



Roger That!

The Official Publication of Rolling Thunder®, Illinois Ch 2

Volume 24, Issue 1



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 his or her time because they believe in the

DPAA Updates

Remaining Numbers to Date

29 December, 2023

WWII
72,124

Korean War
7,484

Vietnam War
1,577

Cold War
126

Gulf Wars
6

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.



Upcoming Events

JANUARY

- 1 NEW YEARS'S DAY
- 15 MARTIN LUTHER KING'S BIRTHDAY
- 22 CHINESE NEW YEAR

FEBRUARY

- 2 Groundhog Day
- 3 Four Chaplains day
- 4 USO Birthday
- 11-17 National Salute to Veteran Patients
- 14 Valentine's Day
- 19 Coast Guard Reserve Birthday
- 19 President's Day

MARCH

- 3 Navy Reserve Birthday
- 4 Hug a GI Day
- 5 Seabee Birthday
- 13 K-9 Veterans Day
- 15 American Legion Birthday
- 17 St. Patrick's Day
- 21 Rosie the Riveter Day
- 25 Medal of Honor Day
- 29 National Vietnam War Veteran's Day

Inside This Issue

President's Message	2
V.P.'s Vision	3
THOUGHTS -NYE RESOLUTIONS	3
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD	4
NRD AND FREE HEALTHCARE	5
HOMES FOR STRUGGLING VETS	6
MISSION COMPLETE - MCGUIRE	7
TNO VETERANS ARE FORGOTTEN	8
AFTER ACTION REPORTS	10
UIC - CRIM	12
RT MEMBER REENLISTS!	13
WWII REMAINS ON GE FARM	14
MESSAGES FROM DOC	16
UNIVERSITIES AND DPAA	17
DOC'S CORNER	18
DATES TO REMEMBER	19
Volunteer Opportunities	20
Chapter 2 Organization	20

WE WILL NEVER FORGET

JANUARY, 2024

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Looking at Things Differently!!



No matter how many times I have attended the National Convention for Rolling Thunder in Washington DC (4 times), having the opportunity to meet our fellow brothers and sisters across the nation and compare our operations in getting our message out is extremely interesting. We compare how other chapters basically do the same thing but in a different way. Everyone walks away with new ideas!

This year the opening session was chaired by Joe Weaver, National Board Member regarding Cremains and Returned MIA Remains. Joe emphasized that our chapters should get more involved in the return of the remains by following the DPAA directives and seeing what remains have been finally accounted for. At that point, it would be up to the chapters to see if the remains are from service personnel in the area and contact the next of kin to help make arrangements for the burial. Contact the local funeral home, the police and municipal government. Joe's comments seemed to indicate that National was not aware of the numerous repatriations that our chapter has performed in the last few years. I just so happened to have Our Mission Complete file dated 28 October 2023 on U.S. Army Air Forces 1LT Edward McGuire and gave it to Joe at the break. I told him if you need a template on how to do a repatriation from Dignified Transfer to Interment, please consult Our Mission Complete File. As a side note, if you go to National's website www.rollingthunder1.com and look at the December newsletter, our Mission Complete File is published in it.

Along the same lines of actively watching the results of the DPAA and the return of identified POWMIA remains, the convention had a guest speaker, Mr. Charles Konsitzke, Team Lead University of Wisconsin – Madison, MIA Recovery and Identification Project. Mr. Konsitzke and the University of Wisconsin work closely with the DPAA in searching for POW/MIA remains throughout the world. But the focus for the University of Wisconsin's MIA Recovery and Identification Project is looking for the remains of Wisconsin servicemen and women. The other interesting component of this project is that it's volunteer based. Hopefully I can put together a ride in the summer to Madison and further explore this MIA Recovery and Identification Project and hope our chapter can get involved.

But no matter how you look at things, there is a lot of work to be done by our members to publicize the POW/MIA issue in the upcoming year. From repatriations to the placement of honor chairs. I am asking everyone to recommit themselves to our mission.

Remember, we will never forget!



Whenever we
Gather,
We will
Honor
and
Remember
Gratefully!



V.P.'s Vision By: Anthony Yarbrough



New Year's Resolutions.... Things to think about for 2024!

Thoughts submitted by: Mary Kirkpatrick

Thinking about how to make 2024 a year to remember? Here are some ideas for you to consider:

- ♦ *As we plan our Rolling Thunder 2024 events, picture yourself in action and get involved in the things that are planned.*
- ♦ *Plan an event that you know would honor our Mission... Bring it to the board.*
 - ♦ *Find a senior Veteran's facility that could use extra hands!*
 - ♦ *Identify a city, school or other facility that could use an Honor Chair!*
 - ♦ *Plan a gathering for our Chapter to celebrate our great energy!*
 - ♦ *Find a ride destination that will build our resolve to continue our Mission!*
- ♦ *Talk to your family about the importance of remembering our **POW/MIA** Heroes!*

*As we move into 2023... Let's build that energy that motivated those that we Honor!
A Happy and Invigorated New Year to YOU!*

Chairman of the Board Wayne "Traveler" Kirkpatrick



As the year winds down, I'm proud to see that our Chapter's enthusiasm just keeps rising.

I believe that a series of events like the ones we have had this year would erode the

enthusiasm of typical organizations similar to ours.

Reported statistics from the community of veteran, motor-cycle, and patriotic organizations indicate that, the average number of 2023 activities that they participated in was....9. Our Chapter successfully planned, led, conducted, and attended....28 events and 15 meetings! Average attendance was 57%.

Here are some of the 2023 events. Count the number of events that you missed and, for your 2024 New Years Resolution, commit to increasing your participation by 25%!!!!

