for an even worse fate. In the An Hoa Basin southwest of Danang, the Fifth Marine Regiment was in its third year of continuous combat operations. Combat is an unpredictable and inexact environment, but we were well led. As a rifle platoon and company commander, I served under a succession of three regimental commanders who had cut their teeth in World War II, and four different battalion commanders, three of whom had seen combat in Korea. The company commanders were typically captains on their second combat tour in Vietnam, or young first lieutenants like myself who were given companies after many months of "bush time" as platoon commanders in the Basin's tough and unforgiving environs.

The Basin was one of the most heavily contested areas in Vietnam, its torn, cratered earth offering every sort of wartime possibility. In the mountains just to the west, not far from the Ho Chi Minh Trail, the North Vietnamese Army operated an infantry division from an area called Base Area 112. In the valleys of the Basin, main-force Viet Cong battalions whose ranks were 80 percent North Vietnamese Army regulars moved against the Americans every day. Local Viet Cong units sniped and harassed. Ridgelines and paddy dikes were laced with sophisticated booby traps of every size, from a hand grenade to a 250-pound bomb. The villages sat in the rice paddies and tree lines like individual fortresses, crisscrossed with the trenches and spider holes, their homes sporting bunkers capable of surviving direct hits from large-caliber artillery shells. The Viet Cong infrastructure was intricate and permeating. except for the old and the very young, villagers who did not side with the Communists had either been killed or driven out to the government controlled enclaves near Danang.

In the rifle companies, we spent the endless months patrolling ridgelines and villages and mountains, far away from any notion of tents, barbed wire, hot food, or electricity. Luxuries were limited to what would fit inside one's pack, which after a few "humps" usually boiled down to letter-writing material, towel, soap, toothbrush, poncho liner, and a small transistor radio.

We moved through the boiling heat with 60 pounds of weapons and gear, causing a typical Marine to drop 20 percent of his body weight while in the bush. When we stopped we dug chest-deep fighting holes and slit trenches for toilets. We slept on the ground under makeshift poncho hootches, and when it rained we usually took our hootches down because wet ponchos shined under illumination flares, making great targets. Sleep itself was fitful, never more than an hour or two at a stretch for months at a time as we mixed daytime patrolling with night-time ambushes, listening posts, foxhole duty, and radio watches. Ringworm, hookworm, malaria, and dysentery were common, as was trench foot when the monsoons came. Respite was rotating back to the mud-filled regimental combat base at An Hoa for four or five days, where rocket and mortar attacks were frequent and our troops manned defensive bunkers at night, which makes it kind of hard to get excited about tales of Woodstock, or camping at the Vineyard during summer break.

We had been told while training that Marine officers in the rifle companies had an 85 percent probability of being killed or wounded, and the experience of "Dying Delta," as our company was known, bore that out. Of the officers in the bush when I arrived, our company commander was wounded, the weapons platoon commander wounded, the first platoon commander was killed, the second platoon commander was wounded twice, and I, commanding the third platoons fared no better. Two of my original three-squad leaders were killed, and the third shot in the stomach. My platoon sergeant was severely wounded, as was my right guide. By the time I left, my platoon I had gone through six radio operators, five of them casualties.

These figures were hardly unique; in fact, they were typical. Many other units; for instance, those who fought the hill battles around Khe Sanh, or were with the famed Walking Dead of the Ninth Marine Regiment, or were in the battle of Hue City or at Dai Do, had it far worse.

When I remember those days and the very young men who spent them with me, I am continually amazed, for these were mostly recent civilians barely out of high school, called up from the cities and the farms to do their year in hell and then return. Visions haunt me every day, not of the nightmares of war but of the steady consistency with which my Marines faced their responsibilities, and of how uncomplaining most of them were in the face of constant danger. The salty, battle-hardened 20-year-olds teaching green 19-year-olds the intricate lessons of the hostile battlefield. The unerring skill of the young squad leaders as we moved through unfamiliar villages and weed-choked trails in the black of night. The quick certainty when a fellow Marine was wounded and needed help. Their willingness to risk their lives to save other Marines in peril. To this day it stuns me that their own countrymen have so completely missed the story of their service, lost in the bitter confusion of the war itself.

