



Roger That!

The Official Publication of Rolling Thunder®, Illinois Ch 2

Volume 24, Issue 4



OUR MISSION: The major function of Rolling Thunder®, Inc. is to publicize the POW-MIA issue: To educate the public that many American Prisoners of War were left behind after all previous wars and to help correct the past and to protect future Veterans from being left behind should they become Prisoners of War-Missing In Action. We are also committed to helping American Veterans from all wars.

Rolling Thunder®, Inc. is a non-profit organization and everyone donates their time because they believe in the POW/MIA Issue.

Upcoming Events

APRIL

- Month of the Military Child!
- Military Saves Month
- 5 Gold Star Spouses Day
- 9 National Former POW Recognition Day
- 14 Air Force Reserve Birthday
- 15 Purple Up! Day
- 23 Army Reserve Birthday
- 30 National Military Brats Day

MAY

- Month of the Military Care Giver
- National Military Appreciation Month
- Public Service Recognition (1st full week)
- National Correctional Officers Week (1st full week)
- 1 Silver Star Service Banner Day
- 1 Loyalty Day
- 6 National Nurses Week (ends May 12th)
- 8 Victory in Europe (VE) Day
- 12 Military Spouse Appreciation Day
- 13 Armed Forces Week (Ends May 20th)
- 14 Children of the Fallen Patriots Day
- 25 Candlelight Vigil at Fort Sheridan
- 26 Rolling Thunder Demonstration Parade
- 29 Memorial Day

SEE PAGE 16 FOR JUNE AND MORE!

Inside This Issue

President's Message	2
V.P.'s VISION	3
RECOVERIG LOST AVIATORS WWII	3
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD	4
HEAVEN CAN WAIT	5
POW AT THE AGE OF 16	6
LOST IN THE SKY	7
SHOOT AND SCOOT	8
DURNBACK CEMETARY	10
DURNBACK	11
WILLIAM CARNEY	12
VIETNAM VETERANS DAY	13
IMPORTANT DAYS FOR RT #2	14-15
DOC'S CORNER	16
DATES TO REMEMBER	17
Volunteer Opportunities	18
Chapter 2 Organization	18

DPAA Updates

Remaining Numbers to Date

26 March, 2024

WWII
72,104

Korean War
7,481

Vietnam War
1,577

Cold War
126

Gulf Wars
5

41,000 of these missing are presumed lost at sea due to ship losses or aircraft water losses.

This information is updated every Friday on the DPAA website. Check DPAA.Mil for the most current data.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Working for the Good of the Whole!!

Ted 'Hogski' Makarewicz, President RT IL 2

I recently reported that one of the topics covered at our Rolling Thunder National convention in Washington DC was to get everyone in the chapter 'ALL IN'! We discussed the fact that it is important that everyone in the chapter have a position of responsibility. That guarantees that everyone is directly working on one goal within our mission in support of our POW/MIA heroes and our veterans. This way, everyone can be involved. It's hard to know where to jump in and so many times, when there is a need, the same people are volunteering and doing the majority of the work! If we each have an area that we are responsible for, we won't have to worry about the when, where and how of 'volunteering'! Many hands make light work!

By having everyone involved, it also prevents people from getting "burned out" or losing enthusiasm in the chapter or the activity. It was discussed at the recent board meeting that there will be a thorough review of all committees and what their job descriptions entail. According to my roster, there are 14 members currently not affiliated with a committee or working with an officer or director on a project.

I will hopefully be sending out a listing of all the committees and their job description for our members to review by our next membership meeting on April 23, 2024. This would give the opportunity for all our members to review the committee descriptions and decide if they would want to remain in their current committee assignment or change to another committee. Those members who do not take the opportunity to sign up for a committee, I will then make assignments based on the member's background and skills.

By having this "all hands-on deck approach," it will keep all our members involved in the chapter even though that member may miss several meetings. The member would be informed by his or her committee members of what's going on in the committee. They can let the member know how they can help and they will not feel disconnected from our Chapter. Everyone must take ownership of our mission and Chapter.

The bottom line is preparing our Chapter for our ability to sustain our mission in the future. In other words, succession planning. Who will be capable and prepared to step up into those leadership positions when called upon. By working for the good of the all, we will accomplish this goal. And that goal is our commitment to the POW/MIA mission and helping American Veterans from all wars. Remember, we will never forget!



Whenever
we
Gather,
We will
Honor
and
Remember
Gratefully!



V.P.'s Vision

By: Anthony Yarbrough



To Rolling Thunder

I hope that these words find you happy and healthy. As we move into the spring and summer months, our commitments will start to increase and we will become very busy with events. I want each of you to take a moment to reflect and to think about why we are here! This edition of the *Roger That* has many stories of heroism and commitment. There are over 80,000 of these stories that still do not have a complete ending. Take some time and read the pages and reflect on how much was given so that we can pursue our lives openly and freely. Think about why you are here.

A large part of the mission of Rolling Thunder Inc® is to educate others about POW/MIA issues, so take a moment to think about what you were to say if you were asked to explain our mission and why it is important to you! Tell anyone who asks about these stories. Tell them to visit our website and read about the men who we have helped to repatriate. Tell them about the gratitude of the families who now have an ending to the story of their loved one. Tell them about the families of the 80,000+ who still are waiting.

And then, as you feel your own gratitude growing, remember our big Rolling Thunder ride is coming in late summer. I am asking for everyone's support with ticket sales and set-up. This is our biggest money maker in support of our mission... It is important that we remember and do our best to remind others to remember and be grateful too. Our Country, Our Heroes and Our Future depend on it!