17 Feb - Harvard Awards Recognition Dinner. Chapter was recognized for our 2022 escort of the Veterans Traveling Memorial

12 Feb - Group Riding and Safety Seminar

25 Feb - Staffed our booth at Woodstock HD Cabin Fever Day

22 April - Supported the Veterans Path to Hope Wild Game Night

23 April - Staffed our booth at the Walneck's Swap Meet

25 April - 2023 Planned and conducted the Dignified Transfer of Korean War MIA SGT Richard Crotty

29 April - Planned and conducted the Repatriation escort of Korean War MIA SGT Richard Crotty

21 May - Conducted our POW/MIA Remembrance Table Ceremony for the Ride for Warriors

27 May - Conducted the first - ever Candlelight Vigil at Fort Sheridan National Cemetery

28 May - Planned and conducted the 3d annual RTXXXV MidAmerica Parade

28 May - Dedicated a POW/MIA Chair of Honor to the Army First Infantry Division Museum at Cantigny

29 May - Participated in the annual Arlington Heights Memorial Day Parade

4 June - 2023 Assisted in the dedication of the CPL Ryan Cummings Memorial Post Office

1 July - Conducted a parade and a POW/MIA Flag dedication for Lake Barrington Shores Veterans

10 July - Assisted in the dedication of the SP4 Joey Dimock Memorial Post Office

13 July - Planned and conducted the escort of the Vietnam Wall to the McHenry VFW

15 July - Participated in the Illinois State Police Memorial Ride

22 July - Participated in the annual Algonquin Village Parade

26 Aug - Attended Chapter 1-IL Pig Gig fund raiser

4 Sept - Participated in the annual Zion Township Parade

13 Sept - Distributed National POW/MIA Day posters to schools and work places

17 Sept - Planned and led our 21st Annual Thunder Run charity ride

21 Sept - Conducted our POW/MIA Remembrance Table Ceremony for the Great Lakes Naval Station and the Lovelle VA Hospital

28 Oct - Planned and conducted the Dignified Transfer of WWII MIA 1LT McGuire

30 Oct - Planned and conducted the Repatriation escort of WWII MIA 1LT McGuire

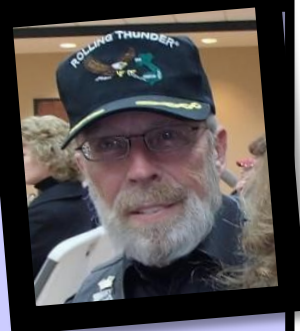
11 Nov - Conducted our 18th Annual Veterans Stand To and POW/MIA Remembrance Table Ceremony

10 Dec - Held our annual Holiday Toys for Tots Chicagoland Party

16 Dec - Participated in wreath laying for Wreaths Across America at the Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery

There are so many of our members who we should thank for making all of our events such a great success. If you weren't among those who supported our missions, please commit to doing so in the forthcoming year. Our great legacy of accomplishments won't continue to grow unless all of us embrace, and contribute to, the mission of Rolling Thunder, Inc.

Merry Christmas, Happy New Year and, thanx for a great 2023!





National Resource Directory

Connecting Wounded Warriors, Service Members, Veterans,
Their Families and Caregivers with Those Who Support Them

By Traveler

The National Resource Directory (NRD) gives service members, veterans, family members, and caregivers the ability to find and connect with organizations that can assist with specialized recovery, rehabilitation, and reintegration needs. The NRD is the product of a partnership with DOD, VA, and the Department of Labor. This program is meant to facilitate free connections between individuals and stringently vetted resources that provide support in many areas such as employment, education, veteran benefits, caregiver support, housing, DD214, awards, military records, and the Military Adaptive Sports Program.

Help a Veteran, a family member, an acquaintance, a neighbor, or yourself, by referring them to this resource at: <https://nrd.gov/>



Free VA Healthcare!

Submitted by: Traveler



Do You Know a World War II Veteran?
They're Eligible for Free VA Health Care.

The Department of Veterans Affairs recently announced that all World War II Veterans are now eligible for no-cost VA inpatient and outpatient health care.

Nursing home care is free (no copays) for nearly all World War II Veterans who are eligible for nursing home services at VA, including 1) anyone in need of such care for a service-connected disability, (2) anyone

in need of such care who also has a service-connected disability rated at 70 percent or more.

However, some Veterans may still have to pay modest copayments for medication or urgent care or long-term care in some cases, depending on their eligibility and service connection.

Under this expansion, Veterans who served in the U.S. military between Dec. 7, 1941, and Dec. 31, 1946, are now eligible for VA health care benefits but must apply because VA cannot automatically enroll them.

VA is reaching out by phone and mail to encourage WWII Veterans who are not currently enrolled in VA care to apply today. Veterans who enroll may also keep their private providers, Medicare, and most other insurance to meet their health care needs.

All WWII Veterans are encouraged to enroll in VA health care – the best, most-affordable health care in America for Veterans. Veterans who are enrolled in VA health care are proven to have better health outcomes than non-enrolled Veterans, and VA hospitals have dramatically outperformed non-VA hospitals in overall quality ratings and patient satisfaction ratings.



Homes for Struggling Vets in 2023!

Submitted By: Wayne 'Traveler' Kirkpatrick



A homeless veteran reads on donated bedding beneath an overpass in Los Angeles, Calif., on June 5, 2019. (Mario Tama/Getty Images)

Veterans Affairs officials met their 2023 goal of permanently housing 38,000 veterans facing financial problems and uncertain shelter options.

The VA has helped house more than 78,000 homeless veterans since the start of 2022, part of a focused outreach campaign designed to target veterans in most need of help.

In a statement, VA Secretary Denis McDonough said the progress is encouraging but also underscores the challenges facing too many veterans in America today.

"While we met our goals for 2023, we're not stopping here," he said. "We're going to keep pushing — through the end of this calendar year and beyond — until every veteran has a safe, stable place to call home in this country they fought to defend."