Like every military unit throughout history we had occasional laggards, cowards, and complainers. But in the aggregate, these Marines were the finest people I have ever been around. It has been my privilege to keep up with many of them over the years since we all came home. One finds in them very little bitterness about the war in which they fought. The most common regret, almost to a man, is that they were not able to do more for each other and for the people they came to help.

It would be redundant to say that I would trust my life to these men, because I already have, in more ways than I can ever recount. I am alive today because of their quiet, unaffected heroism. Such valor epitomizes the conduct of Americans at war from the first days of our existence. That the boomer elites can canonize this sort of conduct in our fathers' generation while ignoring it in our own is more than simple oversight. It is a conscious, continuing travesty.

*Former Secretary of the Navy James Webb was awarded the Navy Cross, Silver Star, and Bronze Star medals for heroism as a Marine in Vietnam.*

## ► VA NEWS

### **CAUTION TO ALL VETERANS**

From the Monsoon Dispatch, VVA Chapter 785

*This is a caution to all Veterans.....*

*We have experienced a poser in our own General Meeting so be cautious*

An organization called Veterans Affairs Services (VAS) is providing benefit and general information on VA and gathering personal information on veterans. This organization is not affiliated with VA in any way.

<http://www.vaservices.org/us/index.html>

VAS may be gaining access to military personnel through their close resemblance to the VA name and seal. Our Legal Counsel has requested that we coordinate with DoD to inform military installations, particularly mobilization sites, of this group and their lack of affiliation or endorsement by VA to provide any services.

In addition, GC requests that if you have any examples of VAS acts that violate chapter 59 of Title 38 United States Code, such as VAS employees assisting veterans in the preparation and presentation of claims for benefits, please pass any additional information to Mr. Daugherty at the address below.

Michael G. Daugherty  
Staff Attorney  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
Office of General Counsel (022G2)

## **VA Office Developing Innovative Patient-Centered Model of Care for Veterans**

*Dr. Tracy Williams Gaudet to Lead Office*

WASHINGTON -- The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is creating a new office to develop personal, patient-centered models of care for Veterans who receive health care services at VA's more than 1,000 points of care across the Nation.

"VA has become one of the Nation's leaders in quality health care and is increasingly cited as the standard to emulate," said VA Under Secretary for Health Dr. Robert A. Petzel. "However, we must always continue to find ways to deliver more with our systems to the incredible patients we are honored to serve. We need to be data-driven, providing the treatments and therapies with the best clinical evidence, and we need to be patient-centered, never losing sight that we have been given the noble mission to care for our Nation's Veterans, families and survivors."

The new VA Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation began operations on Jan. 17 and is based in Arlington, Va.

The office's director, Dr. Tracy Williams Gaudet, comes to VA from Duke University Medical Center where she has served as the executive director of Duke Integrated Medicine since 2001. Dr. Gaudet received her Bachelor of Arts and medical degrees from Duke University.

"The VA's vision and commitment to cultural transformation comes at a pivotal moment for health care in this country, and I am deeply honored to be joining VA in this important work," said Dr. Gaudet. "The Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation will be a living, learning organization in which we will discover and demonstrate new models of care, analyze the results, and then create strategies that allow for their translation and implementation across the VA. VA will continue to be a national leader in innovation, and, in this way, we will provide the future of high-quality health care to our Veterans."

The VA Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation will have four regional implementation teams at select VA medical centers across the country: Birmingham, Ala; East Orange, N.J.; Dallas; and Los Angeles.

Each VA medical center was selected for excellence already demonstrated in producing cultures of patient-centered care based on established criteria. These regional teams, comprised of patient-centered care consultants, will be responsible for facilitating the culture change for patient-centered care at all VA facilities.

## **► OTHER NEWS**

### **ANGEL FIRE PARK MANAGER RETIRES**

Tom Turnbull arrived at Vietnam Veterans Memorial State Park less than a month before Memorial Day Weekend 2006. During his time as manager of the park, he's touched the lives of many veterans. Prior to working for New Mexico State Parks, he was a counselor in New York for six years and studied many facets of indigenous philosophies. This honed his listening skills and made him a valuable member of the Memorial staff. He served in the Navy in Vietnam and often shared his own story. Tom has spoken publicly with national and international groups to educate them on the mission at VVMSP. Most recently, he was invited to be a presenter in the UNM Taos Fall Lecture Series.