Recovering the Lost Aviators of WWII. Smithsonian's History/ March, 2024

Submitted by: Ted Makarewica



Just before dawn on September 10, 1944, the flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS Enterprise came to life, as ground crews readied a line of airplanes for battle. The day's mission was critical: to hit Japanese positions and ships in advance of an amphibious invasion of Peleliu, an island in the archipelago of Palau some 50 miles to the west. At approximately 5:30 a.m., the first contingent of planes taxied and took flight. Then crews moved the next group into position on deck: 12 fighter planes known as Hellcats, five heavy bombers called Helldivers and seven even larger bombers known as Avengers. This is a story about 'The Pregnant Beast'.

Read the whole story and the follow up on how a civilian group called Project Recover, a California based non-profit group, was instrumental in finding the remains of the members of one of the Avengers. These are people who are committed to recovering remains of our lost heroes and their passion matches that of Rolling Thunder! Check out the story [here](#), and see all of the details, and let it motivate you to put your best efforts into our Mission!



Chairman of the Board Wayne "Traveler" Kirkpatrick



Looking back on our 24 years of existence and trying to measure our performance is a difficult task. We can evaluate ourselves on our membership, which is up, on our activities and events, which is way up, on the opportunities that we provide our members, which is constantly increasing, or we can only measure those areas that we've been successful in and ignore our failures. I would submit that, the most accurate way of evaluating any organization is on its ability to evolve, develop, grow, and accept change.

Over the past two + decades we have implemented an exemplary Repatriation program, a stellar Remembrance Table ceremony, a mounted parade unit, a respected Veterans Day Stand To, dedicated 14 Chairs of Honor and implemented a group riding safety program, offered a wide selection of Rolling Thunder products, shirts, hats, flags, etc., executed a very ambitious activities schedule every year, hosted a Chapter Holiday Party and Awards Banquet including a variety of achievement and recognition awards for our members, continued growth and success with our Thunder Run, maintained a solid relationship with our local VA hospital, and provided many VA programs and assistance at Lovell VA. While change and challenges evoke resistance in some and excitement in others, overwhelmingly, the response has been extremely positive and enthusiastically welcomed by the majority.

Does this indicate success? Not from my saddle it doesn't. What really marks success is our ability to do all of this in the face of limited resources, conflicting work schedules, minimal personnel and additional requirements from RT National. However, we're fortunate enough to have a diverse membership that has a passion for our mission and dedication to our cause. Ideally, that will continue, and the result will be continued growth, more opportunities and expanded membership.

The worst possible sickness in an organization is to maintain status quo or to become complacent with your accomplishments. Given the makeup of our Chapter membership, that will never happen.

By now, you're thinking "Where the hell is he going with all this?" Well...stand by for continued chal

lenges and opportunities in 2024 as we continue to grow and evolve as a chapter. Anticipate that we will always have a shortage of resources and conflicting schedules. Recognize that our missions and activities are never easy. And remember, if man would have been given the opportunity to jump ship in a storm...America would never have been discovered.

Our immediate missions include the dedication of a Chair of Honor to the Lake County Sheriff's Office on 12 April 24, to Hines Supply on 17 May, our 4th Annual RT XXXVI MidAmerica Parade followed by our trip to Germany for Adler 24.



With so many missions, please remember our patriotic obligation to honor our Vietnam Veterans on Vietnam Veterans Day, 29 March 24.

March 29 was chosen to be observed as National Vietnam War Veterans Day in perpetuity as March 29, 1973, was the day United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam was disestablished and also the day the last U.S. combat troops departed Vietnam.

Always strive to be...
Proud to serve...

Wreckage of WWII Bomber 'Heaven Can Wait' Found

Submitted by: Traveler



GEORGETOWN, Texas — The American B-24 bomber named "Heaven Can Wait" was shot down off the coast of New Guinea in March of 1944. All 11 servicemen aboard were killed.

Those 11 men have been counted among the more than 82,000 service members and civilians considered missing in action or unaccounted for.

Lt. Thomas V. Kelly Jr., from California, was one of the men aboard the plane when it fell to the water in Hansa Bay.

Sandy Althaus, who lives in Georgetown now, was a young child that spring. She was Kelly's cousin.

"I remember the phone call that my mother had that he had been killed," she told KVUE. "From that point on, there was very little conversation about it. It was so painful that that generation could not handle a discussion."

On Memorial Day 2013, Sandy Althaus' son, Scott Althaus, began the difficult task of finding the location of the plane. Scott Althaus, who is an academic researcher for the University of Illinois, spent hours researching whatever information he could find about "Heaven Can Wait."

"We ended up learning a lot that the family had not known, and enough that we could be fairly confident we knew where that plane was likely to be in the water, in a specific bay in Papua New Guinea," he said.

Scott Althaus made contact with a group now known as Project Recover, who had the ability to travel to the crash site and search for the wreckage. In 2017, group members found it.

Daniel O'Brien is with Project Recover.

"We had two missions going to Papua New Guinea. With the second mission, we were targeting that area where the B-24 'Heaven Can Wait' had gone down, and in fact, found it pretty darn close to where Scott Althaus and the other family members had proposed that it might be," O'Brien said.

The wreckage was more than 230 feet deep – too deep for a traditional dive team to conduct a mission to recover any remains of the plane or its crew members.

A government agency named the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, or DPAA, along with the Navy Experimental Diving Unit, got involved. Earlier this year, a team made the trip to Hansa Bay to recover what they could from the bomber.