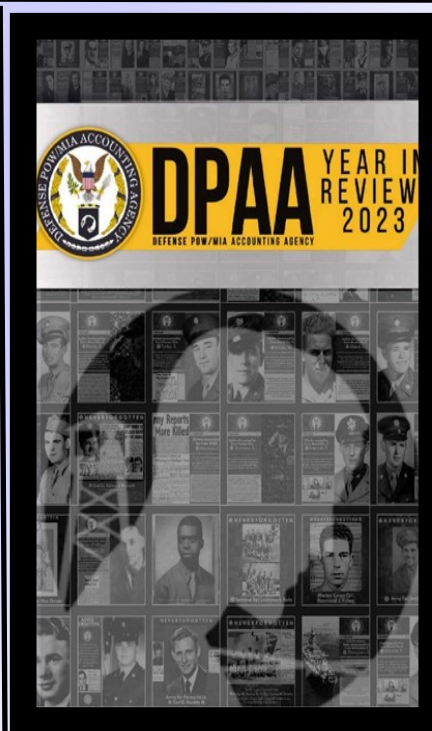
According to the latest estimates from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, about 33,000 veterans across the country are without reliable housing options on any given night.

VA officials also said that since the start of 2022, department programs have helped nearly 192,000 veterans and family members avoid losing their homes because of financial reasons. They have also seen about 93% of the individuals placed in permanent housing remain in solid financial standing one year later.



While The number of homeless vets dropped sharply over the last two years, about 33,000 veterans were still without stable housing in the latest federal survey.

Finding affordable housing for veterans remains a challenge. Veterans Affairs officials will continue to work in the future to find additional ways to partner with landlords and rental companies to expand those options.



Annually DPAA Publishes their Year In Review. This colorful, informative publication contains an incredible amount of information about recovery procedures, identification of remains, site excavation, repatriations, etc. It portrays the entire spectrum of DPAA operations including such participation as that of the University of Illinois at Chicago's Center

for the Recovery and Identification of the Missing.

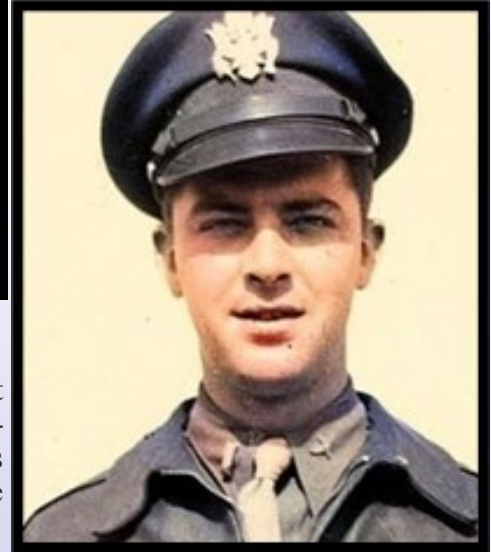
This interesting document can be viewed at:
<https://www.dpaa.mil/Portals/85/Documents/Newsletters/DPAA%20Year%20in%20Review%202023.pdf>



U.S. Army Air Forces 1LT Edward McGuire

“MISSION COMPLETE”

28 OCTOBER 2023



MISSING: First Lt. Edward T. McGuire died Aug. 1, 1943 at 22 years old when his B-24 Liberator bomber went down near Ploiesti, Romania, during Operation Tidal Wave in World War II. His death was presumed when he did not make it back to the Allied base following the operation.

1LT McGuire was one of 177 planes that took part in Operation Tidal Wave to bomb the oil refineries in Romania that fueled Germany's war machine. While McGuire was able to save his crew, his B-24 Liberator was shot down by anti-aircraft fire before he could bail out. [1LT McGuire](#) was buried as an unknown in Belgium for 80 years.

McGuire, was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Purple Heart.

RECOVERY: In 2017, DPAA began exhuming unknowns believed to be associated with unaccounted-for airmen from Operation TIDAL WAVE losses. On June 30, 2023, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced that U.S. Army Air Forces 1st Lt. Edward T. McGuire, killed during World War II, was finally accounted for.

DIGNIFIED TRANSFER 20 October 2023

Rolling Thunder, Chapters 1 and 2-Illinois escorted 1LT McGuire 8 miles in chilly temperatures to the Blake-Lamb Funeral Home in Evergreen Park, IL, and were honored to be able to perform as escorts. The Chicago Police Department provided the escort supported by the Fire and Police departments of Evergreen Park, Oak Lawn and Alsip, IL



INTERMENT 28 October 2023:

1LT Edward McGuire finally came home to rest on 28 October 2023 next to his family members at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery, Alsip, IL.



POW/MIA FLAG: A National POW/MIA Flag, flown during the Dignified Transfer, and subsequent escort, was presented to the next of kin and family members by Al Miller and Ted Makarewicz the presidents of Chapters 1 and 2 on behalf of the members of Rolling Thunder, Illinois.. The POW/MIA Flag symbolizes a “test of our metal” in supporting the on-going efforts to ensure the remaining 82,000 plus servicemen, servicewomen, and civilians, unaccounted for, are returned to our Country and to their loved ones.

No Veteran Is Forgotten!

December 5, 2023

By: Kiran Dhillon, Communications Manager, Veterans Affairs

Submitted by: By: Traveler



and maintenance. Whether interred in a national cemetery or elsewhere, every Veteran is entitled to:

Government headstone, marker, or medallion

Military honors

Presidential Memorial Certificate

Burial flag

Veterans Legacy Memorial

If a Veteran does not have any next of kin to claim their remains and arrange for their interment after their death, VA can help coordinate a final resting place that is a lasting tribute to their service.