Tom's last day at Angel Fire was December 31. His hard work on behalf of veterans and his sense of humor will be greatly missed.

### **VIETNAM VET, FORMER BUSH OFFICIAL MURDERED**

Delaware Police are investigating the apparent murder of a former Bush official who also championed the fundraising effort to build the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on the Mall in Washington, D.C.

John P. Wheeler III, 66, was found dead in a Delaware landfill, and his death has been ruled a homicide by Newark, Del., police. They are asking the public for leads in the case.

Wheeler's body was found in Wilmington on Friday. According to police, somebody initially reported that the body was dumped out of a refuse truck, which would have been coming from Newark, onto the landfill. Newark Police spokesman Lt. Mark Farrall told Fox News that nobody had reported Wheeler missing before he was found.

The Wilmington News Journal reported that Wheeler was last seen riding an Amtrak train from Washington to Wilmington, Del., last Tuesday.

The death has shocked those who knew him. Former Air Force Secretary Michael Wynne, for whom Wheeler worked as a special assistant during the last four years of the George W. Bush administration, told Fox News he was "stunned" to learn of Wheeler's death. He called Wheeler a "patriot to the first order," saying, "he's the most unlikely candidate for someone to do this to."

Wheeler, a Vietnam veteran who lived in New Castle and worked as a defense consultant, had a long and decorated military career and served in the Reagan administration and both Bush administrations.

During the Reagan administration, Wheeler served as chairman of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, helping lead fundraising efforts for the memorial on the National Mall. Wheeler went on to found the Vietnam Veterans Leadership Program, to help find veterans employment opportunities. Then he helped create the Earth Conservation Corps during the George H.W. Bush administration.

Wheeler graduated from West Point in 1966, and had a law degree from Yale and a business degree from Harvard.

Wheeler and his wife, Katherine Klyce, filed a lawsuit in 2009 to prevent their neighbors from constructing a home that would have blocked their view, the News Journal reported.

## **VVMF IN MEMORY PROGRAM**

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund's (VVMF) *In Memory* program honors those who died as a result of the Vietnam War, but whose deaths do not fit the Department of Defense criteria for inclusion upon the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.

Every year there is a ceremony to pay tribute to these men and women who sacrificed so much for their country. The ceremony is held on the third Monday in April—*In Memory* Day.

During the *In Memory* Day ceremony, the names of all the honorees are read aloud. At the conclusion of the ceremony, certificates bearing the honorees' names are placed at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The tributes are collected by the National Park Service and stored in their permanent archive. In addition, the honorees are included in an *In Memory* Honor Roll Book to serve as a lasting reminder of their service and sacrifices.

If you know of anyone whose death was related to Vietnam War involvement and you would like to see them honored in the *In Memory* program, please complete an *In Memory* application and return it to VVMF by no later than **Monday, January 31**. As part of the application, please also include a copy of the death certificate, proof of service in Vietnam, a clean photograph of the honoree, and a short biography.

To download an application: [http://vvmf.org/userFiles/file/In\\_Memory\\_Application.pdf](http://vvmf.org/userFiles/file/In_Memory_Application.pdf)

To find out how to obtain proof of service in Vietnam: <http://www.archives.gov/st-louis/military-personnel/index.html>

The 13th Annual *In Memory* Day Ceremony will be Monday, April 18, 2011 at 10:00 a.m. at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

## ► **BRINGING THEM HOME**

### **AIRMEN MISSING FROM VIETNAM WAR IDENTIFIED**

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced today that the remains of two servicemen, missing in action from the Vietnam War, have been identified and returned to their families for burial with full military honors.

Air Force Col. James E. Dennany, 34, of Kalamazoo, Mich., and Maj. Robert L. Tucci, 27, of Detroit, will be buried as a group Jan. 14, in the Dallas-Ft. Worth National Cemetery.

