



## RUN FOR THE WALL

### Quarterly Newsletter

*“We Ride For Those Who Can’t”*

April 2016

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#### **THE EDITOR’S NOTES**

Very short note this issue, as I’ve been in and out of hospitals for the past month. I had emergency colon cancer surgery, was also diagnosed with basal cell carcinoma (skin cancer), and just a few days ago was back in the hospital for a dangerously low heart rate. I hope it’s all behind me now, as I’m really tired of hospitals.

I mainly want to use this opportunity to thank everyone for your calls, emails, and cards wishing me well. You’ll never know how much it has raised my spirits. Thanks so much



to Paladin, Martha Zaragosa, and Tanker (–4,295 miles in 17 minutes’!) for visiting me in the Las Vegas hospital. There’s no family like our RFTW family!

I do urge you to read about the –Fallen Hero’s Cart” in Chicken Joe’s SR Coordinator’s message. It is truly a remarkable program.

Hope to see many of you on CR in May in Needles and on Midway at the Exit 9 (Havasu) fuel stop in May!

Judy –Velcro” Lacey

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

## **PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE**

Greetings RFTW!

April. The clock is ticking. Are you ready? No, I mean Really Ready? All over the country the RFTW Family is –Getting Ready to Get Ready”. I would like to take this opportunity to challenge YOU to take a hard look at your readiness. To participate in the 10-day journey across our great country you need degrees of determination AND preparation.. The Route Coordinators and their teams have created excellent mission-focused routes and supporting activities, but you have to do your part too.



It is pretty obvious that if you are riding, your bike or trike has to be as mechanically sound as possible before you leave. If you do your own mechanic work, have you taken the time to do a **detailed** check on everything? If you take your ride to the shop, did you tell them about what you are going to do and ask them to take that extra little bit of time to poke, prod, and look at your ride? Have your insurance papers? State Inspection good? Registration up to date? Have you done a test pack yet? Does everything fit **SECURELY** when you’re loaded to roll out? Have you ridden a few miles fully loaded as you would be when in a platoon rolling down the highway?

Are you physically ready? Have you been riding more? Brushed up on those skills that may have become a little rusty over the winter? We all have aches and pains, but the better you prepare the better the daily ride will be for you. Are you carrying a passenger? Are **THEY** prepared to sit on that back seat hour after hour, day after day? Riding for 6 to 8 hours a day, day after day, in weather that could be sunny and 100 degrees plus or rain and freezing temps is a different animal from the HOG Chapter lunch ride or a poker run. There will be times when it is a grind – not fun or pretty. That is when you have to remember that it is a Mission – we push on.

As we all get ready for next month’s mission, it would behoove us to remember the reason we ride: –For Those Who Can’t.” We are all ambassadors of not only ourselves and RFTW, but most importantly the

message of Why We Ride. The message that there are those who did not come home. The message that We Will Not Forget....

Ride Safe!

Greg –Pied Piper (sometimes Yoda)” Smith

President 2015-2016 RFTW, Inc.

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## ► RFTW 2016

### 2016 REGISTRATION STATS

John –Wicked” McKee

Director of Risk Management

Currently, pre-registration is running ahead of 2015:

	Total	Start in Ontario	Total FNGs	FNGs Ontario
Central Route	302	189	104	54
Midway Route	172	128	32	20
Southern Route	304	186	116	54

### NEWS FROM CENTRAL ROUTE COORDINATOR:



March 30, 2016

We are 48 days away from our departure on Run For The Wall XXVIII. As of this writing, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency reports that 1621 service members remain unaccounted for in Southeast Asia. You’ll note that this is three less than when I last wrote on this site in February. Folks, our efforts, and those of many other groups such as Rolling Thunder, are paying off. We are bringing them home.

On March 26<sup>th</sup> of this year, U.S. Army Corporal Davey H. Bart was buried in Humble, Texas. Cpl. Bart served in the Korean War and was captured by Communist Chinese forces during an action on the night of November 1-2, 1950. When our POWs were repatriated in 1953, it was reported that Cpl. Bart had died while in captivity during February, 1951. His parents passed away never knowing his fate for certain, or having had the opportunity to give their son a proper burial. Cpl. Bart’s remains were recently returned as part of several mixed remains disinterred from a common grave, and were identified through familial DNA analysis. He was finally laid to rest, with full military honors, in the soil of the country for which he gave his life. This is why we ride.

**ADDITIONAL LODGING AVAILABLE IN HURRICANE, WV!** For anyone who may have had difficulty getting hotel reservations for our stop in Hurricane, WV, we now have two overflow hotels

located in Cross Lanes, WV (Exit 47). They are the Holiday Inn Express & Suites and the Comfort Inn. Check the Central Route Hotel List on this website for rates and contact information.

## ARE YOU READY?

As we rapidly approach our “kickstands up” date, we should all be starting our preparations to get ourselves, and our bikes, ready for the Run. Here are a few hints, especially for those making the Run for the first time... our FNGs:

- Start getting as much riding in as you can between now and the start of the Run. Practice tight group/formation riding whenever you can, concentrating on maintaining position using throttle control alone (see last month’s entry below). Consider taking an Experienced Rider’s Course as a refresher, and practice slow speed maneuvering, as well.
- Whether you do your own work, or have your bike worked on by someone else, make sure your bike is completely serviced and ready to go. If you’re going “All The Way,” your tires will have to last at least 6500 miles, counting travel to and from your home. Pay particular attention to fluids (oil, brake and clutch, coolant [if applicable], etc.). Ensure that cables and drive belts/chains are in good condition, and that all lights are working properly. Few things will ruin your Run quite like a preventable breakdown.
- Make sure you’re ready to go. If it isn’t already a part of your personal routine, start getting in some exercise... even if it’s just going out for a brisk walk... to increase your stamina and endurance. If you have any health issues, it might be a good idea to get a checkup from your doctor to make sure everything’s in order. If you take medications, make sure you bring enough with you to last you through the Run AND your trip home.
- Start deciding now what clothing, and other items, you are going to bring on the Run. Try not to overdo it... new riders, especially, tend to pack like they’re going on a safari. Sometimes “less is more.” Remember, you will acquire “stuff” along the way, and if you forget something, there’s always a Wal-Mart close by. Once you’ve selected the things you’re going to take, gather them together and do some trial loadouts on your scoot... you’ll probably find yourself paring things down a bit. The January 2016 newsletter on this site has some great information about what to pack, and also good information about how we ride. I highly recommend all riders review this information before we set out.
- Start to hydrate NOW. When riders experience health difficulties during the Run, it often traces back to being dehydrated. Coffee, tea, other caffeinated beverages such as colas, and particularly alcoholic beverages, act as diuretics, causing the body to lose water. Start regularly drinking water now, and continue to do so up to, and throughout, the Run. I personally recommend products such as SmartWater, which contain added electrolytes, but the important thing is to reach, and maintain, a high level of hydration. So, DRINK UP!

In a few short weeks, many of us will gather in Ontario to begin the longest “Welcome Home” parade in the country. Others will join us along the way. However you plan to make this Run, it will be one of the most rewarding experiences of your life. I am looking forward to meeting each of our FNGs (Fun New Guys/Gals) along the way, and to renewing friendships with my brothers and sisters from past Runs. I can’t wait to see you all, and to begin our adventure anew. Be well, and ride safe.

With deepest respect,

**Dave “Papa Smurf” Klemme**  
*“Freedom Isn’t Free”*

**NEWS FROM MIDWAY ROUTE COORDINATOR:**

FOR OUR FNGs (Funny New Guys and Funny New Gals!) – Please be aware that Run For The Wall travels just like the postal service. Neither rain, nor snow, nor sleet, nor hail will stop the Run from going through! What I am saying is you should be prepared to ride in ALL types of weather. Over the years we have had desert heat (up to 100 degrees Fahrenheit), golf ball sized hail, snow and torrential rain downpours. Layering your clothes is the best. Layer heavily in the cold, especially in the early mornings, then strip off layers as the day gets warmer. Remember, even though we are planning to have a hydration and snack truck along the route, please pack a little extra water or Gatorade on your bike. This will help prevent dehydration from weather or from body evaporation. HYDRATE! HYDRATE! HYDRATE!



### **Midway Route participants:**

Our daily morning raffles—both 50/50 and item raffles—raise money we use for donations to schools, veteran support centers, and others in the name of RFTW and in honor and memory of all POW/MIAs and all veterans. The success of this fundraising requires your support and the first step is for you to donate items for the raffles!

This year the Midway Route raffle/donations coordinator is Connie "Tailgate" Williams [cb13williams@gmail.com](mailto:cb13williams@gmail.com). Contact her if you have questions. If you need a letter of appreciation for the donation--which includes the 501(c)(3) designation, she can send that to you.

Donated items should be small enough to be easily carried on a motorcycle. For example, t-shirts, water bottles, small hand tools, lanyards, hats, stress balls, etc. Larger items are sometimes welcome, if they are valuable enough to warrant shipping. Under certain circumstances, special donations might be auctioned off.

Motorcycle and military-related items are always popular, but use your imagination. Gift cards from national or regional chains such as restaurants, Kroger, The Home Depot stores, Walmart, Target, Walgreens, etc., always come in handy and are a good deal. Small allen or regular wrench sets, flashlights, etc., are very popular.

Your local motorcycle dealership/mechanic shop might be willing to donate and talking with them is a great opportunity to spread the word about RFTW in your local area.

If you have items you would like to donate, just bring them with you to registration (whichever city that may be) and let the registration team know that you have a raffle donation. If you end up with more donations than you can carry with you, email Tailgate and she'll get with you to work that out.

Looking for the support of all of you – riders, passengers, organizers, and other supporters – for our raffles and wishing you all a safe and satisfying trip in May.