“We are the voice of these Veterans who don’t have a voice or an advocate,” said Nathan Sanfilippo of VA’s Veterans Experience Office (VEO), who co-lead the Unclaimed Veterans Remains (UVR) Team

Service for 18 unclaimed Veterans at the National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona, August 31, 2022.



Improving the Unclaimed Veterans Remains Program

VA cares for those who served in our nation’s military and their families, caregivers and survivors. Every eligible Veteran deserves a dignified burial and memorialization to commemorate their service.



Volunteers carry the casket during the service of an unclaimed Veteran at the Texas State Veterans Cemetery at Abilene, July 13, 2022.

In December 2021, VA’s Office of Inspector General (OIG) released a report titled, “Improvements Needed to Ensure Final Disposition of Unclaimed Veterans’ Remains,” with 11 recommendations. To address the OIG report’s findings, VA established a UVR Team with stakeholders from across VA. The team’s goal was to improve VA’s management and oversight of UVR benefits and services. Ten of the 11 OIG recommendations have been resolved, with the final recommendation nearing resolution.

A single UVR Program office

VA’s Pension and Fiduciary Service was designated as the UVR program office responsible for coordinating across VA offices to ensure every Veteran receives a dignified burial, including those whose remains are unclaimed.

(Continued on page 11)

VA offers burial benefits to Veterans and their family members, including a grave in a national, state or tribal cemetery, grave liner or vault, and perpetual care



Veterans not Forgotten Continued

By the numbers

VA collaborated with the National Funeral Directors Association, National Association of Medical Examiners, and Cremation Association of North America on a survey to estimate the number of unclaimed Veterans awaiting burial, including those held at locations other than funeral homes. In 2018, VA estimated there were between 11,500 and 52,600 UVR at funeral homes nationwide, and the survey results now estimate there are approximately 20,298 UVR awaiting burial. In fiscal year 2023, VA interred more than 2,300 UVR in VA national cemeteries and VA grant-funded state and tribal Veterans cemeteries.

Service for eight unclaimed Veterans at the Washington Crossing National Cemetery, June 30, 2022.

Systematically identifying UVR

During OIG's assessment, the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) sent OIG a list of 9,283 individuals whose remains were unclaimed. NamUs, overseen by the Department of Justice, is a national database of missing, unidentified and unclaimed persons. VA received this list in November 2023 and identified 480 UVR in the NamUs data. VA contacted known custodians of eligible UVR to offer interment in a national cemetery or, if remains had been otherwise interred, to update VA records accordingly. As a result of this effort, VA continues to work with partners to identify more UVR and provide them with dignified burials.

VA also works with local coroner and medical examiners' offices on better processes for identifying indigent decedents to determine whether they are Veterans and eligible for UVR benefits and services. VA also successfully changed federal regulations to simplify reimbursements for costs incurred for caskets or urns for unclaimed Veterans.

Helping UVR custodians with burial benefits

Sometimes it may be difficult for UVR custodians to know where to start with arranging for burial, so VA established several resources to help.

VA's UVR webpage for benefits and memorials provide custodians and others with helpful information, resources, and links to apply for burial benefits. VA conducts outreach and coordinates across VA teams to ensure dignified UVR burials. VA Regional Benefits Offices in each state have an Indigent Veterans and Unclaimed Remains Coordinator; VA's Office of Pa-

tient Care has a Survivors Assistance and Memorial Support (SAMS) program to help with information on available UVR benefits and to ensure unclaimed Veterans using VA health care receive dignified burials at a national or VA grant-funded cemetery.



Burial flag presented at an interment ceremony at the Mountain Home National Cemetery, Tennessee, October 18, 2023

Ensuring UVR receive burial benefits

National and VA grant-funded cemeteries routinely hold "unaccompanied" ceremonies for unclaimed Veterans and Veterans whose family are unable to attend an interment service. While there may not be next of kin at these ceremonies, they are usually well attended by the local military and civilian community. Many times, local community leaders and members also attend to respect those who have served.

"The great thing is these Veterans and their service are not forgotten," said Thomas Spahr from VA's National Cemetery Administration.

Improving UVR oversight with modernized systems and efficient processes

VA established a system to process and track all requests for UVR burial and it coordinates across VA for burial arrangements. VA also modernized its system to more efficiently track UVR interment requests and burials, and facilitate efficient burial by reducing duplicate requests. VA teams are now coordinating more efficiently to ensure payments of UVR benefits are dispersed quickly and accurately.

Collaboratively ensuring care for all UVR

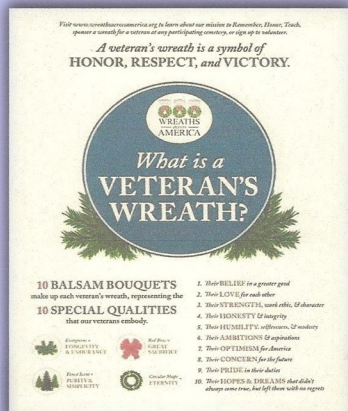
VA's highest honor is to care for those who have served, and we will ensure every Veteran receives the final dignity they have earned. If you are a UVR custodian—or helping someone who is—contact VA at 1-800-MyVA411 (1-800-698-2311) or the National Cemetery Scheduling Office at 1-800-535-1117 to determine eligibility for burial in a VA national cemetery.

The weather was rainy,
but
perfect for a day that was
to mark
remembrance of those
who served our country
with great valor!

Thank you for your
Service!

After Action Report: Wreaths Across America!

What an Honor! - Pictures are worth 1000 words!





After Action Report: Banquet and Toys for Tots!

Submitted By Traveler



SUCH
GOOD
PEOPLE!



Fun times for a
good cause!
Toys for Tots!
It doesn't get any
better than being
together and giving
to others!