Greg Stratton is with the DPAA and was a leader on the mission.

"We recovered a tremendous amount of biological and non-biological evidence to bring home to analyze," he said.

Lt. Commander Daniel Kinney was the leader for the dive unit.

"When we actually got to the bottom and were able to see the aircraft wreckage and to kind of understand the story behind everything, it was a humbling experience and one that my team is forever going to be grateful that we were a part of," Kinney said.

It will take months to analyze the material that was found, but the mission was a huge success. A repatriation ceremony was held for the service members earlier this month and the remains were flown back to the U.S.

Watch the video [here](#). And take to heart the words shared by Thomas Kelly in his last letter home:

I don't want you to feel sorry for me! I'm just telling you to appreciate what you have, even if you don't think it is much—It is SO much! The men fighting here for everyone are doing it for your freedom!

Thank You, Thomas Kelly and all Veterans!

A Heroes Story: POW at the age of 16. Vejo Jesse, Korean POW lives every day ‘With Joy in my Heart!’

**VA News, March 16,
2024**

Submitted by Traveler



Vejo Jesse circa 1950



Total U.S. casualties at Pork Chop Hill numbered 243 killed, 916 wounded and nine captured. Less than three weeks after the Battle of Pork Chop Hill, the Korean Armistice Agreement was signed to end hostilities.

For three months as POW, Jesse was tortured, interrogated, endured sleep and food deprivation, and was kept in solitary confinement.

Vejo Jesse joined the military looking for answers and ended it as a Prisoner of War (POW) survivor. Jesse decided at the age of 15 to join the military to uncover the truth about how his brother, a serviceman, had died.

After telling the recruiter he was 17, he began his journey as a soldier. Born in Corsicana, Texas, Jesse and his brother were the only two children and they were very close.

“I thought I’d be going around the United States meeting people that may have met my brother, but the next thing I knew I was on a plane headed to Korea,” he said. In June 1953, his third month on the ground in Korea, age 16, he was wounded.

“We had personal first aid kits that held a box of matches, a needle and thread, and a few other items. I just stitched up my wound and kept moving,” Jesse said.

“I knew in my heart I was going to make it back home.”

While going through one of the many destroyed villages, Jesse met a young Korean boy who lost all his family. “I felt bad for him, so we worked together to keep one another alive. Shortly later I was captured and taken to Pork Chop Hill,” he recalled.

“Even though I saw a lot of others lose their lives, I knew in my heart I was going to make it back home. It was a glorious day when I saw U.S. troops coming to my rescue,” he shared.

Returning home

Jesse was awarded numerous medals, including the Purple Heart and several Bronze Star Medals for his courage and experiences as a soldier and POW. Although he never found out how his brother died, he shared, “My life was spared and I continue to live everyday with joy in my heart.”

As a long-time patient of [North Texas VA](#), Jesse is one of 220,000 enrolled North Texas Veterans who trust VA with their health care.

“Veterans like Jesse truly gives us a special reason to do what we do,” said Chief of Staff Dr. Jeffrey Hastings. “It’s important we recognize there are families whose loved ones are still missing in action and we extend support to them as well.”

Jesse and Hastings are pictured above. For resources and FAQs for families and others still missing loved ones, visit [Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency \(DPAA\)](#).

Lost in the Sky: A Family's Commitment to Finding Answers

By SGT Ashleigh Maxwell



WASHINGTON D.C. –

It's Thanksgiving Day in 1967. The Mayercik family has gathered in New Jersey to celebrate together and give thanks for another year. The smell of freshly cooked food and the joyful sound of conversation and laughter fills the house as the family reflects on what they are grateful for. Between the bustling movement in the kitchen and the fellowship happening throughout the halls, there is a stifling knock at the door. Outside, two uniformed men stand, preparing to deliver news that will change the lives of this family forever.

Maj. Ronald Mayercik was a navigator aboard an RF-4C Phantom II during the Vietnam War in 1967. He vanished, along with the aircraft's pilot, Col. Brenden Foley, after departing for a weather reconnaissance mission over North Vietnam. An aerial search and rescue mission was launched in an attempt to locate the aircraft but no sign of wreckage or the crew was ever found. Mayercik was never heard from again and to this day is listed as unaccounted for by the Department of Defense.

"There's no grave to go visit," said Traci Wood, niece of Mayercik. "There's no 'what happened to him?' or 'what did he go through?'"

For 56 years, the family of Mayercik has searched for answers. With no information, no clues, and no trace of the aircraft wreckage ever being located, they have desperately clung to the hope that someday, somehow, he will come home.

"They didn't even want to move," said Wood, about her grandparents. "They always said 'what if he comes back and we're not here?' so they hold out hope, still to this day."

Since the early 2000s, the family of Mayercik has relied on the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency to provide answers and solve the mystery of his disappearance. They attend DPAA events regularly, including the annual Vietnam Government Brief, to receive updates and information on the search to bring him home.

William (Buddy) Newell, the research analyst assigned to Mayercik's case, has been involved with DPAA for years.

"I have a special relationship with this case," said New-

ell. "We will keep going [to the site] until we can find him and get an identification."

The first field investigation team that attempted to locate the crash site started their investigation in 1994 in Laos. It wasn't until November of 2000 that the investigation was relocated to Vietnam after the team received notification that a local had discovered Mayercik's identification tag near Hanoi, Vietnam.

"When you find ID tags you know that the body was nearby," said Newell. "They adjust whenever they go out and they do these excavations wherever they find these specific items."