Safety Tip – Now that winter seems to be abating, it is time for us to get ourselves and our scoots ready for the riding season. The best advice that I can give is for all of us to TAKE A MOTORCYCLE SAFETY COURSE!



In most states, if you're going to get a motorcycle license, you need to take a skills test. In many states, you also have to take a motorcycle safety class – think of it as driver's education on two wheels. Even if your state doesn't require you to take a motorcycle safety course, you should. The class will teach you about the traffic safety laws that apply to motorcycles in your state, how to respond to emergency situations on a motorcycle, and give you a chance to try out your new skills in a controlled environment. The instructors will also give you tips about motorcycle maintenance and how to avoid unsafe situations. After all, the time to learn how to recover from a skid on a bike is not when you go into one for the first time. Taking a motorcycle safety course prepares you to hit the road safely and with more confidence.

The good news is that most motorcycle dealerships offer motorcycle safety courses, and some even give discounts or other promotional materials to people who have completed their course. If you've got your heart set on a particular brand of bike, taking a motorcycle safety class from that dealership is a good way to get to know the brand better, and you may even be able to try out some of their models.

Double check the safety of your scooter! Remember the acronym: T.C.L.O.C.K.

T – Tires and Brakes: No cuts, bulges or dry rot on tires. Check for proper tire inflation and tighten spoked rims. Check brake pads and rotors.

C – Cables and Hoses: Check clutch and brake cables for dry rot or fraying.

L – Lights: Check headlight, tail light, brake light and all turn signal and marker lights.

O – Oil: Check oil and all other fluids on your scooter.

C – Chain, Belt or Shaft: Ensure that your drive train is serviced and is operating properly.

K – Kickstand, Side stand or Center stand: Ensure that all stands are lubricated. If they sound like an old door when you use them; they need lubricant! Also check return springs.

Daryl — "Top" Neil  
—Service Before Self"

## **NEWS FROM SOUTHERN ROUTE COORDINATOR:**



Southern Route Leadership teams have come together very quickly now. Work is being done in every team, Road Guards, Platoon Teams, Fuel Team, Staging Team, and Chaplain Corps, which is the largest team we have ever had. We now have a Chaplain for each platoon. State Coordinators are putting the final touches on activities within their state or area of responsibility. In July it seemed to be rather slow and as the year proceeded deadlines came quicker and quicker. Today we are in a high-speed gallop as Southern Route Teams are gearing up for that big day on 18 May 2016. As for myself, I have been overwhelmed by the great work these teams have put forth.

Activities have been added to the Southern Route itinerary. This year we will be doing a wreath laying in all the states we pass through, starting with our first ceremony in Marana, AZ. We also have a new wreath laying ceremony in Newton, MS. This year will be the first time our Advance Team will have the honor to participate. I am excited for them; their job is very important to SR, but they never get to be involved in any activities. This year will be different.

In this year's itinerary, you will find several pages listing all the supporters that provide for us, on a daily basis, as we travel across this nation. It is important for us to recognize these individual and corporations that provide so much for us and ask for nothing in return. They just want to help.

Southern Route has the great honor to be selected to escort the Fallen Hero's Cart to Washington DC. As their story below states, this nation owes a debt to our fallen heroes to honor and respect their remains. I would like to personally thank the Alaska Air mechanics and baggage handlers for what they are doing. Like us, they are all volunteers.

–Fallen Hero's Cart”

The nation that forgets its defenders will itself be forgotten. Alaska Air mechanic and baggage handlers observed the lack of dignity and mishandling of the remains of our Nation's Fallen Heroes and took it upon themselves to right the wrong. They formed an all-volunteer group the –Alaska Airlines Fallen Soldier Project.”

These individuals formed an internal, all-volunteer organization to procure old luggage carts and renovate them. The group paints, decorates, and donates these carts to other International Airports to use as dedicated baggage carts to be used specifically for off-loading and transporting the remains of any of our fallen heroes.



The blue cart; adorned with American flag curtains, military insignias, and a red carpet interior; is to ensure the remains of fallen soldiers are treated and transported with dignity and honor along their journey home to their final resting place. It's the most visible component of the Alaska Airlines Fallen Soldier Program.

In August 2015, one of these carts was delivered to San Diego International Airport. Alaska Airlines has similar carts in Anchorage, Sacramento, Portland, Los Angeles, and Seattle. The Alaska Airlines volunteer group of maintenance employees also volunteered to develop a new transfer process and suggested it to maintenance leadership for approval. The

protocol spells out details on loading and unloading, the distribution of responsibility for each transfer stage, pre-huddle checklists and escort handling. All of the flight crew is included in the protocol from the captain to the baggage handlers, and all members of the crew are trained to ensure the protocol is followed.

The volunteers are continuing to enhance the program. Technicians built a mock casket so employees can simulate an arrival and departure in the hangar for training. Neon safety vests with the "Fallen Soldier" emblem spread awareness and put a spotlight on the program. Protocol requires military escorts to stay with the remains of a fallen soldier from the time they leave a mortuary until they arrive at their final resting place. The remains are shipped as cargo, but escorts accompany the casket into holding facilities between flights. The technicians created a



handbook detailing exactly how the remains are to be handled, such as loading the fallen soldier on the aircraft last to ensure unloading first and requesting a private Transportation Security Administration screening for the military escort.

Fallen Heroes Group has gone beyond the loading and unloading of the remains of our fallen hero. Within the protocol, they have developed procedures for the support and comfort of the volunteer who escorts the fallen hero home. Alaska Airlines make available to these individuals an office, hot meals, beds, showers, telephones, and Wi-Fi to help lessen the stress on these individuals.

It should be noted that the Fallen Hero's Cart is not used solely by Alaska Airlines. The cart is made available to all airlines at the airport where it is stationed. Alaska Airlines sends each airlines information about the cart and assures each airline the use of the cart.

You may gain more information about the Fallen Hero's Cart by going to Alaska Airlines Fallen Soldier Cart website for a full description and videos of the volunteer program.

<http://blog.alaskaair.com/alaska-airlines/people/at-alaska-airlines-a-final-tribute-to-fallen/>

Keep The Faith  
ChickenJoe

### **MISSING MAN COORDINATOR – CENTRAL ROUTE**

There have been a couple of cancellations for Missing Man Escort positions on CR, so there are a couple of spots available as of now. If you are interested in riding the Missing Man Formation, contact Tom "Bones" Pogue at 970-227-5261 or [tomwpogue@comcast.net](mailto:tomwpogue@comcast.net). First preference is given to FNG's and families of POWs/MIAs, but there are often spaces available for others.



### **MISSING MAN COORDINATOR - MIDWAY ROUTE**



Positions remain open for the Midway Missing Man Formation for those interested in honoring a fellow veteran. Please contact Glenn Waggoner Jr., [1buffalolvr@gmail.com](mailto:1buffalolvr@gmail.com), or 951- 990-1873 expressing your interest and desire to participate. If you have a particular day and/or route, please indicate your desire. You will be contacted confirming your date and participation.



### **MISSING MAN COORDINATOR - SOUTHERN ROUTE**



If you are interested in riding in the Missing Man Position you will need to contact Jennifer “Flame” Hudson Connors, the Missing Man Coordinator at [rftw.flame@gmail.com](mailto:rftw.flame@gmail.com). The Missing Man spots go quickly, so get your name in quickly. The positions go first to FNGs with special note to Gold Star Families and POW/MIA Families. The Missing Man Position is a very emotional place within the Run For The Wall mission. The information you will need to provide is:

1. Your full name, including road name (if you have one).
2. Your starting point/your ending point (Example: California to DC / Odessa, TX to Monroe, LA).
3. Are you an FNG (first time rider on this Run? If not, when was your FNG year?).
4. Your cell phone number.
5. The name of the person or unit you are riding to remember/honor.
6. If you have an interest in a particular leg, and why.

Jennifer “Flame” Hudson Connors  
[rftw.flame@gmail.com](mailto:rftw.flame@gmail.com).

## **UNDERSTANDING THE MISSING MAN FORMATION**

By Jennifer “Flame” Connors

As part of our Mission to honor those who never returned, we “fly” a Missing Man Formation at the front of the pack. The lead element consists of five riders and one open position representing the Missing. Row 1 is the Route Coordinator and the State Coordinator or other VIP. Row 2 is an FNG and the Open Position, representing the Missing Man. Row 3 is the MMF Chaplain, and MMF Coordinator.

X X  
X  
X X

We maintain the Missing Man Formation as we roll across the country. At each stop we rotate in a different rider next to Open Position. Preference for this honor is given to FNGs (Fun New Guys or Gals), those making this Run for the first time, family members of those still MIA, Gold Star family members, and former POWs.

It doesn’t matter what you ride. trikes, and bikes with sidecars can be accommodated. If you pull a trailer – we’ll put your trailer on a chase vehicle for your segment. This is a very meaningful, solemn ride. If you have not yet done so, put your name in with the MMF Coordinator – you will be glad you did!

## **COMMUNICATIONS HELP NEEDED ON CR**

Piccolo needs help with Communications on the Central Route. Bounce is unable to make the Run this year. The position helps her talk to the truck drivers to let them know who we are and what we are doing along the way. This helps us get across the country safely by letting them know how to share the road with us and vice versa. She can do the bulk of the communications but sure could use some help! You need a CB radio and feel comfortable talking on it while riding. No FNGs please; you have enough to deal with! If interested, please contact her at 417-533-4844 or send an email to [fire926usa03@yahoo.com](mailto:fire926usa03@yahoo.com).