Awards:

Dirtiest Bike: Chuck Carlson
 Always Late: Patricia Theis
 Member of the Year: Jim Lasik
 Loudest Pipes: Greg Smith
 Most Meetings/Events: Bob Pulman
 Most Helpful: Tony Yarborough
 Most Raffle Sold: Paul Hebein
 Cleanest Bike: Don DeLordo
 Volunteer of the Year: Mary Kirkpatrick



University of Illinois at Chicago's Center for the Recovery and Identification of the Missing (UIC-CRIM)

Submitted by: Traveler

From February to March 2023, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, (DPAA) joined forces with the University of Illinois at Chicago at Chicago's Center for the Recovery and Identification of the Missing (UIC-CRIM) in a collaborative effort to investigate potential aircraft crash sites dating back to WWII.



Photographer Ivan Cultura from the National Museum of the Philippines captured these images chronicling the UIC

CRIM Investigation team's journey. The photos document William Feltz and Dr. David Reid embarking on a trail leading to a possible World War II-era aircraft crash site.

Continuing their mission, on March 3, the team encountered the challenge of river crossings en route to another potential crash site.

The series also captures a moment of respite on

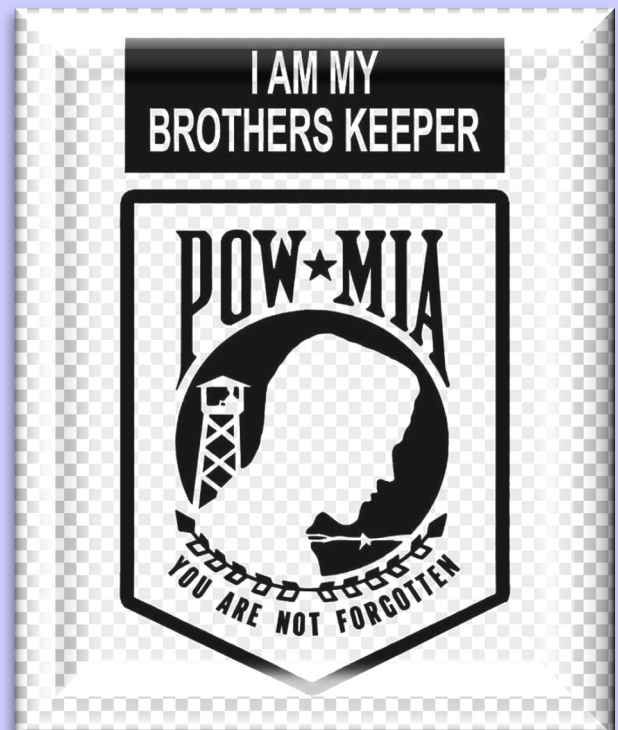


March 7, as a team member rests near the campsite kitchen in proximity to another potential crash site.



Undeterred, the investigation persevered on March 8, with the UIC CRIM team navigating through agricultural land and crossing another river path in their relentless pursuit of additional crash sites.

Stay tuned for any results of their great contribution to accounting for all of our MIAs





RT IL-2 Chapter Member Reenlists

Submitted by: Traveler

We remain proud to congratulate our active – duty member, Talon Bender, on his recent promotion to Sergeant and his six-year reenlistment. Talon is the son of our Veteran member, Nick Bender.

SGT Bender reenlisted off the coast of Hawaii on 5 October 23 wearing his Rolling Thunder t shirt. Following his reenlistment, Talon made a celebratory dive as a Specialist 4th Class, was promoted while submerged and surfaced as a Sergeant E5.

He is an Army Combat Diver with the 7th Dive Detachment Deep Sea Divers and joined our Chapter earlier this year. He has been involved in missions supporting DPAA's recovery operations in Vietnam and the Philippines.



Talon is as proud to be a member of Rolling Thunder, IL-2 as we are to have him as a member. Many of our members sent their congratulations to Talon on both his reenlistment and his promotion to sergeant.



©Bestmessage.org



Remains of US WWII Airmen sought at German farm

From: November Edition of Stars and Stripes
Submitted by: Traveler



Army Cpl. Anthony Boulanger, left, and Army Spc. Alexis Jove, both with the 2nd Cavalry Regiment, shovel soil into buckets at an excavation site in Wistedt, Germany, Oct. 30, 2023. The soil will later be examined for airplane debris and potential human remains. (Phillip Walter Wellman/Stars and Stripes)



Air Force Staff Sgt. Adriel Pineda, with the 86th Medical Squadron, left, and Army Sgt. Kyle Spinner, with the 589th Brigade Support Battalion, 41st Field Artillery Brigade, sift through clay at an excavation site in Wistedt, Germany, Oct. 30, 2023. (Phillip Walter Wellman/Stars and Stripes)

In April 1944, about 200 aircraft from the U.S. 8th Air Force came under fire after bombing factories where fighter jets and synthetic oil deemed critical to Germany's war effort were produced, according to the Defense Department.

Dozens of B-24H Liberator bombers were said to have been shot down, including one carrying four officers and six enlisted airmen that was last seen over Salzwedel, in what is today the state of Saxony-Anhalt.

U.S. forces later obtained German records that mentioned an air crash the same day outside the nearby village of Wistedt and suspected that it was the 10-man crew's plane.

But initial attempts to locate the crash site were futile. As the area fell into the hands of Soviet-controlled East Germany after the war, American personnel for decades were unable to conduct a comprehensive search.

That changed in 2015, when the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency opened a detachment in Germany to recover the remains of Americans who went missing in Europe during World War II.

Experts conducted research and investigations to pinpoint the Wistedt crash site, which eventually led to the discovery of surface debris on a farm just outside the village. An official recovery mission began in August.

Standing at the edge of the excavation pit, which is now over 10 feet deep, Brown said the black color of some of the soil was a result of it being burned by a plane crash.

