



Roger That!

The Official Publication of Rolling Thunder®, Illinois Ch 2

Volume 24, Issue 3



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 her time because they believe in the POW/MIA Issue.

Upcoming Events

JULY

- 4 Independence Day
- 27 National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day
- 28 National Buffalo Soldiers Day
- 29 Army Chaplain Corps Anniversary

AUGUST

- Antiterrorism Awareness Month
- 4 Coast Guard Day
- 7 Purple Heart Day
- 10 U.S. Department of Defense Birthday
- 11 Agent Orange Awareness Day
- 14 Navajo Code Talkers Day
- 16 National Airborne Day
- 29 Marine Corps Birthday

SEPTEMBER

- National Suicide Prevention Month
- 2 V-J Day, Victory over Japan
- 3 Labor Day
- 15-17 Rosh Hashanah (Begins at Sunset on the 15th)
- 15 National POW/MIA Recognition Day
- 18 Air Force Birthday (USAF)
- 18 Office of the Sec. of Defense Birthday
- 18 Air National Guard Birthday
- 29 VFW Day
- 30 National Gold Star Mother's Day

Inside This Issue

President's Message	2
V.P.'s VISION	3
FISCHER HOUSE—DETAILS	3 AND 5
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD	4
UNTIL THEY ALL COME HOME	7
HELLO GIRL, WWI	8
SCHERIFF'S CHAIR DEDICATION	9
NCA COMMEMORATIVES	10
FUNERAL TRADITIONS	10
DURNBACH AND OUR CHAPTER	11
REPATRIATION MYERS	12
REPATRIATION PORTER	14
REPATRIATION SELOOVER	16
HISTORY OF TAPS	18
S. KOREA SEARCH FOR REMAINS	19
MILITARY LABS	20
WHAT IS ROLLING THUNDER?	22
VA FUNERAL BENEFITS	25
DOCS CORNER	26
DATES TO REMEMBER	27
Volunteer Opportunities	28
Chapter 2 Organization	28

DPAA Updates

Remaining Numbers to Date

5 July 2024

WWII
72,053

Korean War
7,466

Vietnam War
1,575

Cold War
126

Gulf Wars
5

El Dorado Canyon
1

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

When You're Good!



The saying goes, "You cannot teach an old dog new tricks" but I believe that is not the case here. Rolling Thunder IL Ch 2's primary mission has been the repatriation of POW/MIA's and we have recently been quite successful at it. Our chapter has been in great demand to the point where we cannot fulfill all the requests for our participation. But Chapter 1 has stepped up and coordinated the recent repatriation of U.S. Army Air Force 2nd Lt. Robert L.E. Porter and will coordinate the upcoming repatriation in October of Private 1st Class Harry Jerele.

My point here is repatriations were exclusively conducted by Chapter 2 and Rolling Thunder Charities was exclusively conducted by Chapter 1. Dave Skinner of Chapter 1 was mentored by our Board Chairman Wayne Kirkpatrick as to the intricacies and procedures of properly coordinating a Dignified Transfer of Remains and Funeral Procession and Burial. I am hoping that Chapter 2 can help pick up the slack in administering to our veterans who need financial assistance in our area. I have contacted Al Miller, president of Chapter 1 who has overseen Veterans Assistance for quite some time and has been amazingly successful in helping our veterans. Hopefully Reggie Rush who is our chair of Rolling Thunder Charities can likewise have that mentoring relationship with Al in getting to know the ropes in this area. I believe the one fear we had was the possibility of been taken or scammed. That issue does not come into play in that the veteran has to first apply to the local county Veterans Assistance Commission. We would only consider an application after the veteran has received a response from their local county Veterans Assistance Commission.

Upon receiving a Veterans Assistance Commission letter, the limit of financial assistance would be up to \$1,000. Payments would be paid to the creditor/vendor directly on behalf of the veteran. Payments would never be paid to the veteran and one request per veteran per year. Some of the eligible expenses would be rental assistance, mortgage assistance, emergency vehicle repair, utility expenses, phone expenses and dependent daycare so the veteran can work. Some ineligible expenses would be past due bills, loans, housing payments related to foreclosure, legal expenses, medical expenses, rentals other than housing, divorce or separation, bankruptcy, credit card payments, child support and alimony. The above are all guidelines that are taken into consideration. We have to remember that our chapter has limited resources and will be encouraged to seek private funding from individuals and corporate sponsorship to donate to Rolling Thunder Charities who is a 501 © 3 Non-Profit Organization. Our Charity Committee was recently formed, and I am looking for great things with the guidance of Chapter 1 in this most needed area of veteran assistance.

Who said you cannot teach an old dog new tricks!



Whenever we
Gather,
We will
Honor
and
Remember
Gratefully!



V.P.'s Vision

By: Anthony Yarbrough



In the last edition, I ended with 'Have a safe summer'. It seems that you are all doing that and also getting our message out to our communities! We have been able to complete the chair dedication for Hines Lumber, some of our chapter were able to honor our American Heroes buried at the Durnbach Cemetery in Germany, and for the 4th of July, our chapter was a part of the parade in Rolling Meadows. The word is getting out there! **Never Forget!** Here are pictures from our 4th of July event..



Please keep in mind our upcoming Thunder Run! Get out and sell the tickets and be ready to jump in when we get our planning together! Let's make this another great year for our Chapter and for our Mission.

Remember and Honor!

The 100th Fisher House will be built at Lovell FHCC!

Submitted by: Traveler



Fisher House.

Lovell FHCC is getting the 100th Fisher House! Groundbreaking started on April 8. We are so excited to be able to offer Fisher House stays to our patients and their families.

Our house will be unique in that it is the first to be built in partnership between the VA and the DoD. The North Chicago Fisher House will allow up to 16 Veteran and military patients and families to stay free of charge, serving families traveling to the health care center for medical care. It will offer more than 5,800 nights of lodging each year, potentially saving patients and families more than \$1.1 million annually.

A Fisher House creates an instant community for its residents united by their common mission of supporting a sick or injured loved one, but it also provides individuals with a secure and private refuge after a long day at the hospital to rest and recharge. You can learn more about Fisher house on it's website... Fisherhouse.org, or read the article on page 5!



Chairman of the Board Wayne "Traveler" Kirkpatrick



We are right in the middle of another busy year that challenges us all in supporting our missions.

The more missions that we successfully accomplish, the more that the public becomes aware of the Rolling Thunder, Inc, POW/MIA mission. This, coupled with our knowledge of Flag protocol, our uniformity in dress, our appearance, and our mounted display of the large service flags, POW/MIA flags and the American Flag, creates a demand for IL Chapter 2 to participate in so many events that we must be very selective.

As our popularity grows, we must scrutinize every request for POW/MIA Chairs of Honor, parades, escorts, Table ceremonies, award presentations, etc. to assure that the missions that we accept are within our mission scope. Clearly, POW/MIA repatriations remain at the top of that list.

With so many opportunities and fewer Chapter members supporting our missions, we have become very selective and declined such events as escorting a memorial wall this year, doing a ride-by for a WWII Veteran's birthday party, riding in two town parades, etc.

We are fortunate to have IL Chapter 1 step up to lead some Repatriations and take some of the pressure and workload off the Chapter's select few who have supported our last three Repatriations and just about every other mission.

As we look over our shoulder at what our Chapter accomplished in the just last few weeks we can see missions that would test the endurance of any organization:

- ◇ **12 April 24** – [Dedication of a POW/MIA Chair of Honor](#) to the Lake County Sheriff's Office
- ◇ **17 May 24** - Dedication of a POW/MIA Chair of Honor to Hines Supply the family who donated the Land for Hines VA Hospital.
- ◇ **23 May 24** – Dignified Transfer and escort of Korean War MIA PFC Myers
- ◇ **25 May 24** – Candlelight Vigil at Fort Sheridan National Cemetery
- ◇ **26 May 24** - 4th Annual RT XXXVI MidAmerica Parade thru Chicagoland

◇ **26 May 24** – POW MIA Remembrance Table Ceremony at 1st Infantry Division Museum

◇ **26 May 24** – Presentation of a replacement Purple Heart to a disabled Vietnam Veteran

◇ **29 May 24** – Escort to graveside services and repatriation of Korean War MIA, PFC Myers

◇ **27 May 24** – Annual invitational Arlington Heights Memorial Day Parade

◇ **30 May 24** - Dignified Transfer and escort of Korean War MIA CPL Selover

◇ **4 June 24** - Escort to graveside services and repatriation of Korean War MIA, CPL Selover

◇ **7 June 24** - Dignified Transfer and escort of WWII 2LT Porter

◇ **10 June 24** - Escort to graveside services and repatriation of WWII MIA, 2LT Porter

And, in the next few weeks.....