## **SHIPPING ITEMS TO ONTARIO**

If you have items that you don't want to carry on your bike and would prefer to ship to Ontario, one of our RFTW Leadership Staff has volunteered to receive and hold the items for you. Please contact Shirley "Top Sarge" Scott at 805-443-4373. She will secure your items until May and deliver them to the Radisson (Host Hotel). After Ontario, the items will be your responsibility.

## **SOUTHERN ROUTE HAS OPENINGS**

SR is looking for a few good men or women who have been on the Run at least once and are going ATW that are interested in volunteering for a couple of jobs on this Run. We are looking for one Quartermaster and four Leadership Support folks. You may be busy at times with the duties assigned you, but you will find them very fulfilling. If you are interested contact either Chicken Joe ([rftw.chickenjoe@gmail.com](mailto:rftw.chickenjoe@gmail.com)) or 409-266-8320) or Assistant Route Coordinator Ghost Rider ([rlwyatt55@yahoo.com](mailto:rlwyatt55@yahoo.com) or 817-235-7408).

## **MANDATORY FNG BRIEFINGS**

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

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

## **RIVERSIDE NATIONAL CEMETERY**

—Arlington West”

A ride to RNC will take place on Tuesday morning, May 17th, from the Run For The Wall host hotel area in Ontario. Rider's meeting at 0830, and KSU at 0900 for the half-hour ride. Current plans are to stage in the street immediately east of the hotel.

Riverside National Cemetery is home of the Medal of Honor Memorial and one of four recognized as a National Medal of Honor Memorial Site. Dedicated in 1999, its walls feature the names of all MoH recipients. The chairman of the committee that built the National Medal of Honor Memorial, Mike Goldware, will give a presentation regarding the Memorial, its significance, and anything you'd like to know about MoH recipients.

The Fallen Soldier / Veterans' Memorial, erected in 2000, is dedicated to all service members who gave the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

The National Prisoner of War / Missing in Action Memorial was dedicated in September 2005. Viet Nam veteran Lewis Lee Millett, Jr., son of MoH Recipient Col. Lew Millett, sculpted the bronze statue which

depicts an American serviceman on his knees with hands bound by his captors. The statue is surrounded by black marble pillars that evoke imprisonment. Lee will be with us to present the Memorial and its design.

Expect to be back to the host hotel by noon, unless you wish to spend more time at RNC, or to visit the March Field Air Museum nearby.

For further information, contact Jim ~~The Mayor~~ Frost at [rftwca@gmail.com](mailto:rftwca@gmail.com)

## **EVENING PARADE IN D.C.**

First and foremost - we have ZERO reservations for the Evening Parade on Fri. May 27 and will not be able to get any due to a computer glitch at Marine Barracks. I'm not much into excuses or pointing fingers, or whatever, so I'll leave it at that with a huge apology to all and hopefully next year will be better.

YOU do have an OPTION. IF you wish, on your own go to the General Admission line at the Barracks and if there are seats available, you'll get in. I think this may work for some of you but I have no way of knowing as the spaces available at THAT time are from people with reservations that don't show up. There are a few eateries and bars in the area so if you can't get in, you can eat. Also - if you're still there on Tuesday the 31st - they will have the Sunset Parade (same thing) at the Iwo Jima monument - no tickets - just take a blanket and sit on the grass. Either location is parking LIMITED.

Thank you and ride safe!

Doug Lyvere

SgtMaj, USMC ret

RFTW BoD, Dir Ops & Training

## **MISC. REMINDERS**

Cash: Take extra \$1 and \$5 bills for gas. When we fill up, total is rounded up; the extra money helps gas up the support vehicles.

Lost and Found: If you lose something, check your route's sound trailer or merchandise trailer; lost items are usually turned in to one or the other.

Morning meetings are mandatory.

Take showers at night so you won't be late for the morning meetings.

If you get sleepy while riding, give a heads up to the riders around you and pull off where safe. You can catch up at the next stop. RIDE SAFE!!!

Make sure your gear is secure—the riders behind you will be very grateful. Double-check at every stop.

**If you have patches with bad words, be prepared to cover them up when going into the schools (duct tape works great as a temporary fix).**

If there is an accident, unless you are involved in it **do not stop**—proceed around it and continue on; the Road Guards, Chaplain Corps, and Chase Drivers will attend to it. If you stop on a freeway, you can cause a bigger accident.

We don't stop to put on rain gear if it starts to rain. If you think that it might rain, put it on now. The weather changes fast; have changes of clothes handy—you can add or remove clothes at gas stops.

If you see a Road Guard come up, tap the top of his helmet and point down—this means he/she wants to get in the lane of travel in front of you. Let him in!

Practice down-shifting to slow down instead of hitting the brakes.

**MORNING MEETINGS ARE MANDATORY!** There's nothing worse than missing an exit because you weren't at the meeting to hear about the route change due to construction.

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## ► OUR STORIES

### TALES OF RFTW

By Shadow

One year I was joining the pack in Rainelle, WV on the Central Route and had arrived early. While I was standing in front of the old Rainelle grade school, two older women were walking toward me carrying fold-up chairs and umbrellas. Looking for a choice spot where they could see RFTW roll in, they tried to set up under a small tree near the curb hoping to catch sun shade. I asked if I could help and they smiled as I took their chairs and placed them on firm stable ground. They were excited as they talked. They had heard about RFTW and when they would ride into Rainelle and stop to visit with the children of Rainelle grade school.

Now it was a bright sunny day, no clouds and warm. The Advance Team was calling out how far the pack was and about how long it might be before they arrived. I was standing just behind the two women ready to take pictures when I heard RFTW was at the top of the mountain preparing to ride in. Then I heard they were coming and one could hear the distant thunder from all the bikes coming down the mountain. These two dear ladies got even more excited when I told them RFTW was coming. They got their cameras out. But then one said to the other... —“Oh my, did you hear that THUNDER rolling across the sky?” as she reached for her umbrella. The other said back to her... —“It wasn't calling for rain and storms?” I chuckled and tried to reassure them..... The sound they heard was NOT from a coming storm, but from the hundreds of motorcycles rumbling down the mountain into town. What they were hearing was the rolling thunder of RFTW as they rode into Rainelle. Their eyes were big as they smiled at me and then the first bikes with the flags flying could be seen.

The two ladies were chattering away and I heard one say.....”I wish my husband could be here to see this. He was a veteran.” I thought to myself.... he IS watching!

### MY FRIEND 66-60970

By Arnie Swift



You know, just when you think God hasn't been listening or doing anything, He gives you a surprise. For the last couple of days I have been hanging out with my friend 66-60970. For those of you who are wondering what kind of friend 66-60970 is, well it is a UH-1H helicopter shot down four times in Vietnam. Of course I also get the chance to hang out with an amazing group of veterans that share the same love for this beat-up piece of history. You might be asking why would anyone spend hours watching over and sharing stories about a helicopter. Because its story needs to be told. But even deeper than that it provides healing for every veteran because it opens up doors to allow veterans to talk when they might not talk any other way.

On any given day at the huey I can share a hundred different stories, but it is the hundreds of stories that are told to me that put a smile on my face. There are happy stories, sad stories, and stories from other conflicts. The common bond is the stories are all from veterans of all the wars. It is also an amazing platform to minister. To the average person coming by to look, climb up in, sit in the seats, listen to the music and the sounds of the helicopter, it is a firsthand look at a piece of history. For those of us who spent hours and days on helicopters just like 970, it makes the history lesson become real and personal.

Throughout the day people will see us poking fun at each other. You know that you just can't put the Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marines together without someone making a comment. But make no mistake, we are brothers and sisters and we have each other's back. The last two days have been no different.

So what did God have to do with this? Glad you asked. We were at the Crossroads Hospice offices along with groups like Wreaths Across America, Camp Valor, and the Vet Van. We were to be there from roughly 11 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. We were up against the possibility of severe weather and praise God we didn't get any. We were parked across the street from some stores and one of them was Petco. Knowing that I needed to get some cat food, I decided to take a break and go get some.

Before I made it to Petco I went into Big Lots to see if they had anything good to munch on and see what they had in the way of gluten free food. I was able to find a vanilla cake mix and that was a good score. Didn't really find anything else so I paid for it and headed out. On leaving I saw a man heading my way, a double amputee, walking very slowly. He noticed my hat, which has Vietnam Veteran on the front, and said thank you for your service. I said "Thank you," and asked if he was a vet. He said he was, three tours. We shook hands and parted. I quickly went into Petco, got the food, and on the way out an idea came to me. I knew they were giving out 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary pins that evening, so I thought maybe I could run, okay walk very fast back to the huey and see if I could get a pin for him.

I found the lady in charge, asked her and she okay, but she had to go down and get something and then she would meet me at the other end of the building. At this point my mind is going, great, I will never find this guy again as this is taking forever. After what was probably 10 – 15 minutes, the lady came back and explained what they were going to do that evening and handed me the pin and two documents. I said thank you and headed out. Moving faster now heading back across the street, praying that the man would still be around and that God would lead me to him. Eyes searching all along the shopping center I headed for Big Lots thinking that was probably the place he was heading. As I entered I saw him heading out.

I have given things to people hundreds of times and each experience is different. As I approached him he said you're back. I said yes but I have something I would like to give you. I handed him the pins, the buttons, and the proclamations and told him thank you again for his service. It is amazing how much a "Thank You" really means and it is more amazing when you are handed a gift of thanks. This man was

definitely moved. He headed towards his car and I continued to walk with him. As he opened the car up and put the items in I could see the emotion of the moment. He shook my hand one more time and said my name is Dave. I told him mine and with another hand shake we parted.