The steep angle of the aircraft's impact left it buried deep below the earth, and excavation required heavy machinery. During his eight years with the agency, this is one of the largest excavations on which Brown has worked.

"We're finding things every hour," said Brown, an Army veteran.

(Continued on page 17)

Stripes)

WISTEDT, Germany — U.S. service members have spent the past three months sifting through soil at a remote farm in northern Germany on a quest to solve an 80-year-old mystery.

They're trying to determine where a 10-man U.S. bomber crew crashed during World War II, so the airmen's remains can be repatriated.

Most of the soldiers and airmen spend their days dumping buckets of thick clay over quarter-inch screens and washing it down with overhead water hoses.

Any material besides rocks remaining in the screen then is collected and examined.

"It gets monotonous, but it's also really gratifying work because we're finding all of these things and it feels like we're making an impact towards the recovery mission," said Tech. Sgt. Jonathan Gonzalez of the 786th Civil Engineer Squadron at Ramstein Air Base, about 350 miles southwest of the site.

With just weeks left in the mission and temperatures inching closer to freezing, the team is racing to unearth as much material as possible.

"We've been fighting through the weather and pushing our capabilities with heavy rains and a lot of unseasonably cold days," said David Brown, a forensic archaeologist leading the excavation for the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency. "But I think we're in good shape."



Remains on GE Farm, continued

Brown and Air Force veteran Rex

Hodges are the only two civilians working at the site. Hodges identifies aircraft parts and other items worn by the crew. A flak jacket, glove and helmet fragments and part of a first-aid box with English writing on it all indicate that an American aircraft went down here, he said.

Pieces of oxidized aluminum, chewed-up rubber and a portion of thick glass that once made up a plane's windshield also were unearthed on a recent day, Hodges said.

Crash debris can provide additional evidence and help excavators pinpoint potential human remains. Material resembling human bones already has been extracted and boxed. Some of what Brown catalogs at his field lab has been sent to Offutt Air Force Base, Neb., for DNA testing. The rest will be sent to the U.S. once the mission concludes later this month. While the evidence looks encouraging, Brown said it's too early to come to conclusions. The workers onsite did not want to name the crew members whose remains they are searching for out of concern that the findings may end up disappointing the families involved.



Army Spc. Taven Kimmel, of the 2nd Cavalry Regiment, loads buckets of extracted soil onto a trailer in Wistedt, Germany, Oct. 30, 2023. The buckets will be moved to a sorting area on the site for examination. (Phillip Walter Wellman/Stars and Stripes)

It likely will be several more months before DNA samples determine whether the Americans can be accounted for in Wistedt.

"You never know until way down the line, but hopefully in a year or so, we'll find out that we were able to bring some people home," said Army Capt. Jonathan Hootnick, who is in charge of the current team at the site. "It's a huge honor for all of us to be part of this."



Happy New Year given in
Selfless Sacrifice to attain...
Peace on Earth!

Some of the Emergencies your VAC can help you with...

In all the situations below, you can always contact the County Veterans Assistance Commission directly for further assistance. If you are struggling with rent or mortgage payments with the elimination of pandemic forbearance programs, **Call the VAC immediately!**

- ♦ Rent or Mortgage payments or Emergency Housing
- ♦ Utility payments
- ♦ Food - Northern Illinois Food Bank - or
- ♦ Midwest Veterans Closet
- ♦ Medical Care - Contact VAC when civilian benefits lost - Do not go to VA if not registered with them. Contact the VAC to get you registered.
- ♦ Most VA visits are currently by Video Conference
- ♦ Family problems - In Lake County, contact 211 for referral to proper resource.

Happy Birthday to our
Newest Branch



The U. S.
Space Force
Dec 20, 2019



Report from Doc VAVS Meeting (Veteran Affairs and Volunteer Services) 15 November, 2023

Mark 'Doc' Mazerkiewicz regularly attends the Veteran Affairs and Volunteer Services Meeting led by Dr. Robert Buckley and Ken List. They present the most current information in the Hospital's Veteran Medical Updates and Volunteer Topics

Mark reported the following information to our chapter at the November Meeting.

- ♦ James Lovell HCS will be using a new Health Records System beginning 9 March 2024.
- ♦ My Healthy Vet is also being updated Nationally in December, 2023. This will give Veterans more access to their own Doctors and their records!
- ♦ The Fisher House will break ground in 2024 and open at the end of 2025 or early 2026.
- ♦ Anyone who is 50-55 years old and smoked during their lifetime (High Risk Smokers) should check with their doctor and schedule a CT scan to check for lung cancer.
- ♦ Volunteers are needed to spend time with patients on campus. Federal requirements include a regime of COVID shots. Masks may be required depending on where you will be volunteering.
- ♦ Patient activity is still a slow start. No evening activities at all at this time. Maybe in 2024!
- ♦ Please, do not donate used clothing! NEW packaged underwear (Boxers), sweat pants and sweat shirts.

Another Word from Doc SHINGLES - HERPES FOSTER

Shingles is a viral infection that is a major concern for most of us! It is a direct relative to chicken pox, which many of us had as children.. Read more to know what you can do!

Shingles results in a painful, itchy rash of blisters. The rash can be found wrapping around either side of the torso, the side of the neck, around one eye or on the face.