Between the years of 2005 and 2013, excavation teams attempted to establish base camps on a mountain just Northwest of Hanoi, Vietnam to begin the search for possible remains, but due to inclement weather conditions in the area, these attempts were unsuccessful. In 2016, DPAA decided to coordinate with the Vietnamese, who were more familiar with the area and acclimated to the weather conditions, to begin a unilateral excavation in attempt to locate Mayercik.

"That's when we started finding material evidence that supported this location," Newell said. "We have a really good relationship with [Vietnam] and everything is just looking better."

Three generations have passed, all of them dedicated to keeping the memory of Mayercik alive. His bedroom nicknamed "Uncle Ronnie's room", by his nieces and nephews, became a place of fun and excitement where they would occasionally sleep, awaiting his return.

His picture, a large painting commissioned shortly after his disappearance, and a replica of the Phantom aircraft he disappeared in, hang in a special place in his childhood home, serving as reminders that although he is gone, his life, his sacrifice, and his memory will never be forgotten.



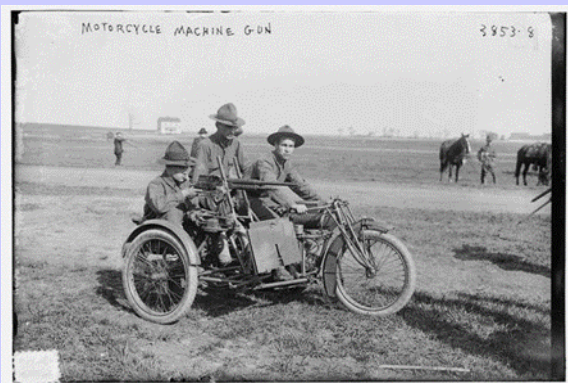
Shoot and Scoot: Military Combat Motorcycles

Submitted By Traveler

Military motorcycles have played a role in chasing Poncho Villa across northern Mexico, delivering messages throughout Europe in World War II and reconnoitering the Middle East in support of the Global War on Terror. The concept sounds like a slam dunk — - motorcycles make for speedy and nimble transports for scouts and couriers — but for one reason or another, every U.S. military iteration has been surprisingly short-lived and limited in application.

Why does the military keep reviving the idea? Maybe Americans just have an innate love for motorcycles. Maybe the allure of riding solo across enemy territory like a cavalry scout in the Wild West is too strong to resist. Whatever the reason, every generation of American warfighters dusts off the concept of military motorcycles and gives it a try.

Iron Horses, Mexican Revolutionaries and the War to End All Wars



(Library of Congress photo)

Horse-mounted cavalry was still considered viable when World War I broke out. However, the Great War quickly necessitated replacing hooves with tires. Immense artillery bombardments, poison gas attacks and

machine guns made the battlefield unsuitable for animals. Trucks replaced wagons, and motorcycles began to replace messenger horses.

America's first militarized two-wheeler was Harley-Davidson's J model. The primitive motorcycle came with 15 horsepower, no front brake, no rear suspension and a gas lamp instead of an electric headlight. Soldiers spent more time scraping mud off the chain than speeding across the bleak landscape, but the J model didn't go lame in the muddy fields, didn't spook at the sound of explosions and didn't need more than a tarp for a stable.

Its rough ride, low ground clearance and underpowered engine struggled everywhere but established roads — and intact roadways could be hard to come by in a country that had endured years of artillery barrages.

The Army's scuffle with Poncho Villa along the U.S.-Mexico border showed the motorcycle's promise. Gen. John "Blackjack" Pershing used several Harley-Davidson J models to pursue Poncho Villa when the Mexican rebel managed to elude U.S. cavalry.

Pershing's motorcycles were equipped with a sidecar and a machine gun. Rather than serving strictly as messengers, the two-man teams were well-equipped for maneuver warfare and could deliver far more firepower than a pair of cavalry scouts.

This was one of the first times motorcycles and airplanes were used in a coordinated military effort. The biggest problem was finding soldiers who knew how to ride. Few motorcyclists existed in 1916 and Harley-Davidson had to step in and train soldiers how to use the J model.

A 1916 article in the Daily Capital Journal out of Salem, Oregon, reported that in 1,600 miles of testing, the J model could "travel over most any kind of ground from 20 to 40 mph, get into action in 50 seconds and deliver 480 shots a minute."

MCMs Continued

Harley-Davidson and Thompson: A Perfect Match



(Courtesy photo)

Before the U.S. entered World War II, the Army sought to replace its J-model motorcycles. According to military history The Liberator, Har-

ley-Davidson beat competition from Indian and Delco with the WLA to earn the Army's business. The WLA went on to see use by military police, scouts and soldiers in armored units who needed fast, agile transportation.

Harley-Davidson reached back in the company catalog to source the engine for the WLA. Its flathead V-twin was famously strong, reliable, easy to maintain and tolerant of the poor-quality, 74-octane gasoline that was available on the front lines.

The 540-pound WLA was a handful off-road, but Harley-Davidson equipped military models with a skid plate, crash bars, more dirt-friendly fenders and an oil-bath air cleaner to improve off-road performance. The military's motorcycles also got blackout lights, a luggage rack and a scabbard for weapons like the Thompson submachine gun. There's anything more American than riding around the battlefield on a Harley-Davidson with a Tommy gun.