There have been many times in my life when I feel like God isn't there or moving or even listening. That is when He sets up a special meeting and just blows me away. There is no doubt in my mind that God allowed me to find Dave a second time, not just for Dave and me, but for the men and women that I shared that story to afterwards. If nothing else that day would have happened, that event alone was worth standing around a 50-year-old helicopter with a bunch of crazy veterans. I also want to thank my friend Gallupe and Jeff Lamb for coming by.

God is not silent; so many times we are just not listening. If God can use a helicopter He can use you. 44 years after the fact, the war in Vietnam is more real for me than it was then. Part of that is because 44 years later, people will listen. If they just could have taken the time to do that when we came home.

Thank you all for letting me share my stories. May God bless each and every one of you. Remember, two words can change a life forever." Thank you."

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## ► OTHER STORIES

*Note: This is the story about Charlie Heintl, a WWII vet currently receiving hospice services through State of the Heart Hospice. State of the Heart cares for families and patients in eastern Indiana and western Ohio who are confronting a life-limiting illness. This hospice is a national partner of We Honor Veterans.*

### CHARLIE'S MEMORIES

On January 4, 1944, Charles (Charlie) Heintl left his hometown of Minster, Ohio at age 17. Little did he know that 10 months later he would be involved in the tragic sinking of the ship he was aboard, the USS Gambier Bay, and he himself would survive 42 hours hanging onto a life raft in the Pacific.



It happened 71 years ago, and the memories are captured in Heintl's story which is one of the personal accounts of that tragic ocean battle on October 25, 1944. Heintl's ship, a small escort carrier, was attacked by Japan's largest battleship, the Yamato. The ship, Heintl recalled, "was monstrous."

Today (2011), Heintl, 85, of Maria Stein, OH, is a State of the Heart Hospice patient and is considering attending the annual reunion of the estimated 800 men who survived the Japanese attack. More than 120 of the ship's sailors were killed.

The reunion is scheduled for October, 2011 in St. Louis. Time has taken its toll on the number of survivors, Heintl explained; only about 13 are still living and will likely attend. Whether he goes or not depends on his health and is somewhat "iffy" explained his wife Rita. An optimistic Heintl, responded, "There's still a chance." Family members have helped the couple attend in recent years. Heintl was one of the youngest men on the ship.

Heinl recalled he “jumped” into the water as the ship was going down. For a day, he had no life jacket and hung perilously to a life raft with other sailors. —“As we watched back, we saw the ship roll over on its hull and begin to sink bow first, exposing the screws. It then sank,” he explained in his personal account of the battle on a “survivor’s page” on the Internet story about the sinking of the USS Gambier Bay.

In his account, he tells of the six to eight foot swells of water and how he and others took turns hanging onto the raft. —“The men began seeing sharks and I thought I saw them too. Someone close to me was attacked. As time went on the sharks became a real menace.”

It was not until six hours after the Gambier went down that orders were issued to conduct a search and rescue mission. Staying alert and being aware of hallucinations became a problem as Heinl and the others struggled to stay awake. On October 27, 1944, they were finally rescued by a US PC boat. —“The men rescuing us said they couldn’t get us out of the water fast enough as there were a lot of sharks in the area.”

Heinl escaped with only minor injuries and was later discharged from the Navy. But, his connection with the USS Gambier Bay was not over. Heinl, just as others, never got to see his shipmates again after the sinking of the ship. They all went their separate ways on various Navy assignments. That fateful day, however, lived in their minds. Just as others, Heinl, spoke rarely of his narrow escape from death. His dark memories of that day remained buried.

However, the thought of seeing his shipmates again lingered with him. He and several others he had contacted spent nearly two years trying to reconnect with their shipmates. —“He would find phone books and get phone books of various cities across the country from friends and search through them for names of the survivors,” his wife explained.

Then, one day in October, 25 years to the day that the USS Gambier Bay went down, the survivors gathered for a reunion. It was the first time they had seen one another since the ship was sunk.

—“I have never seen so many men cry at one time,” said Mrs. Heinl. —“Charlie had never talked of the sinking of the ship much until then. I think it helped them all to openly talk about what they all went through.”

Heinl became active in the group and served as president, treasurer and secretary. Today, his son Mark has taken his position on the board. The couple has another son, John. The couple said they appreciate their hospice services. —“Everyone is very nice and helpful to us,” Heinl said.

To this day, Heinl feels lucky that he was not seriously hurt in that tragic ship sinking 67 years ago. —“I am happy to be alive after that experience,” he said from his comfortable home where he and Rita have lived for the past 56 years.

State of the Heart Hospice is very pleased to be part of NHPCO’s We Honor Veterans initiative. Kelley Hall, education coordinator for State of the Heart said, —“All hospices nationwide are serving veterans, but in many instances are not aware of the patient’s Armed Forces service. Our veterans have done everything asked of them in their mission to serve our country and now it’s our turn to proudly serve them. Now, it’s time for us to step up, acquire the necessary skills and fulfill our mission to serve these men and women with the dignity they deserve. State of the Heart Hospice is proud to be providing care to Mr. Heinl.”

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## ► VA NEWS

### TOXIC EXPOSURE RESEARCH LEGISLATION

Needed for Veterans of Every Generation

National Vietnam Veterans of America issued a press release on Feb. 10 on toxic exposure research. Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Bob McDonald told Members of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs that no legislation on Agent Orange or Toxic exposures is needed. This statement by the DVA Secretary is in line with testimony, delivered before Congress on three occasions in the last eight months, in which the VA claims no research legislation is needed as other Agencies of the Federal Government are doing all of the research studies needed.

John Rowan, National President of Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) responded, ~~W~~“With all due respect to the Secretary, he could not be more wrong. Furthermore, we have yet to receive a list of these research studies referenced in VA testimony which purportedly pertain to veterans and their progeny.”

~~T~~“The events in the past week highlight the shameless wall of ignorance erected by the VA bureaucrats. Case in point is the Secretary’s recent policy regarding the Blue Water Navy veterans of Vietnam. The policy states that a ‘bright line’ can be drawn across the mouth of a flowing river, with those on the inland side of that imaginary line being ‘exposed,’ and those two feet away, on the harbor side of the line, ‘not exposed,’” said Rowan. ~~T~~“Those ‘exposed’ are eligible for presumptive service connection for certain conditions, and therefore medical care and compensation, while those who served two feet away are not. We are leaving our Navy veterans out in the cold, and sadly, many of them have died and their widows have been abandoned.”

~~A~~“Also on Wednesday, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) released a report on Gulf War illness, which I find troubling,” noted Rowan. ~~P~~“Psychiatrists/psychologists comprised half of a panel charged with evaluating medical conditions, most probably caused by exposure to toxic chemicals. It comes as no surprise that this recent report ignores the many toxins to which Gulf War veterans were exposed and reverts to the canard that unless ‘causality’ can be proved by a specific toxin, there can be no forward movement. One would hope the VA and DOD would be looking for an ‘association’ of exposure to one or more toxic substances and the presence of adverse medical conditions, rather than placing an emphasis on the ‘mind-body continuums.’”

~~Y~~“Yes, technically the VA is able to do what is needed without legislation,” said Rowan. ~~H~~“However, the VA has made its case repeatedly that, in the absence of legislation, there will be no justice accorded veterans with Toxic Wounds, nor for their innocent children and grandchildren. America’s veterans of every generation DO need early passage of S. 901 and H.R. 1769, the Toxic Exposures Research Act, and vigorous oversight after enactment to ensure that VA actually does what is mandated in law; we need immediate passage of the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2015, H.R. 969 and S.681; and we need to push for the extension and expansion of the Agent Orange Act of 1991, to include veterans of recent and future wars, so that a system is in place to systematically review battlefield exposures, and they won’t need to refight the battles we have.”

### GULF WAR SYNDROME UPDATE



Exposure to pesticides and other toxins appears to be the cause of Gulf War illness in U.S. veterans, a new analysis states. The Boston University researchers reviewed studies on Gulf War illness, and said their findings "clearly and consistently" show a link between the disorder and exposure to pesticides and taking pyridostigmine bromide (PB) pills, which were meant to protect troops against the effects of nerve gas. There's also evidence of a connection between Gulf War illness and exposure to the nerve gas agents sarin and cyclosarin, and to oil well fire emissions, according to the findings published in the January issue of the journal *Cortex*. These toxins damaged troops' nervous and immune systems, and reduced the amount of white and gray matter in veterans' brains, said study leader Roberta White in a news release from the university. White is a professor of environmental health at Boston University's School of Public Health.

The main causes of Gulf War illness are like so-called "friendly fire," said study co-author James Binns. "We did it to ourselves," he said in the news release. "Pesticides, PB, nerve gas released by destroying Iraqi facilities—all are cases of friendly fire. That may explain why government and military leaders have been so reluctant to acknowledge what happened," Binns said. About 700,000 U.S. troops fought in the first Gulf War 25 years ago, and as many as 250,000 veterans of that conflict have Gulf War illness, the researchers said. It is a debilitating disorder that features symptoms such as fatigue, joint and muscle pain, headaches, concentration and memory difficulties, gastrointestinal problems and skin rashes.

For years, Gulf War veterans have claimed that the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs did not take Gulf War illness seriously. In 2008, a committee created by Congress and directed by the White House released a report that said Gulf War illness is a real disorder that's distinct from stress-related syndromes. The report from the Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses called for research into the causes and treatments of the illness.

Binns was chairman of that committee. Efforts to find effective treatments for Gulf War illness have been unsuccessful, but recent research has started to offer promising leads, the researchers added.

[Source: HealthDay News | February 1, 2016 ++]

## **VA VET CHOICE PROGRAM UPDATE**

Thanks to the bipartisan efforts of three members of Congress, the Government Accounting Office (GAO) will audit the VA's Veterans Choice program, which has been plagued by countless complaints from veterans and health care providers alike. In an effort to help veterans, Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (D-NY), Senator Johnny Isakson (R-GA), and Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) have convinced the GAO to conduct a comprehensive audit of the Veterans Choice program.