◇ **21 June to 3 July 24** - eleven Rolling Thunder, Inc, members going to visit American soldiers' graves in Germany

◇ **4 July 24** – Annual Independence Day Parade in Rolling Meadows

All of this on top of our monthly meetings and staffing our booth at various events.

With a schedule like this, it becomes obvious that we are fortunate to have a select few who will do whatever they can to support every Chapter POW/MIA mission every time.

However.....it's been my experience that very few people join an organization just to wear the colors and not participate in anything.

Each of us should look at the above list and ask ourselves if we were part of the select few or....just part of the color wearers.

Always strive to beproud to serve....





Fisher House Foundation: Providing Comfort Homes for Military and Veteran Families

Submitted by Wayne 'Traveler' Kirkpatrick



Your Soldier, Sailor, Marine or Airman has been on deployment and, expected home in one month. Suddenly, there's a knock on your door and two uniformed military personnel, who just got out of a military staff car, are standing on your porch. Adrenalin rushes through your body and your heart rate nearly doubles.

You answer the door and are formally told that your loved one has been wounded and is being transported to Brooke Army Medical Center (BAMC) in San Antonio, TX. Your military contact, the Casualty Assistance Officer offers you his condolences, provides you with his contact information and encourages you to stay in touch with him. He will inform you of your loved one's date / time of arrival at BAMC when he receives it.

Immediately, you attempt to contact your loved one via cell, text, email to no avail. You contact the wife of his unit commander who leads the unit's wives group created to assist spouses in stressful times. She has heard nothing yet but will check.

What next? Inform the kids, notify his family, coordinate time off from work, find someone to care for your children, find out how to get to BAMC, do you fly or drive, try to find a place to stay in San Antonio, where do you find money to pay for it all, and....your head is swimming with grief and confusion. (This actually happened to one of our members)

Within 24 hours, the unit commander's wife calls to inform you that she has coordinated an airline flight to San Antonio and has a place for you to stay, indefinitely, all paid for by the Fisher House Foundation. WOW!!!!

Until recently, the Next of Kin of a wounded service person or sick veteran hospitalized in our area, had to

live in a hotel and bear the costs of travel, food, child care, etc, all while taking off of work. Not any more thanks to the Fisher House Foundation.

The Fisher House program was established in 1990 by Zachary Fisher and Elizabeth Fisher in response to the recognized need for housing for military families while their loved ones were hospitalized. In 1991, the first Fisher House was inaugurated at the National Naval Medical Center (now Walter Reed Military Medical Center) in Bethesda, Maryland, with the presence of President George Bush Sr. and Mrs. Bush during the dedication ceremony.

The North Chicago Fisher House will be the 100th Fisher House operating in the United States and Europe. Once finished, up to 1,400 families will be able stay in a Fisher House across the country and overseas on any given night.



The North Chicago Fisher House will allow up to 16 Veteran and military families to stay free of charge, serving families traveling to the health care center for medical care. It will offer more than 5,800 nights of lodging each year, potentially saving families more than \$1.1 million annually.

Construction of the 100th Fisher House began in April 2024 at the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center located in North Chicago, Illinois.

Unlike other Fisher Houses built for the VA or a particular military service, this will be the first-of-its-kind home built for the partnership between the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense (DoD), integrating all medical care into a federal healthcare facility with a single combined mission.

(Continued on page 6)

**Fisher House, Continued**

Fisher House Foundation, Inc. is an international non-profit that works alongside the Veterans Health Administration to provide complimentary quality of life services for active military members, veterans, and their families.

Other Quality of Life programs offered by the foundation include the Hero Miles and Hotels for Heroes programs, ongoing assistance to Fisher Houses, scholarships, support for continuing rehabilitation initiatives, and individual assistance to members of the military and their families during a crisis.



A Home Away from Home. Fisher House Foundation builds comfort homes where military and Veteran families can stay

free of charge while a loved one is in the hospital. These homes are strategically located at military and VA medical centers around the world, ensuring that families can be close to their loved ones during challenging times. With up to 21 suites in each Fisher House, families enjoy private bedrooms, baths and shared common spaces like kitchens, laundry facilities, dining rooms and living rooms.

Financial relief for families. Since its inception, the Fisher House program has saved military and Veterans' families an estimated \$610 million in out-of-pocket costs for lodging and transportation. This significant financial relief allows families to focus on supporting their loved ones without the added burden of accommodation expenses.

Hero Miles Program. Fisher House Foundation operates the Hero Miles program, which uses donated frequent flyer miles to bring family members to the bedside of injured service members. This initiative ensures that families can be together during critical recovery periods, regardless of the distance.

Hotels for Heroes. Similarly, the Hotels for Heroes program uses donated hotel points to provide family members with free stays at hotels near medical centers. This program ensures that families have a comfortable place to stay close to their loved ones without any financial strain.

Grant and scholarship programs. Beyond housing, Fisher House Foundation manages the Fisher Service Award, a grant program that supports other charities and scholarship funds for military children, spouses, and children of fallen and disabled Veterans. To date, 15,000 students have received \$27,000,000 in scholarship awards, furthering the Foundation's commitment to supporting military families in various ways.

By the numbers.

- ✦ Daily capacity: 1,300 families.
- ✦ Families served: More than 500,000 since inception.
- ✦ Number of lodging days offered: 12 million+.
- ✦ Scholarship awards: 15,000 students receiving \$27,000,000.
- ✦ Hero Miles airline tickets provided: Over 70,000, worth nearly \$105 million.



Staying at a Fisher House. If you or someone you love is receiving care at a VA or military medical center, check the list of current Fisher Houses to see if there is a location that can help. The criteria to stay are established locally by the hospital or installation command, so please contact the location with any questions. There is never a charge to stay at a Fisher House.

A community of support. Fisher Houses are designed to foster a sense of community while providing private respite for families. Families can prepare their favorite meals in the gourmet kitchen before enjoying a good night's sleep in their private suite. The common areas, such as the dining room, family room and outdoor patio, offer spaces for families to connect and support each other.

Private suite amenities

- ✦ Beds accommodating family needs (multiple twins, full, rollaway crib, etc.).
- ✦ Private, wheelchair-accessible bathroom with ample counter space.
- ✦ Towels and high-quality bedding provided.
- ✦ Large closet with hangers.
- ✦ TV and internet access.

(Continued on page 7)



Fisher House, Continued

Common areas

- ✦ Dining room.
- ✦ Gourmet kitchen with a coffee maker, pots, pans, utensils, pantry compartments, and state-of-the-art refrigerators.
- ✦ Family room with large TV and seating.

- ✦ Living room with seating and a library.
- ✦ Laundry room with multiple washers and dryers.
- ✦ Outdoor patio.

We have not, yet, received a completion date or a date of a grand opening but, once we do, be assured that Rolling Thunder, Chapter 2, Illinois will be in attendance.

Until they all come home.

Submitted By Traveler

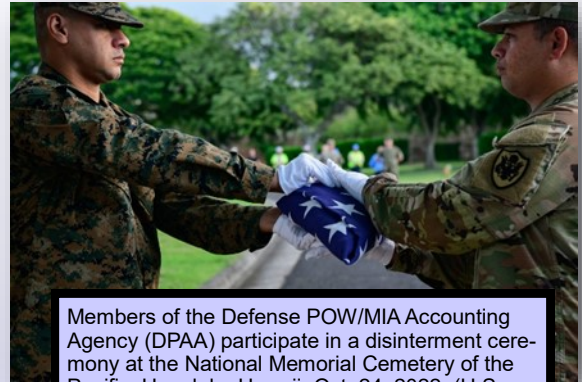
Searching for America's unaccounted service members, last known as a prisoner of war (POW) or missing in action (MIA), is no easy task. The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) is charged with the sacred duty of locating the unaccounted for American heroes.

There are over 81,000 service members who remain unaccounted for since the end of America's wars dating back to World War II. The majority of those unaccounted for served in the Indo-Pacific region during WWII, totaling 72,766 still unaccounted for. Of those, approximately 26,000 are assessed by the DPAA as "possibly-recoverable."

There is often a delay between the DPAA accounting for the service member and families being briefed about it. While some families are very involved in the search for their unaccounted loved one, locating a service member's next of kin isn't a simple process. "This could take some time depending on the level of information available about the veteran's surviving family members, where they reside or have moved over the decades, if there are DNA samples on record, or even if the [next of kin] is aware they were related to the veteran," said Lt. Cmdr. Sean Brophy, Director of Public Affairs at Navy Personnel Command.