Dirt Bikes Tackle the Global War on Terror



na Ana, N.M., on Nov. 14, 2012. (Sgt. Todd Robinson/U.S. Army photo)

Pvt. Edwin S. Ruffner, an armor crewman with company C, 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, discusses the capability of the Christini 450cc all-wheel drive motorcycle during Network Integration Evaluation 13.1, to Lt. Col. Phil Deans of Great Britain at Dona

When Enduring Freedom began in 2001, one of the hottest-selling, off-road motorcycles was the Kawasaki KLR 650. The civilian-market, dual-sport motorcycle was famous for being dependable and easy to ride. Its biggest limitation, as far as the military was concerned, was that it only ran on gasoline. In 2008, a U.S. company had the solution: a new diesel engine for the KLR.

The HDT engine was wildly efficient. One of the motorcycles achieved a top speed of 121 mph at the Bonneville salt flats, and covering more than 400 miles on a tank of fuel was commonplace.

Since the KLR and diesel engines are two reliable creations, the M1030M1 would be virtually indestructible. Unfortunately, that wasn't the case. There were several ways to accidentally render the motorcycle inoperable in a hurry if you're not careful. These alternative-fuel bikes were notoriously unforgiving to work on, and sourcing parts for such a unique motorcycle was a serious problem.

The U.S. military wasn't ready to quit on the idea of a combat dirt bike just yet, though, and there are photos of soldiers showing Italian-made Christini dirt bikes to international VIPs at Dona Ana, New Mexico, in 2012. The Christini AWD 450 had a modern motocross engine and a clever drivetrain that delivered power to both wheels. It wasn't as good at packing gear as the M1030M1, but it was worlds better in speed and handling.

Silent But Deadly: The Future of Military Dirt Bikes



A U.S. Marine assigned to Reconnaissance Company, 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit, rides an MMX motorcycle en route to a raid site during the ground interoperability exercise at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, California, July 25, 2023.

(Cpl. Joseph Helms/U.S. Marine Corps photo)

Modern attempts at militarizing motorcycles have had their challenges, but technology has added a new twist to the concept: electrification. Electric motorcycles have so much potential in the arena of maneuver warfare that the U.S. military can't ignore them.

As an example, the Zero MMX has several advantages compared to internal combustion dirt bikes. Perhaps the biggest is noise; The electric motor's quiet hum is far stealthier than a 450-cc, single-cylinder engine or a two-stroke that leaves a cloud of blue smoke in its wake.

Electric motorcycles like the MMX are easier to ride because all the motor's torque is available from a standstill and there's no transmission or clutch to manage. The MMX can be charged like a normal EV or swap out depleted battery packs for fresh ones in seconds.

More than a century after the first motorcycles hit the battlefield, they remain too expensive and skill-dependent for widespread use in combat.

Durnbach War Cemetery

By Traveler



At the end of WWII the site for Durnbach War Cemetery was chosen, shortly after hostilities had ceased, by officers of the British

Army and Air Force, in conjunction with officers of the American Occupation Forces in whose zone Durnbach lay. The great majority of those buried there are airmen shot down over Bavaria, Wurtemberg, Austria, Hessen and Thuringia, brought from their scattered graves by the Army Graves Service. The remainder are men who were killed while escaping from prisoner of war camps in the same areas, or who died towards the end of the War on forced marches from the camps to more remote areas.

Durnbach War Cemetery contains 2,934 Commonwealth burials of the Second World War 93 of which are unidenti-

fied. One of the graves in the cemetery contains the ashes of an unknown number of unidentified war casualties, recovered from Flossenburg. There are also 30 war graves of other nationalities, most of them Polish.



Within the Indian section of the cemetery will be found the Durnbach Cremation memorial, commemorating 23 servicemen of the army of undivided India who died while prisoners of war in various places in France.

Durnbach is a village 16 kilometers east of Bad Tolz, a town 48 kilometers south of Munich. Durnbach War Cemetery is 3 kilometers north of the village Gmund am Tegernsee.

I believe that it was in 2012 that Juergen Lutz and our German Chapter members discovered Durnbach War Cemetery and the graves of four American servicemen. Our

German brothers and sisters assured that those graves were being maintained properly. They visit them occasionally to pay their respects and to assure that the graves are well maintained.

Durnbach War Cemetery is on our schedule of sites that Juergen, our Adler 24 road captain,

will lead us to in June. Not only will this be a very interesting, and somber, historical visit but we will also honor the graves of the four Americans buried there.





Durnbach

By Traveler

The passion that we hold for all service personnel who are killed in action, prisoners of war, those still missing in action, and for their families, never erodes from the hearts of good people and true patriots.

Such is the case demonstrated by a small group of RT IL-2 members who discovered four headstones of American Servicemen in a cemetery far from their families. As a display of respect and honor, this small group of Chapter members journeys to that cemetery each year to place American Flags on the headstones of these forgotten American heroes. No one asked them to do this. They were not looking for praise or publicity. They do this because they are Rolling Thunder members who have a solid sense of understanding the sacrifice of fallen warriors.

What makes this particularly special is that this small group of Rolling Thunder, Chapter 2 – Illinois members is our German brothers and sister; Juergen Lutz, Oliver Lutz, Andrea Kuehne, and Frank Kuehne.



**Juergen Lutz,
Oliver Lutz,
Andrea Kuehne
&
Frank Kuehne**

The cemetery is Durnbach War Cemetery located about 48 KM south of Munich and about 125 KM from Augsburg where our German sub-chapter resides.

**Frank
and Andrea
Kuehne, Oli
Lutz**



The site for Durnbach War Cemetery was chosen, shortly after WWII hostilities had ceased, by officers of the British

Army and Air Force, in conjunction with officers of the American Occupation Forces in whose zone Durnbach lay.