The program was created in response to the tragic wait time scandal, in which at least 40 veterans died while waiting for appointments at the Phoenix Veterans Affairs Health Care system. When Congress passed the Veterans Choice and Accountability Act and President Obama signed it into law in August 2014, the idea was to expand the availability of hospital care and medical services for veterans. In May 2014 Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki had to resign because of the wait time scandal. Then, in November 2014, Sharon Helman was fired by the VA. Helman had been the VA executive who was in charge of the Phoenix VA Health Care System at the time of the scandal and the subsequent attempt to cover it up. At the time, many people thought that the problem was solved because of Shinseki's resignation and Helman's firing. However, CNN was perceptive enough to ask, But will that improve

things at VA hospitals? The answer seems to be an emphatic no. In fact, there is ample evidence that that the Veterans Choice program is a disaster.

Senator Isakson is the chair of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, and Senator Blumenthal is the ranking member of that committee. During a committee hearing held on 28 JAN, Isakson asked VA Secretary Robert McDonald how the VA plans to address the many issues the VA has faced during its implementation of the Veterans Choice Program. McDonald had no answers. For example, Isakson pointed out that earlier this month a large health care provider in New Hampshire announced that it would no longer participate in the Choice Program because the VA has failed to provide payment for services rendered. Despite the best efforts of Congress and the President, the VA has found another way to make sure that veterans get the short end of the stick. NPR reports that the New Hampshire pain management company, PainCare, has notified its patients that as of February 1st, it will no longer accept Veterans Choice. PainCare spokesman Tom Barnes told NPR, “Of course we want to continue with these patients. The thing is, we’re doing a lot of work, but we’re not getting any reimbursement for it.”

Congresswoman Louise Slaughter represents the Rochester area in Western New York. She explains the situation this way in her press release. “In summer 2014, more than 120,000 veterans were waiting more than 125 days for health care services. In response, Congress passed the Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act, which established the VCP. Two third-party administrators—Health Net and Tri-West—were awarded \$5 billion and \$4.3 billion, respectively, to implement the program.” Health Net is responsible for the non-payments to PainCare.

However, Health Net could not tell NPR what percentage of claims it had paid on time or even how many claims have been paid on time. PainCare finally got its first payment from the Veterans Choice program in December, but it is still owed about \$70,000.

But that is only part of the problem. Barnes says that dealing with the Veterans Choice bureaucrats is a nightmare.

“Even just receiving a phone call; if they call us, they require us to recite our company name, our address, our phone number, and fax. And that’s when they call us. Same thing when you call them.” Barnes also says that according to the VA, it has to schedule the veteran’s first appointment, and that visit must fall within an authorization period determined by the VA without consulting the health care provider. Moreover, there have been many times when the VA hasn’t called to make the appointment before the authorization period expired. When that happens, the veteran has to start all over again trying to get an appointment for medical care. How ironic is that, when you consider that this kind of time delay was the exact reason why the Veterans Choice program was created in the first place?

[Source: Examiner.com | Thomas Mangan | January 24, 2016 ++]

## **VA AGENT ORANGE BENEFITS**

A federal court had ordered the VA to reassess its policy denying Agent Orange benefits to Navy sailors who served in the Vietnam War. The VA’s conclusion: They still don’t qualify. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has once again turned down an effort by Navy veterans to get compensation for possible exposure to Agent Orange during the Vietnam War. In a document released 5 FEB, the VA said it would continue to limit benefits related to Agent Orange exposure to only those veterans who set foot in Vietnam,

where the herbicide was sprayed, and to those who were on boats in inland rivers. The VA compensates these veterans for a litany of associated illnesses, including diabetes, various cancers, Parkinson's Disease, peripheral neuropathy and a type of heart disease.

Advocates for some 90,000 so-called Blue Water Navy veterans who served off the coast of Vietnam have been asking the VA for more than a decade to broaden the policy to include them. They say that they were exposed to Agent Orange because their ships sucked in potentially contaminated water and distilled it for showering, drinking, laundry and cooking. Experts have said the distillation process could have actually concentrated the Agent Orange, which contained the toxic chemical dioxin and was used to kill vegetation and deny enemy cover. ProPublica and the Virginian-Pilot profiled their effort to gain coverage in September as part of an ongoing project to chronicle the impact of Agent Orange on vets and their families.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims last April struck down VA rules that denied compensation for sailors whose ships docked at certain harbors in South Vietnam, including Da Nang. Those ports, the court determined, may have been in the Agent Orange spraying area. The court ordered the VA to review its policy. But on Friday, the VA largely stood by its old policy and once again asserted that there's no scientific justification or legal requirement for covering veterans who served off the coast. —Environmental health experts in VA's Veterans Health Administration have reviewed the available scientific information and concluded that it is not sufficient to support a presumption that Blue Water Navy Veterans were exposed to Agent Orange," the VA said in a fact sheet. Vietnam veteran Jim Smith has been diagnosed with prostate cancer and believes Agent Orange exposure may have played a role. —My feeling is the VA is thumbing their nose and sending the middle finger back to the Blue Water people," he said.

—It's like nobody at the VA has any kind of science background whatsoever."

U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), the ranking member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, criticized the VA's decision. —Rather than siding with veterans, VA is doubling down on an irrational and inconsistent policy," he said in a statement. —Young sailors risked their lives during the Vietnam War, unaware that decades later, they and their children and grandchildren would still feel the toxic effects of exposure. Veterans who served offshore and in the harbors of Vietnam were exposed and deserve the presumption of service connection for Agent Orange-related diseases." Blumenthal and others are seeking adoption of the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act, which would ensure that all vets exposed to Agent Orange are compensated. The VA opposes the legislation, as it has several previous iterations dating back to 2008.

The VA's new review rejecting benefits relied on a 2011 report by the respected Institute of Medicine, as well as other published research, according to the agency's fact sheet. The Institute of Medicine report said there was no way to prove Blue Water vets were exposed to the chemicals, but it identified plausible routes that Agent Orange could have traveled out to sea and into a ship's distillation system. Although military policy at the time recommended against distilling water closer than 10 miles to shore — where the chemical concentration would have been highest — veterans said doing so was often unavoidable, and their commanding officers routinely ordered it. The VA said it is working with veterans groups to —initiate a groundbreaking study of Blue Water Navy Veterans health outcomes. We hope to have data gathered and analyses published in 2017."

Veterans called the VA's decision a betrayal. John Wells, a Louisiana lawyer who has spent more than a decade advocating for Blue Water veterans, said his group would continue challenging the VA and push for legislation that would mandate coverage for the Blue Water veterans. —It wasn't completely unexpected.

We're used to being betrayed by the VA," Wells said. —We're going to fight this thing until we're done or dead." Jim Smith, who served aboard the ammunition ship Butte, has been diagnosed with prostate cancer and believes that Agent Orange exposure may have played a role. —My feeling is the VA is thumbing their nose and sending the middle finger back to the Blue Water people," he said. —It's like nobody at the VA has any kind of science background whatsoever." Blue Water vets — so named to set the sailors apart from their Brown Water Navy counterparts, who patrolled the murky rivers of South Vietnam — were initially deemed eligible for compensation under the Agent Orange Act of 1991, only to have the VA change its interpretation a decade later.

[Source: ProPublica | Charles Ornstein and Terry Parris Jr. | February 8, 2016 ++]

## **VICTORY FOR VICTIMS OF ARMY'S BIOCHEMICAL EXPERIMENTS**

By William C. Triplett, From The VVA Veteran

An appeals court in January handed veterans who were unwitting victims of chemical and biological experiments a long overdue victory in a toughly fought lawsuit brought seven years ago on their behalf by Vietnam Veterans of America and Swords to Plowshares.

Instead of money, thought, the veterans were awarded two things that are arguably more important at this point in their lives—access to detailed information about the experiments and access to health care provided by the experimenter, the U.S. Army.

While some of the particulars of this story may be new, its broader themes are familiar, certainly to Vietnam veterans. —It's another example of the government hiding things, not giving up information that would help veterans," said VVA President John Rowan.

There was a lot to hide.

Beginning in the mid-1950s, at Edgewood Arsenal in Maryland—and with help from the Central Intelligence Agency—the Army developed a secret program to test biochemical agents on unsuspecting soldiers. They were only told they would be testing out new clothing, such as field jackets, and various weapons. They were never told anything about being infected with, or exposed to, things such as deadly nerve agents (sarin and VX), incapacitating agents (BZ), lethal pathogens (plague and anthrax), and even hallucinogens (LSD and mescaline).

According to a CNN report four years ago, when one soldier who'd been subjected to many tests either by injection or pill —questioned the staff about whether he was in any danger, they reassured him, —There is nothing here that could ever harm you."

The Edgewood program was motivated by Cold War fears of possible Soviet biological or chemical warfare attacks. Initially, the tests were defensive in nature—soldiers were often injected or given an antidote shortly after exposure—to discover the best ways to survive such attacks. But subsequent tests were designed for offensive capabilities.

The experiments and the people experimented upon numbered in the thousands. The program went on for years until congressional inquiries and hearing put an end to it in the mid-1970s.



The program's effects on victims, however, was only beginning.

As soldiers finished at Edgewood and prepared to return to their normal duty stations, they were ordered never to discuss anything they had seen, heard, or done while there. The historical record strongly suggests that they obeyed—until later in life when many started coming down with multiple diseases and ailments.