Once the DPAA confirms the remains of a service member through various verifications — like dental records and mitochondrial DNA analysis — the service member's mortuary affairs unit is notified. Brophy said each branch has similar procedures for finding, notifying, and helping the service member's next of kin.

Once a family is notified, the mortuary affairs personnel assist them with funding the transportation of



Members of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) participate in a disinterment ceremony at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, Honolulu, Hawaii, Oct. 24, 2022. (U.S. Army photo/Sgt. 1st Class Michael O'Neal).

the accounted-for veteran, paying for transportation of the family, providing a military honors detail, assigning a media liaison, and anything else required for laying the veteran to rest with honor.

Brophy said some barriers faced by the units can include the family being elderly and unable to travel while others weren't aware of their accounted-for relative.

The DPAA goes to great lengths to identify prisoner of war or missing-in-action service members. They send out teams to search for remains based on historical records and last known information, while other times, they have to request access to disinter remains from military cemeteries.

Starting in 1945, the American Graves Registration Service began locating and identifying unknown remains of WWII prisoner of war and missing-in-action service members. If they could not identify the remains, they buried them in the appropriate military cemeteries, like Hawaii's National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific — informally known as the Punchbowl.

Today's world-wide accountability efforts continue to be aggressively pursued by the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency.



A 'Hello Girl' recognized

The American Legion
APR 26, 2024

Submitted By: Traveler

On Friday, May 3, World War I U.S. Army Signal Corps veteran and "Hello Girl" Marie Edmee LeRoux will make history again. When buried almost 80 years ago in an unmarked grave, she and the other "Hello Girls" were not yet recognized as veterans by the U.S. government. To acknowledge this overdue recognition, several veterans organizations have collaborated to host a dedication ceremony with full military honors at Fort Lincoln Cemetery in Brentwood, Md. The ceremony is open to the public and media; parking is available.

During World War I, women volunteered to serve in the Signal Corps, giving the American Expeditionary Forces an operational advantage to share information on the battlefields throughout Europe. The unit connected over 26 million calls from March 1918 to January 1920, including during the Paris Peace Conference of 1919. But due to U.S. Title 10 laws of the time, they were not acknowledged as part of the Army at the war's end, even though they had served in uniform and mobilized overseas. Veteran status and benefits were not granted to the group until 1977.

The U.S. World War I Centennial Commission, VA, the Military Women's Memorial and the Doughboy Foundation collaborated on the headstone recognition ceremony. "It is an honor to pay our respects to Marie Edmee LeRoux," said WWI Centennial Commission Executive Director Dan Dayton. "We hope that soon there will be another honor for her as well; the commission is advocating that Congress honor all 'Hello Girls,' America's first women soldiers, with a Congressional Gold Medal." (The American Legion also supports this initiative via [Resolution 110](#)).

"This collaboration has truly been a heartwarming experience," added National Cemetery Administration representative James Theres.

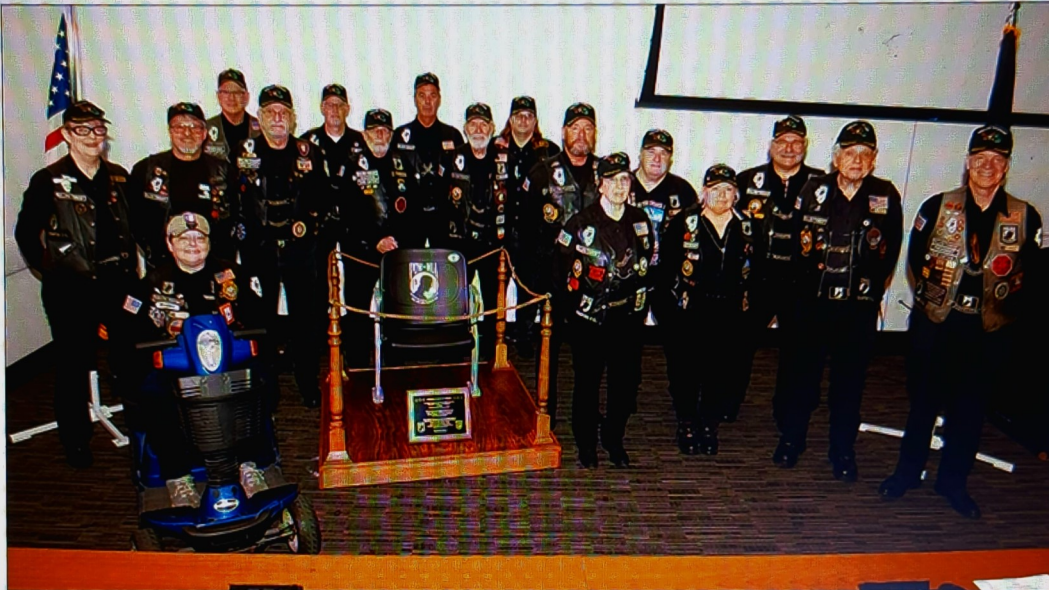
LeRoux was born in Montreal on Feb. 19, 1895. She served in the Signal Corps as a bilingual telephone operator. She sailed overseas on June 18, 1918, with Unit #4 and was honorably discharged on June 6, 1919. After the war, LeRoux stayed in Paris to continue music studies. She returned to the United States in December 1941, died on Jan. 9, 1945, and was buried at Fort Lincoln – receiving no VA headstone because she did not have veteran status.

The dedication ceremony's confirmed participants include LeRoux's granddaughter, representatives from the embassies of Canada and France who will lay a wreath at the headstone, and representatives of several military honor organizations. Speakers at the ceremony, which will begin at 11 a.m. EDT, will include Dayton; VA Chief of Staff Kimberly M. Jackson; and Anthony C. Woods, secretary of the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs. Phyllis Wilson, president of the Military Women's Memorial, will emcee.

"I am ecstatic all of these organizations are honoring my grandmother," said Catherine Bourgin. "It all happened so quickly. After her being in an unmarked grave for 79 years, I was able to work with the National Cemetery Administration to get an official marker for (her) grave."

The event program also includes a brass quintet from the Doughboy Foundation that will play World War I musical selections. The Maryland National Guard Honor Guard will provide burial honors, and a bugler will sound Taps in a replica "Hello Girls" uniform. Rev. Anne Weatherholt of Epiphany Episcopal Church, the only known World War I chapel in the United States, will give the invocation and benediction.





SUBMITTED PHOTO HI-Liter/MCN

Rolling Thunder Illinois Chapter 2 is pictured with the POW/MIA Chair of Honor that they donated to the Lake County Sheriff's Office in a ceremony on April 12.

U.S. Military POW/MIA advocacy group awards sheriff's office 'Chair of Honor'

The Lake County Sheriff's Office proudly accepted the POW/MIA Chair of Honor, donated by Rolling Thunder Illinois Chapter 2.

At a ceremony held on Friday, April 12, 2024, Rolling Thunder Illinois Chapter 2 unveiled the POW/MIA Chair of Honor and officially turned it over to the Lake County Sheriff's Office. The Lake County Sheriff's Office was selected for such an honor because of the office's commitment to those who have served, are serving, or will serve in the United States of America Armed Forces.

The POW/MIA Chair of Honor

is a commemorative symbol of the sacrifices made by American Military Families. The loss of life and the unfinished stories of those who never returned home is what the Chair represents. It is a reminder to all that these men and women must be found and returned to their families. The Chair has been developed through a coordinated effort by National Rolling Thunder and the Hussey Seating Company.

The POW/MIA Chair of Honor will be proudly and prominently displayed in the Lake County Sheriff's Office Training Room, where those attending

community meetings, community training sessions, and law enforcement training sessions will be able to see and honor the Chair.

The POW/MIA Chair of Honor is proudly displayed at several locations across the United States, including: United States Capitol, Illinois State Capitol, Gillette Stadium, Soldier Field, Lucas Oil Stadium, Guaranteed Rate Field and Chicago City Hall.

Retired Army Colonel Wayne Kirkpatrick of Rolling Thunder, Inc, stated, "As Americans, we have a

See CHAIR, Page 5

Page 5:

POW/MIA Chair Cont...

Moral obligation to find, identify and repatriate our nation's service men and women. The impact of a soldier missing in action spans many generations and transcends political issues, social issues and any contemporary controversy. We must never forget their sacrifice regardless of the era of loss. The Chair of Honor is to remind us to... Never Forget!"