On Nov. 12, 1969, Dennany and Tucci were flying the number three aircraft of three F-4Ds escorting an AC-130 gunship on a night strike mission over Laos. After the gunship attacked six trucks and set two of them on fire, the AC-130 crew's night vision equipment was impacted by the glow from the fires. They requested that Tucci attack the remaining trucks. During the attack, gunship crew members observed anti-aircraft artillery gunfire directed at Tucci's plane followed by a large explosion. No radio transmissions were heard from the F-4D following the attack and no parachutes were seen in the area. An immediate electronic search revealed nothing and no formal search was initiated due to heavy anti-aircraft fire in the area.

Beginning in the mid-1990s analysts at DPMO and the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) developed case leads they collected from wartime reporting and archival research.

In 1994, a joint U.S.-Lao People's Democratic Republic (L.P.D.R.) team led by JPAC analyzed leads, interviewed villagers, and surveyed five reported crash sites near the record loss location with negative results.

In 1999, during another joint survey, officials in Ban Soppeng, Laos, turned over remains later determined to be human, two .38 caliber pistols and other crew-related equipment that villagers had recovered from a nearby crash site. Between 1999 and 2009, other joint U.S.-L.P.D.R. teams pursued leads, interviewed villagers, and conducted three excavations. They recovered aircraft wreckage, human remains, crew-related equipment and personal effects.

JPAC scientists used forensic tools and circumstantial evidence in the identification of the remains.

With the accounting of these airmen, 1,702 service members still remain missing from the conflict.

For additional information on the Defense Department's mission to account for missing Americans, visit the DPMO website at <http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo/> or call 703-699-1169.

### **RECENTLY RECOVERED**

**1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Robert F. Dees**, U.S. Air Force, 474<sup>th</sup> Fighter-Bomber Wing, was lost on Oct. 9, 1952, near Sinyang, North Korea, when his F-84E Thunderjet aircraft failed to return following a bombing mission. His remains were identified on Nov. 16, 2010.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Dewey W. Foster**, U.S. Army Air Forces, 39<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron, 35<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group, was lost on April 11, 1944, northwest of Dumpu, Papua New Guinea, while on an escort mission in his P-47 D Thunderbolt aircraft. His remains were identified on Nov. 2, 2010.

**Maj. Richard G. Elzinga**, U.S. Air Force, Detachment 1, 56<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Wing, was lost on March 26, 1970, when his O-1G Birdog reconnaissance aircraft crashed in Laos. His remains were identified on Oct. 28, 2010.

**Maj. Thomas J. Beyer**, U.S. Air Force, 20th Tactical Air Support Squadron, was lost on July 30, 1968, when his O-2A Skymaster aircraft failed to return from a reconnaissance mission over South Vietnam. His remains were identified on Oct. 12, 2010.

**Staff Sgt. Samuel E. Hewitt**, U.S. Marine Corps, Company I, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 9<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiment, was lost on March 22, 1966, while near the village of Viem Dong, South Vietnam. His remains were identified on Sept. 20, 2010.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Richard S. Ryrholm, Jr.**, U.S. Army Air Forces, 432<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Squadron, was lost on Sept. 4, 1943, near Lae, Papua New Guinea, after engaging enemy aircraft in his P-38H-5 Lightning aircraft. His remains were identified on Sept. 20, 2010.

**Staff Sgt. Joe R. Sanchez**, U.S. Army, B Battery, 15<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery, was lost on Feb. 13, 1951, in South Korea. His remains were identified Sept. 15, 2010.

## ► SICK CALL

### **Bruce “Duct Tape”**

Duct Tape was seriously injured November 5 when a car ran a red light and hit him. He had 10 broken ribs, and both lungs were punctured. He had chest tubes, and was on a ventilator and in an induced coma. On November 20 he started to wake up periodically and was responsive.

Bruce’s condition improved and he was able to go home the beginning of January. He has been out to see a VA doctor. He lost 30 pounds, still uses O2 at night, and has lots of follow-up doctor appointments.

Bruce posted the following on the RFTW Forum:

“Thank you for your prayers (they really DO work!), emails, cards, and letters. I felt the healing powers of God so many, many times up to and including the present! God bless you, everyone.

I'm still weak as a kitten, but a veritable army of folks are working to improve my lot each day. Diane (Sweetness) has been nothing short of spectacular throughout this ordeal... working full time, taking on the weight of the world, and visiting me every single day to offer her love and support. She is my hero!