Suspecting their illnesses were tied to the Edgewood experiments, the former soldiers filed claims for service-connection with the VA, which, it turned out, had actually been part of the Edgewood experiments at one point. The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that by 2009, the VA, hardly a disinterested party, had denied 97 to 99 percent of their claims for disability and death benefits.”

Frustrated, eight Edgewood veterans approached the San Francisco-based law firm Morrison Foerster, which was known for representing veterans. VVA soon got involved because of its longstanding interest in the potential long-term effects of veterans' exposure to toxic substances. Eventually Swords to Plowshares, a veterans rights organization also based in San Francisco, became involved, too.

The decision was made to sue, but not for monetary damages. The plaintiffs wanted to know exactly what was done to them. They also wanted appropriate health care for illnesses they believed resulted from the testing. The suit, filed by Morrison Foerster, named the U.S. Army, the CIA, and the Department of Defense as defendants.

Time, however, was on the government's side. An estimated seven thousand eight hundred soldiers—possibly more—had been experimented upon, but some had died and others were dying. Before the lawsuit could even move forward, the Army tried to get it dismissed, claiming a slew of legal points such as lack of jurisdiction and expiration of the statute of limitations.

The Army also tried to invoke the Feres doctrine, which essentially immunizes the U.S. military from being sued for money regarding injuries sustained during service. While the plaintiffs made clear they were not seeking cash, the Army argued that the money that would be spent in providing health care could be construed as a financial award.

A year passed, and in 2010 a District Court judge ruled against the defendants on all counts. The case would be allowed to proceed.

It would be another three years, however, before any further progress was made. But it was major progress. In November 2013 the same District Court issued an injunction compelling the Army to inform the veterans about the details and health effects of experiments performed on them. Specifically, the judge said the Army has an ongoing duty to warn [the veterans] about newly acquired information that may affect their well-being now and in the future as it becomes available.”

The judge also said that Army Regulation 70-25 “entitles plaintiffs to medical care for any disabilities, injuries, or illnesses suffered as a result of participation in the experimentation program.” But the judge didn't compel the Army to provide that care, citing care available from the VA.

Morrison Foerster felt the Army should be compelled to provide medical care, and appealed that part of the ruling. “The Army has its own independent duty under its own regulations to provide care,” said Ben Peterson, a Morrison Foerster attorney involved with the litigation. “That's entirely separate from the VA.” Put another way, why shouldn't the Army be made to comply with its own rules? Especially, as the law

firm maintained, since studies had shown links between the tests and some illnesses the veterans had developed.

As Morrison Foerster filed an appeal for a second or tandem injunction, the defendants appealed not only to overturn the injunction to disclose information about the tests, but also, once more, to have the case dismissed entirely. The move didn't surprise Rowan. "It's all part and parcel of the government not wanting to tell anybody anything," he said. "It was that way with Agent Orange, the Atomic soldiers, and so many others."

The case went to the Ninth Circuit of Appeals, which reviewed all arguments and issued a decision two years later, in June 2015. Once again, the ruling came down completely on the veterans' side. The Ninth Circuit denied the Army's attempt to have the case tossed, upheld the District Court's injunction for the Army to provide access to information about the tests, and—perhaps most importantly—granted Morrison Foerster's request to file a second injunction forcing the Army to provide health care.

As such, the Ninth Circuit effectively disagreed with the District Court only on that last point, and only in part, writing "we cannot agree that the Army's duty to provide care is excused by the availability of medical care from another government agency [the VA], even if that care would overlap to some degree and in some manner with the care that the Army is required to provide."

That might seem to have put an end to things and therefore been cause to celebrate, but the case wasn't finished. While the Ninth Circuit had granted the second injunction, it was up to the District Court to spell out exactly what the injunction would say. So the case went back there.

The Army hadn't given up, either. Its attorneys petitioned the Ninth Circuit to rehear the full case in hopes of obtaining a more favorable ruling. It wasn't until January that the court responded—declining to rehear.

VVA hailed the decision as a clear and final victory. "It reaffirms our position that caring for veterans in part of the continuing cost of war," Rowan said, noting the Ninth Circuit's refusal to rehear sends a signal that the government cannot ride roughshod over its own regulations and the rights of veterans.. This case has succeeded in exposing the breadth and scope of some of the top-secret experimentation that the military first denied and then acknowledged had been conducted to the potential detriment of the health of thousands of test subjects."

Rowan also saluted Morrison Foerster "for their unwavering support of veterans." The law firm of course welcomed the victory, but as Patterson said: "Keep in mind, it's possible the Army could try to get the Supreme Court to take the case. They've got ninety days to do it." That is, from the date of the Ninth circuit's January ruling, meaning the deadline for filing a request for Supreme Court review would be around the end of this April.

"It's been a long case," Patterson said. "We got both the District Court and the Ninth Circuit to say, yes, you have to do these things for veterans. It'd be great if the Army did the right thing" and did not file for Supreme Court review.

For the moment, the only matter still outstanding is the specific wording of the injunction making the Army responsible for providing health care, which the District Court has not yet issued. It could come any day, though, and it will certainly be reason to celebrate.

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## ► OTHER NEWS

### PEACE CAMP FOR YOUTH

July 21-28, 2016

The Republic of Korea in conjunction with the 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Korean War, has decided to commemorate not only the U.S. Veterans, but also invite back their grandchildren in a special program for all of the United Nation Countries.

Grandchildren learn native dress and culture. The ROK pays for everything in South Korea.

This year's 6<sup>th</sup> PCFY will have the registration cost cut in half!

FCPS History Teacher and MHT Tour Leader Shayne Jarosz will take back college age (18 years old – waivers available for 17-year-old high school graduates) to Seoul to experience the thanks of the grateful Korean people who were saved from communist takeover in 1950-1954. The Peace Campers will interact with like-aged grandchildren from the other 18 U.S. Peace Keeping Force Countries as well as South Korean college students. Cultural events and fun will be the priority this summer in and around Seoul.

### Post Tour to Beijing, China

Beijing is only a two-hour flight from Korea. The price is right since your grandchildren have already paid for the Trans-Pacific flight. Now is a special time to visit Beijing since all of the main tourist attractions have been renovated as seen during the 2008 Olympics and again for the 2013 National Day. An experienced MHT Tour Leader will be with the group!

Military Historical Tours, the official Korea Revisit Tour Coordinator for the KWVA:800-722-9501  
[mhtours@miltours.com](mailto:mhtours@miltours.com), [www.miltours.com](http://www.miltours.com).

### SEAL RECEIVES MEDAL OF HONOR

On Feb. 29, Senior Chief Special Warfare Operator (SEAL) Edward C. Byers Jr. became the sixth Navy SEAL in U.S. history to receive the Medal of Honor.

President Barack Obama presented Byers with the medal during a White House ceremony for his heroic gallantry as an assault team member attached to a Joint Task Force in support of Operation Enduring Freedom Dec. 8, 2012.

Byers spoke at a press conference following the ceremony.

"The important thing I want to say here is that everything we do is as a team; if it wasn't for that team I wouldn't be standing here today.



Specifically for me, my teammate, friend and brother Nick Checque," he said, referring to fallen team member Petty Officer 1st Class Nicolas Checque. "The award is truly his. He was an American hero and he was the hero of that operation.

Today has been a very memorable day in my life surrounded by friends and family and it is truly something I'll never forget. We're gonna celebrate Nick's life and celebrate the lives of the brothers that have fallen protecting our freedoms so that we can sleep peacefully in our beds at night," added Byers.

In December 2012, Byers, along with other members of his team, was tasked with a mission to rescue Dr. Dilip Joseph, an American citizen being detained by the Taliban in a mountainous region in the Qarghah'i District of Laghman Province. Byers was the second assaulter on the approach toward the building identified as containing the hostage.

While Byers tried to rip down blankets that served as the door to the building, the first assaulter pushed his way through the doorway and was immediately shot by enemy AK-47 fire. Byers, fully aware of the hostile threat inside the room, boldly entered and immediately engaged a guard pointing an AK-47 towards him. As he was engaging that guard, another adult male darted towards the corner of the room. Byers could not distinguish if the person may have been the hostage scrambling away or a guard attempting to arm himself with an AK-47 that lay in the corner, so he tackled the unknown male and seized control of him. While in hand-to-hand combat, Byers maintained control of the unknown male with one hand, while adjusting the focus of his night vision goggles (NVGs) with his other. Once his NVGs were focused, he recognized that the male was not the hostage and engaged the struggling armed guard.

By now, other team members had entered the room and were calling to Joseph to identify himself. Byers heard an unknown voice speak English from his right side. He immediately leaped across the room and selflessly flung his body on top of the American hostage, shielding him from the continued rounds being fired across the room. Almost simultaneously, Byers identified an additional enemy fighter directly behind Joseph. While covering the hostage with his body, Byers was able to pin the enemy combatant to the wall with his hand around the enemy's throat. Unable to fire any effective rounds into the enemy, Byers was able to restrain the combatant enough to enable his teammate to fire precision shots, eliminating the final threat within the room.

Byers quickly talked to Joseph and, after confirming that he was able to move, extracted him to the helicopter-landing zone. Byers, a certified paramedic and 18D medic, subsequently assisted with the rendering of medical aid to the first assaulter. Byers and others performed CPR during the flight to Bagram Airfield where his teammate was declared deceased.