Sheriff John D. Idleburg said, "This Chair will serve as a constant reminder of the sacrifices made by our brave service members and their families. It is a symbol of our commitment to always honor and remember those who are prisoners of war or missing in actions, and as a Marine Corps Veteran, I am so proud our Office will serve as a permanent display of the POW/MIA Chair of Honor!"

HI-LITER / MCN • MAY 8-14, 2024 • 5



SUBMITTED PHOTO HI-Liter/MCN

The Chair of Honor will be proudly displayed at the Lake County Sheriff's Office in the training room as a symbol of the sacrifices made by American Military families.



NCA adds options for commemorative plaques and urns

May 9, 2024
National Cemetery Administration
Submitted by: By: Traveler

Beginning June 10, families of deceased and cremated Veterans can apply to receive commemorative plaques or urns from VA if they do not want to inter their loved ones in a VA National Cemetery or receive a government-furnished headstone, marker or medallion for placement in any cemetery.

Commemorative urns are used to hold the remains of a deceased, cremated Veteran, and commemorative plaques are designed to hang on a wall. Both the urns and the plaques honor a Veteran's service and serve as a lasting tribute to the individual's status as a Veteran. Eligible family members can request one or the other, but not both.

It's important to note that, **if a family chooses a plaque or an urn to commemorate a Veteran, VA is prohibited by law from interring that Veteran's remains in a VA national cemetery or from providing a headstone, marker or medallion for placement in any cemetery.** Families should be certain of their choice. If the family chooses to receive a plaque or an urn to commemorate their Veteran, their decision cannot be undone. The law does not provide a method to restore these benefits.

To be eligible, the Veteran (or service member who died on active duty) must have served in the Armed Forces on or after April 6, 1917; the Veteran must be eligible for a headstone or marker under 38 U.S.C. § 2306(d),

and the Veteran's remains must have been cremated—with no portion of the remains interred at any location.

Information about VA burial and memorial benefits is available online, at VA national cemeteries, or by calling toll-free at 1-800-827-1000. To make burial arrangements at any VA national cemetery at the time of need, call the National Cemetery Scheduling Office at 1-800-535-1117. VA also encourages Veterans to apply for Pre-Need Eligibility to establish eligibility for VA burial and memorial benefits in advance of need.

Growing numbers of Vietnam veterans are being laid to rest in recent years, and in many cases their families are attending military funerals. Every eligible veteran can receive military funeral honors.



Vietnam Navy vet Micki Raymond Jerdon, who died at 65, is buried at Fort Logan National Cemetery in Colorado. (Joe Amon/The Denver Post via Getty Images)

US military funeral traditions honor the fallen on land, air and sea

Submitted by: By: Traveler

Among military burial traditions, the 21-gun salute is the oldest. In the 14th century, warships and shore forces fired off their guns to show that their weapons were empty and they were friendly.

Also of artillery origin, dating at least to the 18th century, is the custom of carrying a head of state or high-ranking military official on a two-wheeled horse-drawn caisson.

Taps — referring to a soft triple beat on the drum — was composed by Union Brig. Gen. Daniel Adams Butterfield in 1862 as a quieter substitute for gunfire to signal the end of the day's activities. It was later adopted to a soldier's final rest.

A 20th century tradition among Air Force personnel is the "Missing Man" formation, in which a "finger four" flight of warplanes approaches the burial site from the south and the second element's leader breaks formation to climb westward, into the sunset.

The Royal Air Force used a flyover at the funeral of British King George V in 1936, and the U.S. Army Air Corps used a similar flyover at the funeral of Maj. Gen. Oscar Westover in 1938. The flyover became standard after the April 1954 funeral of Gen. Hoyt Vandenberg.

A universal honor in American military funerals is the presentation of the flag that draped the coffin before burial. It is folded 13 times (for the 13 original states in 1776) into a triangular shape and given to the nearest kin.



Honoring our American Heroes at Durnbach Cemetery, Germany

On June 27th, members of Rolling Thunder Illinois, Chapter 2 were able to visit Durnbach Cemetery in Germany.

The Cemetery houses 'foreign' servicemen who were members of the Allied Forces. Buried there are four American Servicemen from World War II.

Our Chapter was very honored to be able to pay our respects to these men buried so far from home. **We will not forget!**





Roger That!



"MISSION COMPLETE"

29 MAY 2024

Pvt. 1st Class Bryan Myers Jr

MISSING:

U.S. Army Pvt. 1st Class Bryan Myers Jr., 21, of Cobden, Illinois, killed during the Korean War, was accounted for February 27, 2024.

In Sept. 1950, Myers was a member of Company H, 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division, during the Korean War. He was killed in action while his unit was defending the

Pusan Perimeter, in South Korea. The exact circumstances of his death were unknown, and his remains were not accounted for during or after the war.

In 1950, the remains of an American soldier were recovered from a foxhole on the east side of Mt. Chulmol, near Haman, South Korea. Investigators estimated the death to have occurred in early September but were unable to make a positive identification. The remains, designated as Unknown X173 Masan, were initially interred in the United Nations Military Cemetery Masan, before ultimately being transferred to the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific (Punchbowl), in Honolulu, Hawaii.

RECOVERY:

In March 2019, scientists from the DPAA laboratory exhumed Unknown X-173 from the Punchbowl for scientific analysis. Pvt. 1st Class Bryan Myers Jr was accounted for February 27, 2024.

To identify Myers' remains, scientists from DPAA used chest radiograph and other circumstantial evidence. Additionally, scientists from the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System used mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) analysis.

Pfc Myers' name is recorded on the Courts of the Missing at the Punchbowl, along with the others who are still missing from the Korean War. A rosette will be placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for.



DIGNIFIED TRANSFER 23 May 2024



The Illinois State Police provided the escort supported by the Fire and Police departments, IL

Rolling Thunder, Chapters 1 and 2-Illinois supported by Patriot Guard Riders escorted Pfc Myers 60 miles to [Fred C. Dames Funeral Home, 3200 Black Rd, Joliet, IL](#), and were honored to be able to perform the duties of pawl bearers and escorts.

ROLLING THUNDER [CHAPTER 2-IL](#) ATTENDEES (4) Wayne Kirkpatrick, Scott Miller, Nick Bender, and Mary Kirkpatrick.

(Continued on page 13)



PVT. 1st Class Myers, Cont

INTERMENT 30 May 2024



Following prayers at Fred C. Dames Funeral Home, 3200 Black Rd, Joliet, IL, U.S. Army Pvt. 1st Class Bryan Myers Jr finally came home to rest on 30 May 2024 next to his family members at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery, Elwood, IL.

An American Legion Post provided the 21-gun salute and bugler playing taps before the next of kin received the folded American flag that accompanied the remains.

A POW/MIA Flag, flown during the Dignified Transfer, was presented to the next of kin by Wayne Kirkpatrick and Al Miller of Chapters 1 and 2 on behalf of the members of Rolling Thunder, Illinois.

The funeral procession was along a 15 - mile route where local citizens, fire and police departments and the public turned out to view the funeral procession and to honor U.S. Army Pvt. 1st Class Bryan Myers Jr, who was buried with full military honors for his sacrifice in the Korean War.

Despite decades of time, the ceremony brought a sense of closure to the family, comfort to his friends, warmth to his fellow Americans, and pride to his Veteran brothers and sisters.

ROLLING THUNDER CHAPTER 2-IL ATTENDEES (5) Andy Haszlakiewicz, Wayne Kirkpatrick, Nick Bender, Scott Miller, and Greg Smith.

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. The POW/MIA Flag symbolizes a “test of our metal” in supporting the on-going efforts to ensure the remaining 81,000 plus servicemen, servicewomen, and civilians, unaccounted for, are returned to our Country and to their loved ones.

MEMORIAL BRICK: A Commemorative Brick will be added to the KIA / POW / MIA section of the Veterans Memorial at Woodstock Harley-Davidson, memorializing U.S. Army Pvt. 1st Class Bryan Myers Jr,



ROLLING THUNDER®, INC
CHAPTER 2 OF ILLINOIS
Wauconda, Illinois





"MISSION COMPLETE"

10 JUNE 2024

2LT Robert Porter

Second Lieutenant Porter entered the U.S. Army Air Forces from Illinois and served in the 703rd Bombardment Squadron, 403rd Bombardment Group.