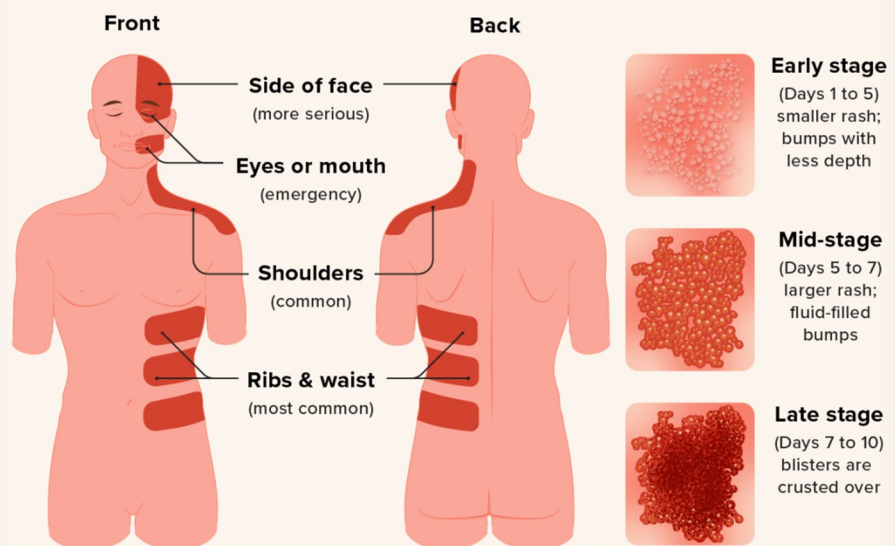
Thought the shingles infection is not life-threatening or contagious, it is often times very painful! While us older fold are more prone to the virus, young adults are not immune.

An episode of shingles usually heals on its own within a few weeks, but antiviral drugs can reduce the pain and itching, speed healing and reduce the risk of complication. Those who had chicken pox can end up with shingles years later, usually after the age of 50. this is due to the fact that the infection can live dormant and activates due to mounting age, lowered immunity a treatment like radiation, or medication that suppresses immunity.

There is a 2-dose series of shots with the second shot given 2-6 months after the first. It is important to get both shots. Contact your doctor!

Shingles Lesions

Common locations and stages



healthline

DPAA is partnering with Universities on Recovery Missions!

Submitted by Mary Kirkpatrick

Many Universities are partnering with the DPAA, Department of POW/MIA Accounting Agency, to continue the process of recovery. It is a great way to build the understanding needed to motivate the next generation to continue the search!

The DPAA gathers the data needed to identify possible places where remains of our service men and woman may be found. They pass this information on to the Universities. Then, the Archaeology Departments of Universities use these search opportunities to teach their students the basics of an archaeological dig. The benefit of the cooperation between these two organizations is one for which many POW/MIA families are grateful. Heroes are being returned to their families!

From Pearl Harbor to today, Wisconsin has over 1500 missing service personal. In 2015, the University of Wisconsin—Madison Missing in Action Recovery and Identification Project was the first academic team the

U.S. Department of defense asked to help with uncovering and Identifying remains. They've found an airman from New Jersey, an airman from Alabama and a soldier from Canada who was working in the U.S. Army. They're waiting

on identification of remains that they found in Belgium during the summer of 2023. Their ultimate goal is to work only on Wisconsin cases, but if the Defense Department wants them to recovering someone from another state, then they will go out there and do that ... because that is what is needed! See their facebook page to read more about the activities of the UIW - Recovery Identification Program.



The UW-Madison MIA RIP team works to recover the remains of an American service member in Belgium during the summer of 2023. The team displayed American flags for the July 4 holiday. Photo courtesy of Ryan Wubben

Closer to home, is the Center for Recovery and Identification of the missing at the University of Illinois, Chicago. Excavations only occur with explicit approval and support from DPAA. Excavations typically take place after at least one investigation has taken place at a site. Once in the field, the CRIM teams work in conjunction with the local community, government officials, local archaeologists, and other partners. Excavations are done with the intent of finding human remains and material evidence that supports correlation of a site to a specific incident and evidence that supports identification of those remains!

To read more about them go to : [CRIM | University of Illinois Chicago \(uic.edu\)](https://uic.edu/crim)



Other universities are doing the same. University of Nebraska, Omaha, Maxwell Air University, University of Illinois, Chicago, Texas A&M, and many others are looking for opportunities to bring back our heroes! This is such a great way to bring our next generation into the process of 'Remembering and Honoring! Here's to the continuation of this great partnership!



Doc's Corner...

By: Mark Mazurkiewicz

Holiday Challenges. Not all things are Merry and Bright...

*From the VA News, December 18, 2019
Tips for Managing Stress Around the Holidays*



There are many joyous things about the holiday season, but this time of year can also bring on stress, depression, and other challenges. For Veterans or their family members, the unique experiences of the military and transitioning back to civilian life can make enjoying the season difficult.

Here are a few things to keep an eye out for as the holiday season approaches — as well as healthy tips for managing these challenges.

Withdrawing From Friends and Family?

The holidays are typically times spent with family members and friends. But Veterans transitioning back to civilian life — or even those who returned home years ago — might find themselves avoiding the people and activities they would usually enjoy.

"I'm a pretty extraverted, amicable person, but I didn't want anything to do with anybody. I didn't want to talk with anybody," says Bryan, a U.S. Marine Corps Veteran. Sometimes a vicious cycle can develop: The more time you spend alone, the less you feel like people will understand you. And the less you feel like people understand you, the more time you want to spend alone.

"You can't isolate yourself," says Bryan. "You have to surround yourself with good people that want to see you do better. Take advantage of the programs they have at the VA or the nonprofit organizations that are there to help Veterans out."

Feelings of guilt can sometimes lead people to withdraw, become irritable, or feel like life has lost meaning. These behaviors can strain personal relationships, especially during the holidays, when most people spend a lot of time with family members and friends. But if you're having trouble forgiving yourself — for something you did or *did not* do — talking with your family members and friends is actually a positive first step.

If you notice yourself withdrawing from loved ones, here are a few ways to begin breaking a pattern of isolation. If these actions feel overwhelming, start with small steps: Identify the thoughts and feelings that make you want to be alone.