It saddens us to sit by the roadside as y'all pass thru Arizona, but we wouldn't miss it for the world. After all, RFTW is our family and we pray for you daily. I won't be able to drive even a four-wheeler for another four-six months ... something about not being able to see the road, I guess. Again.”

## ► TAPS

### Vance Scott

After a valiant fight with cancer, Vance passed away January 16. Shirley “Top Sarge” said he is finally at peace, and thanked everyone for their prayers of support. Vance was born in Little Rock, Ark. and lived in Simi Valley, Calif. He enlisted in the US Air Force and was stationed at Lackland AF Base for basic training. He joined during the Korean Conflict and wanted to go there, but was sent to Turkey instead. He then was transferred to Libya for 18 months. Vance served two tours in Vietnam, 65-66 and again from 69-72. He retired in 1972 after 21 years of faithful service in the Air Force with the rank of S/Sgt. He married Shirley in February 76 in Ark. then moved to CA. He has three children from a previous marriage, Rosa, Vance Jr and Maria.

Vance was remembered on the RFTW Forum in the following ways:

“A time to reflect on what a friend and Brother Vance was. Always a smile, always ready to help riders, whether FNG's or old heads. Always there with our supporters with a ready smile and hug.”

“Vance and Shirley are what ‘Run For The Wall’ is all about.”

“God bless! I can just hear God saying to Vance “Welcome Home.”

“Words are of little comfort at a time like this, but it is all we can do. May he be at peace with the world, he was a warrior, a friend, a family member to us all and an example of true courage.”

“A very special angel has gone home ... He now is at peace and on his ride of a lifetime for all of us.”

### John Marcikese

John lost his battle with colon cancer and passed away on October 16. Although he never realized his dream of going to the Wall, his widow, Pat, will be taking his ashes on RFTW this year to be buried at Arlington. John had a Silver Star, Bronze Star, and two Purple Hearts; he was shot on Hamburger Hill.

### Norman Anthony Moritz

Norman, 72, died November 28. He was a staunch supporter of RFTW and for many years provided us with free fuel when Central Route arrived in Wentzville, MO.

## ► CLOSING THOUGHTS

### The Boys of Iwo Jima

Michael T. Powers, from his book, *Heart Touchers: Life-Changing Stories of Faith, Love, and Laughter*



Each year my video production company is hired to go to Washington, DC, with the eighth grade class from Clinton, WI where I grew up, to videotape their trip. I greatly enjoy visiting our nation's capitol, and each year I take some special memories back with me. This fall's trip was especially memorable.

On the last night of our trip, we stopped at the Iwo Jima memorial. This memorial is the largest bronze statue in the world and depicts one of the most famous photographs in history -- that of the six brave soldiers raising the American Flag at the top of a rocky hill on the island of Iwo Jima, Japan, during WW II.

Over one hundred students and chaperones piled off the buses and headed towards the memorial. I noticed a solitary figure at the base of the statue, and as I got closer he asked, 'Where are you guys from?'

I told him that we were from Wisconsin. 'Hey, I'm a cheese head, too! Come gather around, Cheese heads, and I will tell you a story.'

(James Bradley just happened to be in Washington, DC, to speak at the memorial the following day. He was there that night to say good night to his dad, who had passed away. He was just about to leave when he saw the buses pull up. I videotaped him as he spoke to us, and received his permission to share what he said from my videotape. It is one thing to tour the incredible monuments filled with history in Washington, DC, but it is quite another to get the kind of insight we received that night.)

When all had gathered around, he began to speak. (Here are his words that night.)

My name is James Bradley and I'm from Antigo, Wisconsin. My dad is on that statue, and I just wrote a book called 'Flags of Our Fathers' which is #5 on the New York Times Best Seller list right now. It is the story of the six boys you see behind me.

Six boys raised the flag. The first guy putting the pole in the ground is Harlon Block. Harlon was an all-state football player. He enlisted in the Marine Corps with all the senior members of his football team. They were off to play another type of game. A game called 'War.' But it didn't turn out to be a game. Harlon, at the age of 21, died with his intestines in his hands. I don't say that to gross you out, I say that because there are people who stand in front of this statue and talk about the glory of war. You guys need to know that most of the boys in Iwo Jima were 17, 18, and 19 years old - and it was so hard that the ones who did make it home never even would talk to their families about it.