The great majority of those buried here are airmen shot down over Bavaria, Wurtemberg, Austria, Hessen and Thuringia, brought from their scattered graves by the Army Graves Service. The remainder are men who were killed while escaping from prisoner of war camps in the same areas, or who died towards the end of the War on forced marches from the camps to more remote areas.

Durnbach War Cemetery contains 2,934 Commonwealth burials of the Second World War, 93 of which are unidentified. One grave in the cemetery contains the ashes of an unknown number of unidentified war casualties recovered from Flossenburg. Also, one grave contains the remains of 6 unidentified U.K. airmen. There are also 30 war graves of other nationalities, most of them Polish. Within the Indian section of the cemetery will be found the Durnbach Cremation Memorial, commemorating 23 servicemen of the Indian Army who died while prisoners of war in various places in France and Germany, and who were cremated in accordance with their religion.

While the cemetery is operated by the UK, Commonwealth War Graves Commission, it is funded by the WWII Allied countries and maintained by the host nation, Germany.

The Americans buried here are:

- 1st Lieutenant Eric George Roberts, Age 23, American Army Air Force, KIA 08 October 1943
- 1st Lieutenant Stanley Warren Penner, Age 23, American Army Air Force, KIA 25 February 1944
- Flight Officer William George Shearer, Age 26, American Army Air Force, KIA 25 July 1944
- Technical Sergeant James John Hannon, Age 24, American Army Air Force, KIA 21 February 1944



W.G. Shearer, S.W. Penner, J.J Hannon

(Continued on page 12)

Dunnbach, continued

We don't know the history of these four Americans but, it would be a reasonable assumption that they died when their airplane was shot down. It could also be very likely that they were serving with the UK on one of their aircraft. It was not uncommon to assist our allies by providing them with qualified replacement personnel during the war.

The biggest question however, is why these four servicemen were not brought home to be buried. We have no answer and...that may be a good topic for our members to research.



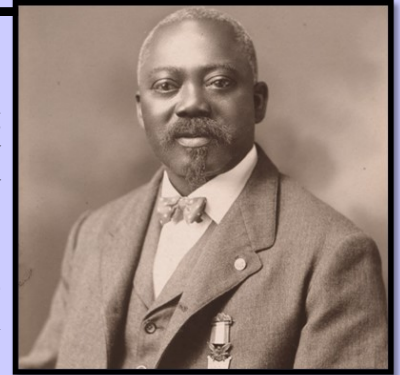
What? Our German sub-chapter drinking beer?

Regardless of the circumstances, their families can rest knowing that their loved ones are being honored and watched over by our brothers and sister of Rolling Thunder, Chapter 2 – Illinois – Germany.

We remain proud of the work of our German sub-chapter and we should all strive to maintain the same sense of dedication and respect to all warriors worldwide.



William Carney Becomes First Black American to Earn the Medal of Honor



Recognized for heroically protecting the American flag during the [Civil War](#), Army Sgt. William Harvey Carney receives the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest military decoration, on May 23, 1900.

The first Black American service member to earn the award, Carney was born into slavery in Virginia in 1840. Although a handful of other Black service members had already received the medal, Carney's award celebrated an earlier action. He was one of many Civil War-era honorees to be granted the medal decades later. Although he was born into slavery, Carney's family relocated to Massachusetts (reports vary on whether they were freed or escaped), and, in 1863, Carney joined the Union Army as part of the [54th Massachusetts Volunteer Regiment](#), the first Black regiment from the North to serve in the war.

"I had a strong inclination to prepare myself for the ministry; but when the country called for all persons, I could best serve my God by serving my country and my oppressed brothers," [Carney wrote in 1863](#). "The sequel is short—I enlisted for the war."

It was during his unit's first major battle that Carney saw the flag bearer get hit by bullets, and rushed to catch the flag from him before it hit the ground. "Despite suffering several serious gunshot wounds himself, Carney kept the symbol of the Union held high as he crawled up the hill to the walls of Fort Wagner, urging his fellow troops to follow him," [according to the U.S. Army](#). "He planted the flag in the sand at the base of the fort and held it upright until his near-lifeless body was rescued."

Carney's injuries resulted in an honorable discharge, and he returned to Massachusetts, where he worked for the postal service and as a messenger at the Massachusetts State House.

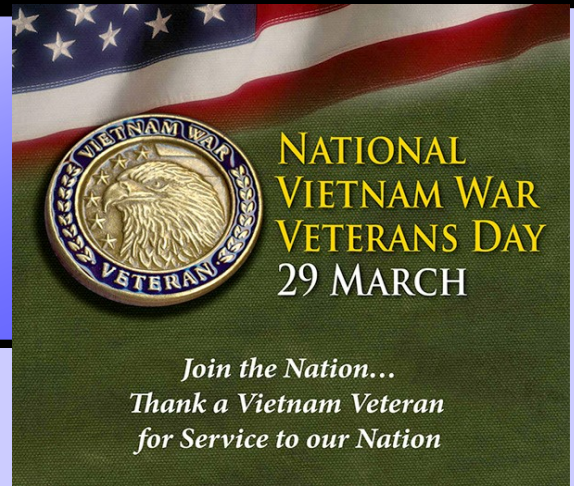
Vietnam Veterans Day

March 29th

VA News, March 29, 2024

Hans Peterson, VHA News Editor and Air Force Veteran

Submitted by Mary Kirkpatrick



March 29 is National Vietnam Veterans day.