- Reach out to your family members or friends, even if it's the last thing you feel like doing. Research shows that spending time talking with family members and friends improves your mood and your health.
- Connect with Veterans' groups or participate in clubs or hobbies focused on something you like.

"Isolation and withdrawal [are] not going to get you the end result that you need," says Marylyn, a U.S. Army Veteran. "You want to get back to enjoying your life, the things you like to do, and be able to explore new things. So you're going to eventually have to talk to someone and connect with someone."

Feeling on Edge in Large Crowds?

Whether you're walking through a crowded shopping mall or attending a large party with loud noises, you may find yourself in situations that make you uncomfortable during the holidays. Your military training taught you the importance of being observant and alert when you need to be — and being in that state of high alert in civilian life may be stressful.

"When you're in large crowds or there's a lot of chaos, you have to keep an eye on everything because you don't know where a potential threat is," says Casey, a U.S. Army medic. "After you see things like a life or death matter, your No. 1 goal is 'I'm always going to protect myself.'"

This experience of feeling on edge is also called hypervigilance, a symptom experienced by some Veterans who have returned from war or experienced traumatic events during their time in the military. Hypervigilance is a state of being on very high alert — constantly "on guard" — to possible risks or threats.

"It takes a long time to shed that alertness," says Casey. "Once it's there and you depend on it to stay alive, it's really hard to lose it once you've been back." Talking to your family and friends can be a first step. Turn to them whenever you are ready.

On edge?

Here are a few tips to keep in mind if you find yourself feeling on edge in large crowds:

- If you're with friends or family, tell them what you're feeling so they can try to help you work through it.
- Try grounding yourself by focusing on details of your surroundings or neutral physical sensations, such as the feeling of your feet on the floor.
- Practice relaxation exercises, such as taking slow, deep breaths.
- Calmly remove yourself from the situation.

"Being able to talk helps me manage, because it's not built up," says Ertell, a U.S. Marine Corps Veteran who served in Vietnam. "It helps me to manage my hypervigilance."



Military Celebrations for 4th Quarter

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

January

- 1 New Year's Day!
- 15 Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday
(Third Monday in January)
- 20 Presidential Inauguration Day
- 22 Chinese New Year

February

February is Black History Month

- 2 Groundhog Day
- 3 Four Chaplains day
- 4 USO Birthday
- 11-17 National Salute to Veteran Patients
- 14 Valentine's Day
- 19 Coast Guard Reserve Birthday
- 19 President's Day



March

March is Women's History Month

- 1 Mardi Gras
- 3 Navy Reserve Birthday
- 4 Hug a GI Day



March Continued...

- 5 Seabee Birthday
- 10 Daylight Savings... Spring Ahead!
- 13 K-9 Veterans Day
- 15 American Legion Birthday
- 17 St. Patrick's Day
- 21 Rosie the Riveter Day
- 25 Medal of Honor Day
- 29 National Vietnam War Veteran's Day



So many days

To honor our

American

History and our

Heroes!

Hearts filled with the desire to give!



Happy Birthday to
Our Great
Americans!

- 1 January Wayne Kirkpatrick
- 1 January Juergen Lutz
- 2 March Steve Johnson
- 6 March Reginald Rush

- 7 March Ron Carpenter
- 9 March Rich Lanute
- 10 March Scott Seal
- 24 March Cindy DeLordo!



Happy Days to our Chapter Celebrities for January,
February and March

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...

ELECTED OFFICERS & DIRECTORS		COMMITTEE LEADERS		ROGER THAT	
President	Ted Makarewicz Hogski@hotmail.com	Activities	Bill Fulton whf5069@aol.com	Executive Editor	Ted Makarewicz Hogski@hotmail.com
Vice President	Tony Yarbrough Anthony.Yarbrough@flex.com	Charity	OPEN	Editor-in-Chief	Mary Kirkpatrick Mawalters57@gmail.com
Treasurer	Paul Hebein Hebein 36388@comcast.com	Member-ship	Cindy DeLordo Cindy324@att.net	Publisher	Mary Kirkpatrick Mawalters57@gmail.com
Secretary	Mary Jo Scarlette MScarlette@sbcglobal.net	Purchasing	OPEN	ASSOCIATE EDITORS	
Chairman of the Board	Wayne Kirkpatrick wkirkpa177@aol.com	Safety	Paul Hebein hebein36388@comcast.net	Executive & Board	Wayne Kirkpatrick wkirkpa177@aol.com
Past President	Don DeLordo Don_De@att.net	Website	Kim Niccoli Lovinlife4@gmail.com	Safety & Road Captains	Don DeLordo Don_De@att.net
Director	Mark Mazurkewicz MSM27636365@gmail.com	Quarter master	Mark Mazurkewicz MSM27636365@gmail.com	Membership	Cindy DeLordo Cindy324@att.net
Director	Cindy DeLordo Cindy324@att.net	SGT at Arms	Scott Seal Scooter02@charter.net	Charity and Education	Mary Kirkpatrick Mawalters57@gmail.com
Director	Bill Fulton, whf5069@aol.com	Education Chair	Mary Kirkpatrick Mawalters57@gmail.com	Events & Calendar	Bill Fulton whf5069@aol.com
Director	Mary Kirkpatrick Mawalters57@gmail.com	Chaplain	Mary Kirkpatrick Mawalters57@gmail.com	Military Community	Wayne Kirkpatrick wkirkpa177@aol.com

© Copyright 2017 ROLLING THUNDER[®] INC. ILLINOIS, CH 2

Roger That! is the official publication of the ROLLING THUNDER[®] INC, ILLINOIS, CH 2 and is published quarterly.

The content and opinions expressed in articles are those of the authors and not necessarily those of ROLLING THUNDER[®] INC ILLINOIS, CH 2

For more information about Rolling Thunder[®] Illinois, Chapter 2 visit our website at
www.RollingThunderIL2.org