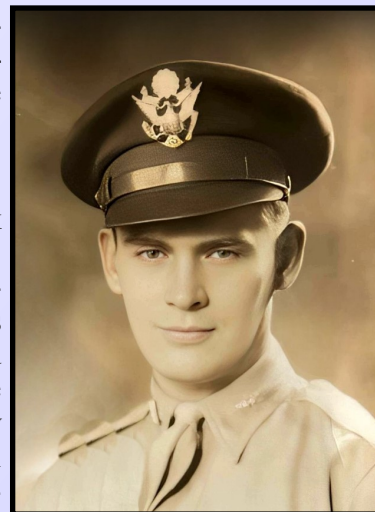
MISSING:

On February 24, 1944, he was the navigator aboard a B-24J Liberator (serial number 42-100312) which took off from its airbase in England, for a bombing mission against enemy targets near Gotha, Germany.

During the mission, his aircraft sustained damage from an enemy fighter attack and exploded in mid-air near Bad Salzungen, Germany. Two crew members survived the attack, but the rest, including 2LT Porter, were lost in the explosion. Post-war search efforts to find his remains were unsuccessful.

RECOVERY:

In March 1952, the American Graves Registration Command (AGRC) took custody of commingled unidentified remains from Bad Salzungen Cemetery. Among them were remains belonging to several crewmembers from a bomb-crash between Bad Salzungen and Leimbach-Kaiseroda. However, there was not enough evidence to warrant an individual or group identification, and they were ultimately interred in the Ardennes American Cemetery. In June 2021 these remains were disinterred and transferred to a DPAA Laboratory for further study. The laboratory analysis and the totality of the circumstantial evidence available established one set of these remains as those of 2LT Porter.



er

Second Lieutenant Porter is memorialized on the Tablets of the Missing at the Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery in Hombourg, Belgium. A rosette will be placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for.

DIGNIFIED TRANSFER 6 June 2024



The Illinois State Police provided the traffic control, supported by local Fire and Police departments. The hearse was led by, Rolling Thunder, Chapters 1 and 2-Illinois Mounted Color Guard supported by Patriot Guard Riders and other groups, who escorted 2LT Porter 16 miles from Midway Airport to Lawn Funeral Home, 7732 W 159th St, Orland Park, IL and were honored to be able to perform the duties of pallbearers and escorts.

(Continued on page 15)



PVT. 1st Class Myers, Cont



The procession was along a 16 - mile route where hundreds of local citizens, fire and police departments turned out to view the procession and to honor 2LT Porter.

ROLLING THUNDER [CHAPTER 2-IL](#) ATTENDEES (6) Wayne Kirkpatrick, Mary Kirkpatrick, [Anthony Yarborough](#), [Ted Makarewicz](#), [Scott Miller](#), and [Nick Bender](#).

INTERMENT 10 June 2024

Following prayers at Lawn Funeral Home, 7732 W 159th St, Orland Park, IL, 2LT Porter finally came home to rest on 10 June 2024 at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery, Elwood, IL.



The funeral procession was along a 32 - mile route where local citizens, fire and police departments and the public turned out to view the funeral procession and to honor 2LT Porter who was buried with full military honors for his sacrifice in the Korean War.

An American Legion Post provided the 21-gun salute and bugler playing taps before the next of kin received the folded American flag that accompanied the remains.

A POW/MIA Flag, flown during the Dignified Transfer, was presented to the next of kin by Ted Makarewicz, Dave Skinner, and Anthony Yarbrough of Chapters 1 and 2 on behalf of the members of Rolling Thunder, Illinois.

Despite decades of time, the ceremony brought a sense of closure to the family, comfort to his friends, warmth to his fellow Americans, and pride to his Veteran brothers and sisters.

ROLLING THUNDER CHAPTER 2-IL ATTENDEES (6); Ted Makarewicz, Anthony Yarborough, Scott Miller, and Nick Bender. Wayne Kirkpatrick, and Mark Mazurkewicz.

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. The POW/MIA Flag symbolizes a “test of our metal” in supporting the on-going efforts to ensure the remaining 81,000 plus servicemen, servicewomen, and civilians, unaccounted for, are returned to our Country and to their loved ones.

MEMORIAL BRICK: A Commemorative Brick will be added to the KIA / POW / MIA section of the Veterans Memorial at Woodstock Harley-Davidson, memorializing U.S. Army Air Corps 2LT Robert Porter.



ROLLING THUNDER®, INC
CHAPTER 2 OF ILLINOIS
Wauconda, Illinois





"MISSION COMPLETE"

4 JUNE 2024

US Army CPL Richard Seloover

MISSING:

In September 1950, Seloover of Whiteside, Ill., was a member of Heavy Mortar Company, 9th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division. He went missing in action along the Nakdong River in the vicinity of Yongsan, South Korea, on Sept. 6, 1950 during one of the heav-

iest battles of that war. Because of intense fighting, his body could not be recovered at that time.

The exact circumstances of his death were unknown, and the U.S. Army issued a presumptive finding of death on Dec. 31, 1953. On Dec. 29, 1950, Unknown Remains X-348 was recovered from an isolated grave near the village of Bon-Po, roughly 5 miles from where Seloover was reported lost. The remains could not be identified at the time and were buried as an unknown in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu.

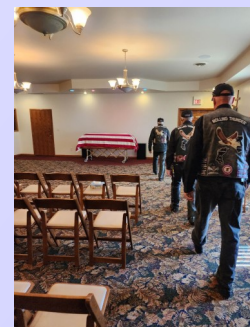
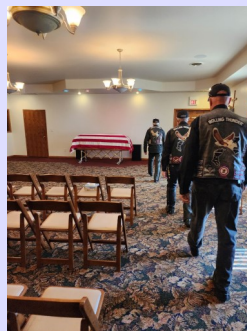
RECOVERY:

In June 2021, DPAA personnel disinterred Unknown X-348 and sent the remains to the DPAA laboratory for analysis. Scientists from DPAA used dental and anthropological analysis, as well as chest radiograph and other circumstantial evidence. Additionally, scientists from the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System used mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) analysis.



PFC Seloover's name is recorded on the Courts of the Missing at the Punchbowl, along with the others who are still missing from the Korean War. A rosette will be placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for. Seloover will be buried in Rock Falls, Ill., on 4 June 2024.

DIGNIFIED TRANSFER 30 May 2024



The Illinois State Police provided the escort supported by the Fire and Police departments, IL

Rolling Thunder, Chapters 1 and 2-Illinois supported by Patriot Guard Riders escorted PFC Seloover 107 miles to McDonald Funeral Home, 1002 12th Avenue, Rock Falls, Illinois 61071, and were honored to be able to perform the duties of escorts.

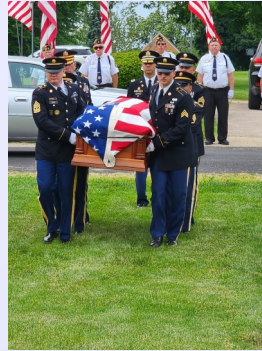
ROLLING THUNDER CHAPTER 2-IL ATTENDEES (4) Andy Haszlakiewicz, Paul Hebein, Nick Bender, and Wayne Kirkpatrick,

(Continued on page 17)



CPL Selover Cont

INTERMENT 4 June 2024



Following an assembly at McDonald Funeral Home, 1002 12th Avenue, Rock Falls, Illinois 61071, U.S. Army CPL Richard Selover finally came home to rest on 4 June 2024 next to his family members at Coloma Cemetery, 908 Avalon St, Rock Falls, IL.

A US Army Honor Guard provided the 21-gun salute and bugler playing taps before the next of kin received the folded American flag that accompanied the remains.

Wayne Kirkpatrick, Chapter 2-Illinois, Rolling Thunder gave a short eulogy at the families request.

A POW/MIA Flag, flown during the Dignified Transfer, was presented to the next of kin by Ted Makarewicz and Tony Yarborough of Chapter 2 on behalf of the members of Rolling Thunder, Illinois.

The funeral procession was along a 3- mile route where local citizens, fire and police departments and the public turned out to view the funeral procession and to honor U.S. Army CPL Richard Selover, who was buried with full military honors for his sacrifice in the Korean War.

Despite decades of time, the ceremony brought a sense of closure to the family, comfort to his friends, warmth to his fellow Americans, and pride to his Veteran brothers and sisters.

ROLLING THUNDER CHAPTER 2-IL ATTENDEES (6) Ted Makarewicz, Anthony Yarborough, Wayne Kirkpatrick, Ron Carpenter, Nick Bender, and Mark Mazurkewicz

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. The POW/MIA Flag symbolizes a “test of our metal” in supporting the on-going efforts to ensure the remaining 81,000 plus servicemen, servicewomen, and civilians, unaccounted for, are returned to our Country and to their loved ones.