You see this next guy? That's Rene Gagnon from New Hampshire. If you took Rene's helmet off at the moment this photo was taken and looked in the webbing of that helmet, you would find a photograph ... a photograph of his girlfriend. Rene put that in there for protection because he was scared. He was 18 years old. It was just boys who won the battle of Iwo Jima Boys. Not old men.

The next guy here, the third guy in this tableau, was Sergeant Mike Strank. Mike is my hero. He was the hero of all these guys. They called him the 'old man' because he was so old. He was already 24. When Mike would motivate his boys in training camp, he didn't say, 'Let's go kill some Japanese' or 'Let's die for our country.' He knew he was talking to little boys. Instead he would say, 'You do what I say, and I'll get you home to your mothers.'

'The last guy on this side of the statue is Ira Hayes, a Pima Indian from Arizona. Ira Hayes was one who walked off Iwo Jima . He went into the White House with my dad. President Truman told him, 'You're a hero.' He told reporters, 'How can I feel like a hero when 250 of my buddies hit the island with me and only 27 of us walked off alive?'

So you take your class at school, 250 of you spending a year together having fun, doing everything together. Then all 250 of you hit the beach, but only 27 of your classmates walk off alive. That was Ira Hayes. He had images of horror in his mind. Ira Hayes carried the pain home with him and eventually died dead drunk, face down at the age of 32 (ten years after this picture was taken).

The next guy, going around the statue, is Franklin Sousley from Hilltop, Kentucky—a fun-lovin' hillbilly boy. His best friend, who is now 70, told me, 'Yeah, you know, we took two cows up on the porch of the Hilltop General Store. Then we strung wire across the stairs so the cows couldn't get down. Then we fed them Epsom salts. Those cows crapped all night.' Yes, he was a fun-lovin' hillbilly boy. Franklin died on Iwo Jima at the age of 19. When the telegram came to tell his mother that he was dead, it went to the Hilltop General Store. A barefoot boy ran that telegram up to his mother's farm. The neighbors could hear her scream all night and into the morning. Those neighbors lived a quarter of a mile away.

The next guy, as we continue to go around the statue, is my dad, John Bradley from Antigo, Wisconsin, where I was raised. My dad lived until 1994, but he would never give interviews. When Walter Cronkite's producers or the New York Times would call, we were trained as little kids to say 'No, I'm sorry, sir, my dad's not here. He is in Canada fishing. No, there is no phone there, sir. No, we don't know when he is coming back.' My dad never fished or even went to Canada. Usually, he was sitting there right at the table eating his Campbell's soup. But we had to tell the press that he was out fishing. He didn't want to talk to the press.

You see, like Ira Hayes, my dad didn't see himself as a hero. Everyone thinks these guys are heroes, 'cause they are in a photo and on a monument. My dad knew better. He was a medic. John Bradley from Wisconsin was a caregiver. In Iwo Jima he probably held over 200 boys as they died. And when boys died in Iwo Jima, they writhed and screamed, without any medication or help with the pain.

When I was a little boy, my third grade teacher told me that my dad was a hero. When I went home and told my dad that, he looked at me and said, 'I want you always to remember that the heroes of Iwo Jima are the guys who did not come back. Did NOT come back.'

So that's the story about six nice young boys. Three died on Iwo Jima, and three came back as national heroes. Overall, 7,000 boys died on Iwo Jima in the worst battle in the history of the Marine Corps. My voice is giving out, so I will end here. Thank you for your time.

Suddenly, the monument wasn't just a big old piece of metal with a flag sticking out of the top. It came to life before our eyes with the heartfelt words of a son who did indeed have a father who was a hero. Maybe not a hero for the reasons most people would believe, but a hero nonetheless.

## **VIDEOS ...**

WWII vet in Cape May Point NJ has performed this ceremony for 38 years!

<http://www.comcast.net/video/honoring-fallen-vets/1536192981/>

“Angel Flight”

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GgkxiqKj0nU&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GgkxiqKj0nU&feature=player_embedded)

“Fighting Words”

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fUpwvT5Vp24&feature=related>

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**To promote healing among Vietnam veterans and their families and friends  
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