PHOTO

## **AN EXTRAORDINARY HERO**

Command Sergeant Major Bennie Adkins was born in Waurika, Oklahoma and was drafted in 1956. He was assigned to a garrison unit in Germany, with a follow-on assignment to the 2nd Infantry Division, Fort Benning, Georgia. After attending Airborne School, he volunteered for Special Forces in 1961, serving with Special Forces for more than 13 years with the 7<sup>th</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Special



Forces Groups (Airborne). During that time he deployed to the Republic of Vietnam three times between 1963 and 1971. In April 1967, Adkins was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his actions with Detachment A-102 during his second tour in Vietnam. After Vietnam, Adkins was assigned to Fort Huachuca. Graduating in the third-class of the Sergeant Major Academy, Adkins retired from the Army in 1978. Before retiring, as a sergeant major he returned to the Special Forces at Fort Bragg, then went to Fort Sherman and led training at its Jungle Operations Training Center. After the Army, Adkins earned a bachelor's and two Master's degrees from Troy State University. Additionally, he ran his own accounting company, and taught classes at Southern Union Junior College and Auburn University.

Following 2002, the U.S. Army reviewed all 6,500 recipients of the Distinguished Service Cross to see if any recipients were shortchanged; this led to two-dozen awardings in March 2014. In 2013, as part of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014, the Senate Armed Service Committee passed a provision removing the time limit for Donald P. Sloat and Adkins. In August 2014, President Obama awarded the Medal of Honor to Adkins at a ceremony that included the awarding of the Medal of Honor posthumously to Sloat and American Civil War army officer Alonzo Cushing. In September of that same year, Adkins was inducted into the Pentagon's Hall of Heroes.

Command Sergeant Major Bennie G. Adkins distinguished himself during 38 hours of close-combat fighting against enemy forces, March 9-12, 1966. At that time, then-Sergeant First Class Adkins was serving as an Intelligence Sergeant with Detachment A-102, 5th Special Forces Group, 1st Special Forces at Camp A Shau, in the Republic of Vietnam.

At the time of action, Sergeant Adkins and nine other U.S. Army Special Forces Soldiers were based at Camp A Shau, a Special Forces camp positioned to observe and interdict enemy infiltration into South Vietnam from the north. Camp A Shau was located in the northern part of the country, in the isolated A Shau Valley, which bordered Laos and was separated from the nearest friendly forces by approximately fifty kilometers of dense jungle-covered mountains. The triangular camp was fortified with barbed wire defenses, with an airstrip located just outside its perimeter.

In addition to the 10 U.S. Army Special Forces Soldiers manning Camp A Shau, there were six Vietnamese Special Forces, (LLDB) and 210 Vietnamese Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG). In the days leading up to the attack on March 9, two North Vietnamese defectors warned Adkins' camp of an imminent assault by enemy forces. And so in preparation, Camp A Shau was reinforced with seven additional U.S. Special Forces personnel, 149 additional CIDG (Nung) troops, and nine interpreters.

At 3:50 a.m., on the morning of March 9, Special Forces Detachment A-102 at Camp A Shau was subjected to a full-scale assault by an estimated two reinforced North Vietnamese regular Army regiments equipped with mortars, rifles, anti-aircraft guns and machine guns. The battle opened with a mortar barrage and small-arms fire, which continued throughout the night, until 4 a.m., March 10, when the enemy forces assaulted the camp in waves.

On the onset of the first day's attack, Adkins awoke and ran through intense enemy fire to man the American mortar position, which was adjacent to the team house. Adkins continued to man the position despite the position taking direct mortar hits that wounded him and killed several other defenders at his position.

Upon learning that two Americans were killed, and several Americans and Vietnamese were injured in the initial volley, Adkins temporarily turned the mortar over to another Soldier and ran through a hail of

exploding mortar rounds to a trench in the center of camp, where the wounded and dying were pinned down. Through the morning of March 9, Adkins would provide aid, drag the seriously injured to safety, and recover the remains of dead American and Vietnamese personnel. With disregard for his own safety, Adkins repeatedly exposed himself to sniper and mortar fire, while moving casualties to the camp dispensary, and to a casualty collection point by the main gate, on the east wall.

Late in the morning of March 9, Adkins assembled a group to provide cover at the camp's airstrip, so that a severely wounded Master Sgt. Gibson could be evacuated. Ignoring any personal risk, Adkins assisted in loading Gibson onto the evacuation aircraft, while under fire, and then provided covering fire support during take-off.

During the evacuation, Adkins was again wounded.

Later that day, two helicopters attempted to land in the center of camp to evacuate the approximately 40 wounded defenders. The first helicopter was shot down and crashed. When the second helicopter landed, Adkins stood fully exposed to enemy fire, and loaded the wounded Soldiers onto the helicopter, despite the enemy directing heavy machine gun and small-arms fire on the helicopter and evacuees.

Later that day, when a resupply air drop landed outside the camp perimeter, Adkins successfully maneuvered outside the camp walls to retrieve the much-needed supplies.

At approximately 4 a.m., March 10, the enemy launched their main attack against the south and east walls. When the assault began, Adkins was in the American mortar pit, and began firing illumination and high-explosive shells. During this action, Adkins' position took a direct hit that killed one, wounded two, knocked down the mortar and wounded him, yet again. With no regard for his injuries, Adkins restored the mortar and continued to fire.

Adkins drew more enemy fire to his position when covering a rescue mission on Camp A Shau's airstrip. U.S. Air Force A-1E pilot Maj. Dafford Myers, along with Maj. Fisher and one other A-1E flight, had been engaged in strafing the enemy at the south and east walls, when Myers' plane caught fire. Myers was forced to make a crash landing on the airstrip. At this time, Adkins increased his volume of fire onto the enemy, drawing their attention onto his own position so that Fisher could safely land and pull the wounded Myers from the runway. Twice, enemy fire struck the American mortar pit and literally blew Adkins into the air, killing and wounding several others at his position. However, the rescue was successfully completed, and Fisher later received the Medal of Honor for his daring action.

Since the start of the March 10 assault, Adkins' position had been hit a total five times – killing four and wounding several others, including Adkins. By 6:30 a.m., Adkins was the only Soldier left firing in the camp.

When all the mortar rounds were expended, Adkins manned a recoilless rifle and turned his attention to a break in the south camp wall, only 30 meters from his position, where enemy was infilling to assault the American mortar position. From his position facing the wall break, Adkins inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy and stalled their attempts to overrun the camp. At this time, Adkins was again wounded, when his recoilless rifle took a direct hit.

The enemy had broken into the camp in strength, and the remaining defenders were forced to withdraw to the north wall. During the withdrawal, some joined Adkins in the mortar pit. The defenders in the pit



continued to take fire until they exhausted their supply of hand grenades. In time, almost all the defenders in the pit were dead or wounded, with no relent in the enemy assault.

Out of ammunition and with only an M-16 rifle to resist the enemy, Adkins led the remaining defenders to an American communications bunker, in which several Americans were attempting to fight off a company-sized assault through the south gate, and over the wall. Twice, Adkins and his fellow defenders in the bunker succeeded in repulsing the enemy assault on their position. Throughout, Adkins provided medical care to the survivors and coordinated for air support with aircraft overhead.

By about noon, on March 10, the enemy controlled all of the camp except for the American communications bunker, which was held by Adkins and the group at the north wall. The remaining enemy forces launched several unsuccessful counterattacks, but were stopped by Adkins and his team.

His ammunition supply exhausted, Adkins braved intense enemy fire to return to the desolated mortar pit, gathering vital ammunition and evading fire, while returning to the bunker. The situation at Camp A Shau grew dire enough that supporting aircraft were instructed to bomb the camp itself, sparing only the portions held by the remaining defenders.

At about 5 p.m., on March 10, the remaining personnel at the communications bunker were ordered to destroy all communications, equipment and signal operating instructions (radio codebook), and to provide cover for an attempted helicopter evacuation of remaining defenders. Crossing the camp to reach the north wall exposed Adkins and his team to additional enemy fire once more.

Once at the north wall, Adkins and several remaining defenders braved enemy fire in a 350-meter rush to the landing zone, carrying other wounded men. They arrived at the landing zone only to find that the last helicopter had departed moments earlier.

Adkins began to organize and rally the remaining Vietnamese into a patrol, and began an escape by foot through the jungle. The patrol evaded pursuit and continued their escape throughout the night, stopping only for a two-hour rest. Late in the afternoon on March 11, Adkins and his patrol were able to make radio contact with rescue helicopters for another attempted evacuation. Although the group was able to board a rescue helicopter, it was destroyed by enemy machine gun fire before takeoff. The group replenished their supplies and continued to flee through the jungle. They successfully evaded the enemy until they were rescued by helicopter, on the morning of March 12.

While carrying a wounded soldier to the extraction point he learned that the last helicopter had already departed. Adkins led the group while evading the enemy until they were rescued by helicopter on March 12, 1966.

Camp A Shau was abandoned only after near continuous close combat for 38 hours, without reinforcements, with limited resupply, and with limited air support, with the surviving defenders engaged in escape and evasion, for an additional 48 hours. Approximately 200 of the camp defenders were killed in action, with 100 wounded. The enemy suffered an estimated 500 to 800 casualties. It is estimated that Adkins killed between 135 and 175 of the enemy, while suffering 18 different wounds. His contribution to the defense of the camp and recovery of the survivors, at great risk to his own life, represents extraordinary heroism and selflessness, above and beyond the call of duty, and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service, and reflect great credit upon himself, Detachment A-102, 5th Special Forces Group, 1st Special Forces and the United States Army.

During the thirty-eight hour battle and forty-eight hours of escape and evasion, fighting with mortars, machine guns, recoilless rifles, small arms, and hand grenades, it was estimated that Adkins killed between 135 and 175 of the enemy while sustaining eighteen different wounds to his body.

Adkins was presented with the Medal of Honor at the White House on Sept 15, 2014, and when the previous line was read aloud, there was a collective, audible gasp throughout the assembled crowd of friends, family, press and members of the military in the East Room of the White House.