MEMORIAL BRICK: A Commemorative Brick will be added to the KIA / POW / MIA section of the Veterans Memorial at Woodstock Harley-Davidson, memorializing U.S. Army CPL Richard Selover.



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CHAPTER 2 OF ILLINOIS
Wauconda, Illinois



Taps: How a Medal of Honor Recipient Gave America its Most Famous Military Bugle Call Ever!

By Stephen Ruiz
Submitted by: Traveler



Brig. Gen. Daniel Butterfield not only earned a Medal of Honor while serving in the Union Army during the Civil War, but he also is responsible for the bugle call we know as taps. (Wikimedia Commons)

Daniel Butterfield could not read or write music, but he knew what he liked. A brigadier general in the Union Army who would go on to receive the Medal of Honor in 1892 for gallantry during the Civil War, Butterfield was not particularly enamored with the bugle call that signaled lights out to U.S. troops at the end of the day.

One day in July 1862, Butterfield summoned his brigade's bugler, Oliver Willcox Norton, and suggested he play a series of notes that were less formal than the official call of "Extinguish Lights." Norton followed Butterfield's instructions, and after a few tweaks, what resulted was the U.S. military's most popular bugle call of them all: Taps.

"There is something singularly beautiful and appropriate in the music of this wonderful call," Norton would later recall in an undated article called "The Origin of 'Taps'". "Its strains are melancholy, yet full of rest and peace. Its echoes linger in the heart long after its tones have ceased to vibrate in the air."

The easily recognizable 24 notes of taps have become so ingrained into military life that every U.S. service member, veteran, their families and even the public at large have become intimately familiar with them. While originally intended to encourage service members to go to sleep -- it is sounded at 9 p.m. on U.S. bases -- it is also now synonymous with military funerals and wreath-laying ceremonies. It is the only bugle call in America's armed forces with multiple purposes.

Butterfield was working for a company co-founded by his father -- a little enterprise called American Express -- when he joined the 12th New York Militia; he was serving as a colonel when the Civil War began. In September 1861, he was promoted to brigadier general, and after his unit was transferred to the Army of the Potomac, Butterfield and his men found themselves at the Battle of Gaines' Mill, Virginia, on June 27, 1862.

Part of the Peninsula Campaign -- the Union's bid to capture the Confederate capital, Richmond -- Butterfield was injured at Gaines' Mill while commanding the 3rd Brigade, 1st Division, V Army Corps. Despite the pain, Butterfield would "[seize] the colors of the [Union Army's] 83d Pennsylvania Volunteers at a critical moment and, under a galling fire of the enemy, [encourage] the depleted ranks to renewed exertion," according to his Medal of Honor citation.

The next month, Butterfield and his men camped near the James River in Virginia. While recuperating from his injuries, Butterfield worked on a solution to his "Extinguish Lights" dilemma.

Butterfield lacked any type of musical background, but he was "a little bit of an aficionado of bugle calls," according to Villanueva; he also was well-versed in Army procedure, as he wrote a manual, "Camp and Outpost Duty for Infantry: 1862," to chronicle a soldier's daily duties.

Taps was not an original composition but rather something inspired by Butterfield's time in the New York Militia, when he learned about "Tattoo," a bugle call signaling the final roll call of the day, Villanueva said.

Union Army Brig. Gen. Daniel Butterfield, who is credited with revising the bugle call that we know as 'taps,' earned the Medal of Honor for his actions at the Battle of Gaines' Mill, Virginia, during the Civil War in 1862. (Wikimedia Commons)



(Continued on page 19)



Taps Continued...

"When the soldiers first heard it played, it was a much slower call, and it was like a melancholy type of song to them, a way of putting them to sleep," Villanueva said.

Other Union brigades heard Norton's playing of taps and requested permission to play it; the call also spread across battle lines, with some Confederates using it, too. The Army officially recognized taps in 1874, almost a decade after the Civil War ended, and although Butterfield's revision was first played at a military funeral during the Peninsula Campaign, it did not become mandatory at military services until 1891.

Butterfield, who resigned from the Army with the rank of major general in 1870, was buried at West Point in 1901 at the age of 69 despite never attending the U.S. Military Academy. And yes, taps, which has no official lyrics, was sounded at his funeral.

"Of all the military bugle calls, there is none that is so easily recognized or more apt to evoke emotion," Villanueva said.

More than 1,000 U.S. military veterans die daily, according to Taps for Veterans.

US, South Korea begin annual search for remains still missing from Korean War

Submitted By Traveler



A South Korean sailor carries his uncle's remains during a Korean War remains repatriation ceremony at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, July 25, 2023. (Zachary Beatty/U.S. Marine Corps)

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — Anthropologists and historians from the United States and South Korea have embarked on their annual search for the remains of service members killed during the 1950-53 Korean War.

In April this year, ten U.S. military and civilian members of the Hawaii-based Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency began their monthlong mission with counterparts from South Korea.

DPAA and the Ministry of National Defense Agency for Killed in Action Recovery Identification, or MAKRI, partnered to excavate and identify Korean War-

era human remains starting in 2011.

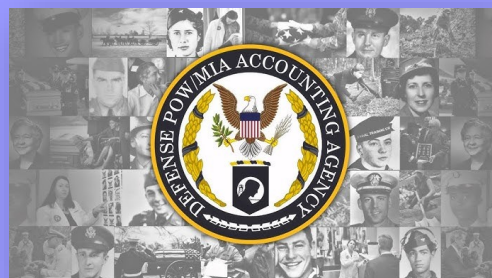
The surveyors will explore five cities, including Mungyeong, about 90 miles southeast of Seoul, according to MAKRI. The other cities — Chuncheon, Hongcheon, Pyeongchang and Hoengseong — are between 30 to 55 miles south of the Demilitarized Zone that divides the Korean Peninsula.

The survey areas include a site where an American F-51D Mustang is believed to have crashed during a mission in 1950 and where roughly 30 2nd Infantry Division soldiers were killed in combat in 1951, according to MAKRI.

The teams will employ several search methods, including reviewing combat records, interviewing locals, searching for battle debris and identifying terrain changes based on decades-old aerial photos, the release said.

Since 2000, South Korea has received more than 300 sets of remains from the U.S. and returned 26 sets. Of the roughly 36,500 U.S. casualties of the war, 7,480 are still unaccounted for, according to DPAA. About 950 of those are believed to be missing in South Korea.

The agencies continue to make headway in identifying remains and accounting for missing American and allied troops.



The Military Lab that Identifies Fallen Troops Decades after WWII

By Josh Funk, The Associated Press
May 28, 2024, 09:23 AM
Submitted by: Traveler

OFFUTT AIR FORCE BASE, Neb. (AP) — Generations of American families have grown up not knowing exactly what happened to their loved ones who died while serving their country in World War II and other conflicts.

But a federal lab tucked away above the bowling alley at Offutt Air Force Base near Omaha and a sister lab in Hawaii are [steadily answering those lingering questions](#), aiming to offer 200 families per year the chance to honor their relatives with a proper burial.

“They may not even have been alive when that service member was alive, but that story gets carried down through the generations,” said Carrie Brown, a Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency lab manager at Offutt. “They may have seen on the mantle a picture of that person when they were little and not really understood or known who they were.”

Memorial Day and the upcoming 80th anniversary of D-Day on June 6 are reminders of the urgency of Brown’s work. The forensic anthropologists, medical examiners and historians who work together to [identify lost soldiers](#) are in a race against time as remains buried on battlefields around the globe deteriorate.

But advances in DNA technology, combined with innovative techniques including comparing bones to chest X-rays taken by the military, mean the labs can identify more of the missing soldiers every year. Some 72,000 World War II soldiers remain unaccounted for, along with roughly 10,000 more from all the conflicts since. The experts believe about half of those are recoverable.



Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency forensic anthropologist Carrie Brown looks at photos of service members from the USS

POW/MIA Accounting Agency forensic anthropologist Carrie Brown looks at objects in a lab at Offutt Air Force Base, Monday, May 20, 2024, in Bellevue, Neb. (Charlie Neibergall/AP)



Oklahoma on a wall at Offutt Air Force Base, Monday, May 20, 2024, in Bellevue, Neb. (Charlie Neibergall/AP)

The agency identified 59 servicemembers in 2013, when the Offutt lab first opened. That number has steadily risen — 159 service members last year, up from 134 in 2022 — and the labs have a goal of 200 identifications annually.