VA thanks and honors our approximately 7 million living Vietnam Veterans and the 10 million families of those who served during the Vietnam War period. Since the birth of the United States, no single generation of Americans has been spared the responsibility of defending freedom by force of arms. More than 44 million American men and women have sacrificed and served in times of war. Their collective service and individual sacrifices have safeguarded the cherished concepts embodied in our constitution.

Most military families endure the hardship of separation, uncertainty and fear, but the families of our Vietnam Veterans also witnessed their husbands and wives, sons and daughters, and fathers and mothers returning home to a nation in turmoil. They watched as the vast majority received no formal recognition for their service or welcome home ceremonies hosted by their communities.

Like Veterans returning from today's battlefields, those who served in Vietnam came home with both physical and unseen injuries of war. Many of the unseen injuries suffered by our Vietnam Veterans went undiagnosed and weren't understood by our medical community or citizenry as they are now. Veterans were left to meet these challenges without the assistance available today.

Emotional video illustrates one Veteran's experience

[We offer our nation's thanks](#) (video link... click and watch!) to as many as possible of the living Vietnam Veterans and the families of the Veterans who served from Nov. 1, 1955, to May 15, 1975.

Too many who fought in Vietnam never experienced that return home or the chance to marry and have children or grandchildren. Their futures were cut short, and their hopes and dreams along with it. The families of those who

didn't return whose names are

etched on The Wall experienced the painful loss of a loved one without the collective support of their nation.

These inclusive dates maximize the recognition of United States military Veterans who served on active duty during the Vietnam War period. No distinction is being made between Veterans who served in-country, in-theater or who were stationed elsewhere during the Vietnam War period. All were called to serve and the overwhelming majority served honorably and admirably.

58,307 names appear on the Wall in Washington, D.C. Many tens of thousands were disabled. Approximately 7,500 women, the majority of whom were nurses, served in Vietnam. Eight were killed in theater, all of whom were nurses. And 1,627 are still considered missing in action and their families await word of their fate.

We have the opportunity to welcome them home

Some continued to serve in uniform while many returned to civilian life, started families and immediately began contributing to their communities. Some took up service as police officers, teachers, doctors and nurses. From town halls and boardrooms to the nation's capital, others became leaders and elected public servants.

As World War II and the Korean War reached their 50th anniversary, our nation commemorated our warriors' service and sacrifice. Now, we have the opportunity to do what should have been done 50 years ago: Welcome our Vietnam Veterans home with honor and thank them and their families for their service and sacrifice.

Across the country, thousands of local, state and federal organizations are hosting events each year to thank and honor our Vietnam Veterans and their families. The commemoration's cause is indeed noble and thanking and honoring these Veterans and their families is the right thing to do.

SUNDAY, MAY 26TH 2024



Rolling Thunder® Inc

ILLINOIS

**NATION WIDE RIDE FOR
FREEDOM
25-26 MAY2024**



JOIN ILLINOIS ROLLING THUNDER CHAPTERS ON SATURDAY NIGHT, 25 MAY AND SUNDAY, 26 MAY 2024 FOR THE MIDAMERICA ROLLING THUNDER XXXVI RIDE FOR FREEDOM WEEKEND.

PURPOSE OF THE RIDE IS TO REMIND OUR GOVERNMENT TO KEEP SEARCHING FOR OUR 82,000+ MISSING SERVICEMEN AND WOMEN!

SATURDAY, 25 MAY, 7:30 PM. CANDLELIGHT VIGIL FT SHERIDAN NATIONAL CEMETERY, VATTMAN ROAD, LAKE FOREST, IL 60035. CEREMONY, SPEAKERS AND WALK OF HONOR.

SUNDAY, 26 MAY, 8:30 – 10:00 AM. ROLLING THUNDER XXXVI DEMONSTRATION PARADE REGISTRATION, OPENING CEREMONY. NO ENTRY FEE!

STAGE AT: JAMES A. LOVELL FEDERAL HEALTH CARE CENTER FOR 54 MILE DEMONSTRATION RIDE THRU HINES VA HOSPITAL TO CANTIGNY PARK AND 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION MUSEUM. STAGING AT LOVELL, 3001 GREEN BAY RD, NORTH CHICAGO, IL, 8:30AM-10:00AM. EVENT STARTS PROMPTLY AT 10:00AM.

FOOD, VENDORS, MUSIC, RT XXXVI PINS & PATCHES, TSHIRTS, POW/MIA HONOR CHAIR DEDICATION, AND US ARMY 1ST INFANTRY MUSEUM TOURS AT CANTIGNY PARK, 1S151 WINFIELD ROAD, WHEATON IL.

CHAPTER 1, WARRENVILLE, IL, WWW.ROLLINGTHUNDERIL1.COM

CHAPTER 2, WAUCONDA, IL, WWW.ROLLINGTHUNDERIL2.ORG

CHAPTER 3, OLNEY, IL, WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/RTIL3

NEVER FORGET!





Saturday, 25 May, 2024
Join us for our 2nd Annual
Candlelight Vigil at Fort Sheridan
National Cemetery.
We will have speakers and a walk
of honor to remember the



Rolling Thunder XXXVI
Demonstration Parade!
Sunday 26 May, 2024!
Join us!



Special Days for our Service Men, Women and their Families!
Celebrate their service!



Celebrate Military Children!
April 15, 2024



Doc's Corner...