Every member of Adkins' unit was either killed or wounded during the 48-hour ordeal detailed above. Two of the men he saved were able to attend the event. After the ceremony, Adkins' thoughts quickly turned to the other heroes with whom he served.

—This Medal of Honor belongs to the other 16 Special Forces soldiers with me,” he said.

## **VIETNAM WAR SEARCH LIST**

From James Gregory

This is probably the best search list ever compiled about the Vietnam War. It would take months to look at everything this site offers. If you served during Vietnam, you will enjoy this site. I am sure you will find your unit and unit activities. Incredible resource and data base for anyone serving during Vietnam.

<http://www-static.cc.gatech.edu/fac/Thomas.Pilsch/Vietnam.html>

## **SELECTIVE SERVICE SYSTEM UPDATE**

As Congress begins debate on whether to force women to register for the draft, a bipartisan group of House lawmakers has a compromise solution: Get rid of it altogether. On 11 FEB, a group of four representatives — Mike Coffman (R-CO), Jared Polis (D-CO), Peter DeFazio (D-OR), and Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA) — introduced new legislation to abolish the Selective Service System (SSS), calling it an outdated and unneeded program. —Maintaining the Selective Service simply makes no sense,” Coffman, a Marine Corps veteran, said in a statement. —In 1973, the last draftee entered the Army and since then, despite the first Gulf War and subsequent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Pentagon has never considered reinstating the draft.” The idea comes amid dueling proposals from other lawmakers either requiring or continuing to exempt women from registering for the draft for the first time in U.S. history.

In December, Defense Secretary Ash Carter announced plans to open all infantry and combat-unit positions to women, provided they meet gender-neutral job standards. The military's past prohibition on women serving in those roles also provided a legal backing for excluding women from registering for the draft. Coffman said re-opening of that debate provides a timely opportunity to get rid of the Selective Service System. Agency activities cost taxpayers roughly \$23 million each year, and a 2012 Government Accountability Office report questioned whether the system could even provide a viable list of draftees to the Defense Department if needed. Military officials have repeatedly said that reverting to the draft from the current all-volunteer system would have significant negative impact on troop training, readiness and quality.

DeFazio noted that young men who fail to register for the draft face penalties, including denial of federal student loans and potential criminal punishment. “Not only will abolishing the Selective Service save the U.S. taxpayers money, it will remove an undue burden on our nation’s young people,” he said in a statement. “We need to get rid of this mean-spirited and outdated system and trust that if the need should arise Americans — both male and female — will answer the call to defend our nation.” Defense Department officials have said they are reviewing draft rules and regulations, and expect to issue recommendations in coming months. The issue is expected to be a key point of controversy in the annual defense authorization bill debate. It has also become a talking point on the Republican presidential campaign trail. Former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush and Florida Sen. Marco Rubio have both offered support for having women register, while Texas Sen. Ted Cruz has voiced strong opposition to the idea.

[Source: Military Times | Leo Shane | February 11, 2016 ++]

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## ► PENDING LEGISLATION

To follow these bills, go to

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

### HOUSE BILLS:

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

*Sponsor: Rep Abraham, Ralph Lee [LA-5] (introduced 1/9/2015)*

*Committees: House Veterans' Affairs*

*Latest Major Action: 1/9/2015 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.*

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

*Sponsor: Rep Green, Al [TX-9] (introduced 1/9/2015)*

*Committees: House Financial Services; House Ways and Means*

*Latest Major Action: 1/9/2015 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.*

*H.R.763 : VA Vet Choice Pilot Program. A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program under which eligible veterans may elect to receive hospital care and medical services at non-Department of Veterans Affairs facilities, and for other purposes.*

*Sponsor: Rep LoBiondo, Frank A. [NJ-2] (introduced 2/5/2015)*

*Committees: House Veterans' Affairs*

*Latest Major Action: 2/5/2015 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.*

H.R.969 : Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify presumptions relating to the exposure of certain veterans who served in the vicinity of the Republic of Vietnam, and for other purposes.

Sponsor: Rep Gibson, Christopher P. [NY-19] (introduced 2/13/2015) Related Bills: S.681

Committees: House Veterans' Affairs

Latest Major Action: 2/13/2015 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

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

Sponsor: Rep. Rangel, Charles B. [D-NY-13] (Introduced 03/19/2015)

Committees: House - Armed Services

Latest Action: 03/19/2015 Referred to the House Committee on Armed Services.

### **SENATE BILLS:**

S.398 : VA Chiropractic Care and Services. A bill to amend the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Programs Enhancement Act of 2001 and title 38, United States Code, to require the provision of chiropractic care and services to veterans at all Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers and to expand access to such care and services, and for other purposes.

Sponsor: Sen Moran, Jerry [KS] (introduced 2/5/2015)

Committees: Senate Veterans' Affairs

Latest Major Action: 2/5/2015 Referred to Senate committee. Status: Read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

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

Sponsor: Sen Tester, Jon [MT] (introduced 2/26/2015)

Committees: Senate Veterans' Affairs

Latest Major Action: 2/26/2015 Referred to Senate committee. Status: Read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

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

Sponsor: Sen Gillibrand, Kirsten E. [NY] (introduced 3/9/2015) Related Bills: H.R.969

Committees: Senate Veterans' Affairs

Latest Major Action: 3/9/2015 Referred to Senate committee. Status: Read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

S.684 : Homeless Veterans Prevention Act of 2015. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the provision of services for homeless veterans, and for other purposes.

Sponsor: Sen Burr, Richard [NC] (introduced 3/10/2015)

Committees: Senate Veterans' Affairs

Latest Major Action: 3/10/2015 Referred to Senate committee. Status: Read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

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## ► BRINGING THEM HOME

Cpl. **Dennis D. Buckley** U.S. Army A Battery, 15th Field Artillery Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division; lost 2/13/1951 in South Korea, recovered 3/21/2016.

1st Lt. **Frederick W. Langhorst** U.S. Army Air Forces 1330 Army Air Force Base Unit, Air Transport Command; lost 7/17/1945 in India, recovered 3/17/2016.

Sgt. 1st Class **Alan L. Boyer** U.S. Army Command and Control Detachment, 5th Special Forces Group; lost 3/28/1968 in Laos, recovered 3/16/2016.

Sgt. 1st Class **Raymond K. McMillian** U.S. Army Medical Company, 3rd Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division; lost 2/12/1951 in South Korea, recovered 2/26/2016.

Flight Officer **Dewey L. Gossett** Army Air Forces 527th Fighter Squadron, 86th Fighter Group, 12th Air Force; lost 9/27/1943 in Italy, recovered 2/25/2016.

Cpl. **Davey H. Bart** U.S. Army Company K, 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division; lost 11/2/1950 in North Korea, recovered 2/24/2016.

Sgt. **John C. Holladay** U.S. Marine Corps Company B, 1st Marine Raider Battalion, 1st Marine Raider Regiment; lost 7/20/1943 in Soloman Islands, recovered 2/24/2016.

Pfc. **Aubrey D. Vaughn** U.S. Army Company C, 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, 5th Regimental Combat Team; lost 4/23/1951 in North Korea, recovered 2/24/2016.

Cpl. **Eldon W. Ervin** U.S. Army Headquarters Battery, 57th Field Artillery Battalion, 7th Infantry Division; lost 11/28/1950 in North Korea, recovered 2/9/2016.

Cpl. **Dudley L. Evans** U.S. Army Company G, 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division; lost 2/15/1951 in South Korea, recovered 1/29/2016.

Pfc. **Roy A Henderson** U.S. Army Company B, 1st Battalion, 29th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division; lost 7/27/1950 in North Korea, recovered 1/14/2016.

Cpl. **Kenneth R. Stuck** U.S. Army Company L, 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division; lost 11/2/1950 in North Korea, recovered 1/8/2016.

*Of the 16 million Americans who served in World War II, more than 400,000 died. The number of Americans who remain missing from conflicts in this century are: World War II (73,515), Korean War (7,800), Cold War (126), Vietnam War (1,624), 1991 Gulf War (5), and Libya (1).*

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## ► SICK CALL

*We wish our following RFTW family member a good recovery. Our prayers are with you.*

### **Michael —Shadow Walker” Casillas**

From Monsoon 2-7-16: Aloha All....PRAYER REQUEST for my brother Michael Casillas, who was involved in a serious motorcycle accident while riding his "Fatboy." Same bike I ride and it is known for its solid wheel disc to be a hazard in wind. Because of this wind, Mike lost the bike and suffered serious injuries from broken ribs, back and to bleeding in the brain. Mike undergoes brain surgery today after suffering a mini-stroke. Prayers Airborne for this Navy Vietnam Veteran, who has never dropped his pack and has been there for all our causes supporting our own. Mike is a "RFTW" and "PGR" supporter and participant.

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## ► TAPS

**Pat —Ashes” Marcikese** passed away February 23 after a short battle with cancer, surrounded by friends and some of her RFTW family: Martha Zaragosa, Dadbo, Dirt, and Velcro. Earlier, Pegger had also been there to say goodbye. Pat and her husband John were active in veterans groups and issues, PGR, and motorcycle riding clubs. John served in the Army for 23 years and was awarded a Silver Star, Bronze Star, and 2 Purple Hearts when he served in Vietnam. He was wounded on Hamburger Hill. He was honored in 2010 as Lake Havasu's first Hometown Hero, and a street was named after him.

John had never been to The Wall, and for several years he talked about visiting it with RFTW, but something always interfered. When he became ill in 2010 he vowed to go in 2011, but he died before he could fulfill his dream. Pat joined our RFTW family in 2011 when she carried her husband's ashes to Arlington for burial. Now it's Pat's turn to be carried to Arlington to join her husband. Her ashes will be carried in a custom leather vest on Central Route.

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*You Are Not Forgotten*