The labs’ work allowed Donna Kennedy to bury her cousin, Cpl. Charles Ray Patten, with full military honors this month in the same Lawson, Missouri, cemetery where his father and grandfather are buried. Patten died 74 years ago during the Korean War, but spent decades buried as an unknown in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Hawaii.

“I just I ached. I mean, it hurt. You know, I just felt so bad. Even though I didn’t know him, I loved him,” Kennedy said.

Patten’s funeral was a simple affair with just a few family members. But often when veterans who fought decades earlier are identified, people waving flags and holding signs line the streets of their hometowns to herald the return of their remains.

“This work is important first and foremost because these are individuals that gave their lives to protect our freedom, and they paid the ultimate sacrifice. So we’re here holding that promise that we’ll return them home to their families,” Brown said.

(Continued on page 21)



Labs, continued

“It’s important for their families to show them that we’ll never stop, no matter what,” she said.

Often there are compelling details, Brown said.



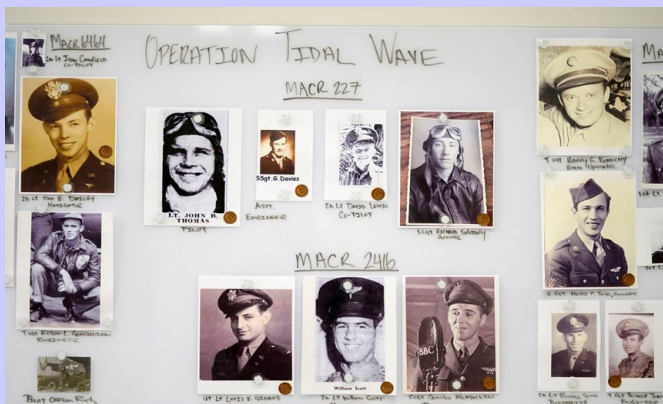
A worker looks at objects in a Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency lab at Offutt Air Force Base, Monday, May 20, 2024, in Bellevue, Neb. (Charlie Neibergall/AP)

One of her first cases involved the intact remains of a World War I Marine found in a forest in France with his wallet still in his pocket. The wallet, initialed G.H., contained a New York Times article describing plans for the offensive in which he ultimately died. He also had an infantryman badge with his name and the year he received it on the back.

Before leaving France with the remains, the team visited a local cemetery where other soldiers were buried and learned there were only two missing soldiers with the initials G.H.

Brown had a fair idea who that soldier was before his remains even arrived in the lab. That veteran was buried in Arlington National Cemetery and Brown often visits his grave when she is in Washington D.C.

Most cases aren’t that easy.



Photos of service members are seen on a wall in a Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency lab at Offutt Air Force Base, Monday, May 20, 2024, in Bellevue, Neb. (Charlie Neibergall/AP)

The experts who work at the lab must piece together identities by looking at historical records about where the remains were found and which soldiers were in the area. They then consult the list of possible names and use the bones, objects found with them, military medical records and DNA to confirm their identities. They focus on battles and plane crashes where they have the greatest chance of success because of available information.

But their work can be complicated if soldiers were buried in a temporary cemetery and moved when a unit was forced to retreat. And unidentified soldiers were often buried together.

When remains are brought to the lab, they sometimes include an extra bone. Experts then spend months or even years matching the bones and waiting for DNA and other test results to confirm their identities.

One test even can identify if the soldier grew up primarily eating rice or a corn-based diet.



Items are seen in a Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency lab at Offutt Air Force Base, Monday, May 20, 2024, in Bellevue, Neb. (Charlie Neibergall/AP)

The lab also compares specific traits of collar bones to the chest X-rays the military routinely took of soldiers before they were deployed. It helps that the military keeps extensive records of all soldiers.

Those clues help the experts put together the puzzle of someone’s identity.

“It’s not always easy. It’s certainly not instantaneous,” Brown said. “Some of the cases, we really have to fight to get to that spot, because some of them have been gone for 80 years.”



What was Rolling Thunder?

Submitted By Traveler

Thousands of soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen crowded into a staging area. Some checked their maps, others made last-minute adjustments to their vehicles and equipment. Months of planning were about to turn into action. On cue, engines roared to life, and a massive formation embarked on a new kind of mission.

This was Operation Rolling Thunder -- but not the one that the U.S. military conducted in Vietnam during the 1960s. Motorcycles replaced bomber jets, leather vests replaced combat fatigues, and Washington, D.C., streets took the place of Southeast Asian jungle.

What was the Rolling Thunder motorcycle rally all about, and why did it end? The story has dark beginnings and a silver lining -- and it's one you should know.

Rolling Thunder Started in Vietnam



Operation Rolling Thunder lasted from 1965 to 1968 and failed to bring the Viet Cong to its knees. (National Museum of the United States Air Force)

The first time Operation Rolling Thunder entered the American lexicon came in 1965. The United States military was in a shooting war in Vietnam, but the real fight was against communist expansion by the Soviet Union and China. In an effort to contain fighting in Vietnam and avoid direct conflict between global superpowers, policymakers in Washington, D.C., fell back on an old favorite: the undefeated record of American air superiority.

Air power "seemed to offer the possibility of war at

Retired Staff Sgt. Tim Chambers stands at attention and salutes as motorcycle-riding veterans pass during the 25th annual Rolling Thunder motorcycle rally on May 27, 2012, in Washington, D.C., to bring awareness to prisoner-of-war and missing-in-action service members. (U.S. Marine Corps photo)



arm's length and on the cheap, although most policymakers realized that the use of air power would be cheap only by comparison with a manpower intensive land war," according to a 1989 assessment of the campaign from Air Force University's Center for Aerospace Doctrine, Research, and Education.

The plan was simple: Operation Rolling Thunder would destroy the Viet Cong's critical resources in North Vietnam almost instantly, bringing the enemy's fighting capability to a screeching halt with minimal involvement from on-the-ground troops.

As the Air Force Historical Support Division points out, that didn't happen. When the plan failed to cripple the Viet Cong's war effort, the Johnson administration changed the objective; rather than destroying resources at the source, American air power would intercept them on the way to the battlefield and cut off supply lines.

When hunting down bicycles in the jungle from 30,000 feet turned out to be virtually impossible, the goalposts vanished altogether. After years of futilely lobbing explosives into the jungle and losing downed pilots and crew to North Vietnamese prison camps, bombing ceased in 1968. President Lyndon B. Johnson began negotiations with the North Vietnamese in 1969.

The U.S. ended its involvement in Vietnam in 1973, and North Vietnamese forces seized Saigon in 1975, according to the U.S. Department of State. American air power had met its match, and the victor was fighting in flip-flops.

(Continued on page23)



Rolling Thunder, continued...

Welcome Home; Now See Yourself Out



For the first time in American history, returning service members did not have the support of the

The National Archives reports that 58,220 Americans died in Vietnam. North Vietnam returned 591 American prisoners of war as part of Operation Homecoming following the Paris Peace Accords in 1973. Approximately 2,500 U.S. service members remained missing.

Polling as recent as 1991 found that the majority of Americans not only believed North Vietnam failed to return all prisoners of war, but considered the U.S. government derelict in its duty to free them.

And if it wasn't bad enough that service members felt betrayed by their government both during the conflict and decades after it ended, the general public gave returning service members an ice-cold reception.

"I remember feeling like, what could I do to acknowledge them, and I just gave the peace signal," as Steven Wowwk, an Army veteran who was wounded in Vietnam, told History in 2018. "And instead of getting return peace fingers, I got the middle finger."

Remembering Those Left Behind



Vietnam veteran Artie Muller helped create the Rolling Thunder motorcycle rally in 1988. (Defense Department photo)

In the decades following the withdrawal from Vietnam, veterans of the conflict couldn't help but notice that their elected leaders were more than happy to put the war's scars behind them -- prisoners and missing service members included.

Two Vietnam veterans, Artie Muller and Ray Manzo, brought the issue back into the public eye with a motorcycle rally in 1988.

It started with a letter-writing campaign to recruit veteran motorcyclists for a ride through Washington, D.C., on Memorial Day. Manzo wrote to veteran groups, politicians and other riders to get the word out.

"I am asking for your assistance in organizing a Nationwide Run all across America for as many bikers as possible to ride to Washington, D.C., for Memorial Day 1988 and bring about an end to the POW/MIA problem," the letter said, according to History.net. "We have to make one more huge effort to get our POW/MIAs home. Please help."