By: Mark Mazurkiewicz

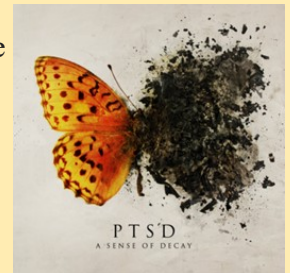
PTSD Causes, Symptoms, Triggers and Care!



War and sometimes everyday life can include experiences that create a strong sense of fear, sadness or other negative emotions that can alter the body's ability to process these things productively. Reminders of that event can create the 'fight or flight' feeling that our body uses to keep us safe. But, when the body continuously moves into the 'fight or flight' response, even when things around are not threatening, the response becomes unproductive and for many it becomes debilitating. This is where we need to be aware of the symptoms and the supports that are available to assist those who suffer from this challenge.

Here are 5 Symptoms of PTSD

- ♦ A life-threatening event is known in the person's life. This includes a perceived-to-be life threatening event...
- ♦ Internal reminders of a traumatic event. These signs of trauma typically present as nightmares or flashbacks...
- ♦ Avoidance of external reminders... read below in the 'triggers'.
- ♦ Altered anxiety state, heightened experiences of anxiety.
- ♦ Changes in mood or thinking. Sometime thoughts that bring out responses to stimuli that does not allow for productive/logical action. Unhealthy coping strategies, such as Drug and Alcohol use.

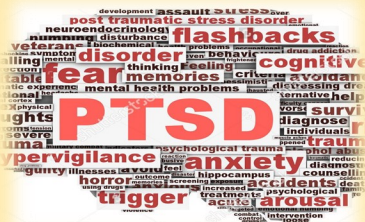


What are PTSD Triggers?

- ♦ Triggers can include sights, sounds, smells, or thoughts that remind you of the traumatic event in some way.
- ♦ Some PTSD Triggers are obvious, such as seeing a news report of an assault. Others are less clear. For example, if you were attacked on a sunny day, seeing a bright blue sky might make you upset.

What techniques can we use to address PTSD

- ♦ There are many options for addressing PTSD. Some are long term and include counseling or group support.
- ♦ Some are things that can be done simply each day without the need for others to assist:
 - *Deep breathing
 - *Expressive writing
 - *Self Soothing
 - *Mindfulness
 - *Relaxation
 - *Social support.
- ♦ The more coping strategies you have, the more likely you will be able to prevent the Development of unhealthy coping strategies, such as Alcohol and Drug use.



If you know of someone who is experiencing a disruption of their life due to a traumatic experience, check out the following websites and offer assistance in getting help!

*WWW.ptsd.va.gov

*WWW.Nimh.nih.gov

****The Cost of Freedom can be seen at your local VA Hospital****

"To care for them who have borne the battle."

-Abe Lincoln-



Military Celebrations for 4th Quarter

<https://veteran.com/military-calendar-holidays-events-observances/>

April

Month of the Military Child!

Military Saves Month

- 5 Gold Star Spouses Day
- 7 Good Friday
- 9 Easter
- 10 National Former POW Recognition Day
- 14 Air Force Reserve Birthday
- 15 Purple Up! Day
- 22 Ramadan (Ends April 21)
- 23 Earth Day
- 23 Army Reserve Birthday
- 30 National Military Brats Day

May

Month of the Military Care Giver

National Military Appreciation Month

Public Service Recognition (1st full week)

National Correctional Officers Week (1st full week)

- 1 Silver Star Service Banner Day
- 1 Loyalty Day
- 6 National Nurses Week (ends May 12th)

- 8 Victory in Europe (VE) Day
- 12 Military Spouse Appreciation Day
- 14 Mother's Day
- 13 Armed Forces Week (Ends May 20th)
- 13 Children of the Fallen Patriots Day
- 15 Peace Officers Memorial Day
- 22 Maritime Day
- 29 Memorial Day

June

PTSD Awareness Month

Home Ownership Month

- 6 D-Day
- 11 National Flag Week (ends June 17th)
- 12 Women Veterans Day
- 14 Army Birthday
- 18 Father's Day
- 19 Juneteenth
- 20 Veterans Golden Age Games (ends May 25th)
- 23 Coast Guard Auxiliary Birthday
- 24 PTSD Awareness Day
- 25 Armed Forces Day

9 April Chuck Carlson
11 April Diana Lanute
23 April Oliver Lutz
26 April Frank Keuhne
13 May Patricia Thies

1 June Mark Mazurkiewicz
6 June Mary Scarlett
13 June Cindy Johnson
21 June Andrea Keuhne
29 June Mark Anderson

Happy Birthday to
Our Great
Americans!



Happy Days to our Chapter Celebrities for April, May
and June

Let us know your special Dates so that we can celebrate with you!



Projects that need YOU!

Below, you will find a short description of our ongoing projects. These have been developed to support our mission to Honor and Remember our POW/MIA Heroes! Contact a member of the Board to see how you can add your hands to the working committees!

Honor Chair

You have seen the chairs in stadiums, city halls and the National Capitol? Help us to identify new settings for this Chair!

Street Signs

We have over 60 MIAs in Illinois due to the Vietnam War. This project includes contacting the hometowns and discussing how to remember these heroes by naming a street in their honor!

Table Ceremonies



The Honor Table that you see here on this page, is a very somber memorial to the 82,000+ still Missing. The Ceremony can be presented to any size group... large or small and teaches the importance of remembering!

School Presentations

Teaching the next generation about our Heroes allows them to appreciate the sacrifices made to maintain American Values! Ask your children/grandchildren for the information for their social studies teachers! We will do the rest...

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