Manzo's letter ended up published by Outlaw Biker and Easy Riders, two major motorcycle magazines of the time. That was the spark the cause needed: A few months later, an estimated 2,500 veterans showed up in the nation's capital on their motorcycles, according to Histories of the National Mall



Rolling Thunder is a motorcycle demonstration ride that began in 1988 to bring awareness to the POW/MIA issue and achieve full accountability for, and the return of, all service members, alive or dead. (Courtesy photo)

The demonstrators delivered their message loud and clear, and others would join their mission. According to History.net, more than 30,000 riders came the following year and attendance grew to 75,000 a few years later. According to WUSA9, Washington, D.C.'s CBS affiliate, attendance had grown to 500,000 by 2018.

(Continued pm [age 24])

Rolling Thunder, continued...

The rally was a great way for veterans to build a community, but the point was always to remind elected officials and military leaders that they have not succeeded in bringing home everyone they've sent to war -- and not just the one in Vietnam.

By the Department of Defense's own numbers, more than 80,000 U.S. missing service members have not been accounted for from overseas wars. There is an ongoing effort to recover these missing service members, but the process requires extensive research, DNA samples from living family members and years of forensic testing.

In 2019, Rolling Thunder organizers announced an end to the rally. According to The Washington Post, Muller pointed to a lack of cooperation from the Pentagon Security Police and Washington Police and an increase in harassment of supporters and sponsors. Pete Zaleski, Rolling Thunder Inc.'s then-vice president, chalked it up to a lack of funding. Whatever the cause, the last Rolling Thunder rally took place in 2019.

Rolling to Remember



Medal of Honor recipient Master Sgt. Jose Rodela pays his respects at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. (E.J. Hersom/Defense Department photo)

Rolling Thunder in DC is in the history books, but the movement rides on. Veterans, the public and their motorcycles are scheduled to flood the streets of major cities across the nation for the 36th consecutive year at the 2024 Rolling to Remember rally now held in each state.

As in the past, veterans plan to gather for a candlelight vigil.

The U.S. military's involvement in Vietnam ended 51 years ago. It's been 36 years since riders went kickstands-up for the first Rolling Thunder rally. With every year that passes, fewer Vietnam veterans are able to throw a leg over a motorcycle to participate.

The cause isn't getting any quieter, though. New generations of veterans and service members continue to make the pilgrimage to the nation's capital each Memorial Day to speak for those who

were killed or captured and never came home.

It turns out that the roar of veterans' motorcycles lasted a lot longer than the infamous Rolling Thunder bombing campaign.

RTXXXVI

A Rainy but Successful
Relay of our Message...



We Will Never
Forget!



VA Benefits Likely Won't Cover All of a Veteran's Funeral Costs

Submitted By Traveler

Many of us have Veteran friends, family, acquaintances. As such, we should be knowledgeable of Veteran benefits in an effort to help them with any questions.

Many military veterans want to be buried in military-related cemeteries. One common misconception when planning the burial of a veteran is that the Department of Veterans Affairs will cover all the costs of the funeral. While burial in a VA cemetery or state veterans cemetery may eliminate many of the expenses, quite a few costs are not covered by the VA.

A veteran's surviving family members may be caught off guard if they expect these costs to be covered.

What's Covered

The VA offers a burial allowance that it pays to the designated survivor. The amount varies depending on the cause of death, date of death, and whether there are expenses for the burial plot.

For example, for a non-service-connected death of a veteran who died on or after Oct. 1, 2023, the burial allowance is \$948. An additional allowance of \$948 is available if the veteran is not buried in a national or state veterans cemetery and there are expenses for a burial plot. If applicable, a headstone or marker allowance is \$231 if the veteran died on or after Oct. 1, 2021.

For a service-connected death on or after Sept. 11, 2001, the maximum allowance is \$2,000. The VA may pay some or all of the transportation costs if the veteran is buried in a national cemetery.

What's Not Covered

The VA allowance may help cover burial costs such as a casket, transfer of the remains, embalming, cosmetic services, the cost of the funeral service, use of the funeral home facilities, cremation, urn, use of hearse and/or limousines, funeral cards and other printed materials, and flowers.



If the veteran is not buried in a veterans cemetery, burial costs include the burial plot, opening and closing the burial plot, and any additional services at the cemetery.

How to Receive a VA Burial Allowance

If the veteran was married and the spouse was listed in VA records, the VA will typically send the payment automatically after being notified of the veteran's death. In all other situations, a claim is filed with the VA.

There is a two-year deadline to file claims for non-service-connected deaths. There is no deadline to file claims for service-connected deaths.

Active-Duty Deaths

The branch of service typically covers the majority of expenses for the burial of an active-duty service member.

What Should You Do?

Everyone should have a plan for paying their final expenses. Burial in a national or state veterans cemetery will reduce costs significantly. The VA's burial allowance will help offset the additional costs. For the rest of the expenses, options include a special savings account, prepaying funeral expenses or a life insurance policy specifically for this purpose.

If you intend to be buried in a national veterans cemetery, fill out the VA's Application for Pre-Need Determination of Eligibility for Burial in a VA National Cemetery.

Most importantly, make sure your family knows there will be expenses beyond the veteran's benefits. This will give them time to prepare and not be surprised.

Doc's Corner...

By: Mark Mazurkiewicz

Holiday Challenges! Be Aware and Reach Out

Source: Mayo Clinic



Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a mental health condition that's triggered by a terrifying event — either experiencing it or witnessing it. Symptoms may include flashbacks, nightmares and severe anxiety, as well as uncontrollable thoughts about the event.

Most people who go through traumatic events may have temporary difficulty adjusting and coping, but with time and good self-care, they usually get better. If the symptoms get worse, last for months or even years, and interfere with your day-to-day functioning, you may have PTSD.

Getting effective treatment after PTSD symptoms develop can be critical to reduce symptoms and improve function.

Post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms may start within one month of a traumatic event, but sometimes symptoms may not appear until years after the event. These symptoms cause significant problems in social or work situations and in relationships. They can also interfere with your ability to go about your normal daily tasks.

PTSD symptoms are generally grouped into four types: intrusive memories, avoidance, negative changes in thinking and mood, and changes in physical and emotional reactions. Symptoms can vary over time or vary from person to person.

Intrusive memories

Symptoms of intrusive memories may include:

- ✦ Recurrent, unwanted distressing memories of the traumatic event
- ✦ Reliving the traumatic event as if it were happening again (flashbacks)
- ✦ Upsetting dreams or nightmares about the traumatic event
- ✦ Severe emotional distress or physical reactions to something that reminds you of the traumatic event

Avoidance

Symptoms of avoidance may include:

- ✦ Trying to avoid thinking or talking about the traumatic event
- ✦ Avoiding places, activities or people that remind you of the traumatic event

Negative changes in thinking and mood

Symptoms of negative changes in thinking and mood may include:

- ✦ Negative thoughts about yourself, other people or the world

- ✦ Hopelessness about the future
- ✦ Memory problems, including not remembering important aspects of the traumatic event
- ✦ Difficulty maintaining close relationships
- ✦ Feeling detached from family and friends
- ✦ Lack of interest in activities you once enjoyed
- ✦ Difficulty experiencing positive emotions
- ✦ Feeling emotionally numb

Changes in physical and emotional reactions

Symptoms of changes in physical and emotional reactions (also called arousal symptoms) may include:

- ✦ Being easily startled or frightened
- ✦ Always being on guard for danger
- ✦ Self-destructive behavior, such as drinking too much or driving too fast
- ✦ Trouble sleeping
- ✦ Trouble concentrating
- ✦ Irritability, angry outbursts or aggressive behavior
- ✦ Overwhelming guilt or shame

This 4th of July 2024, Please be mindful and Respect your Veteran Neighbors. These Men and Women may have been to Foreign Wars in their Military Pasts. Unexpected loud Fireworks could set-off some PTSD Issues with these Honorable Fellow Veteran's! Please show them your Respect!

Also, please be mindful of our Furry Pet Friends, too. They also have very sensitive Ears!

May your 4th of July be Safe and Enjoyable as We American's Celebrate Our 'Independence Day'!!



**-THE COST OF FREEDOM CAN BE SEEN AT
YOUR LOCAL VA HOSPITAL-**



Military Celebrations for 3rd Quarter

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



July

- 4 Independence Day
- 25 National Hire a Veteran Day
- 27 National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day
- 28 National Buffalo Soldiers Day
- 29 Army Chaplain Corps Anniversary

August

Antiterrorism Awareness Month

- 4 Coast Guard Day
- 7 Purple Heart Day
- 10 U.S. Department of Defense Birthday
- 11 Agent Orange Awareness Day
- 14 Navajo Code Talkers Day
- 16 National Airborne Day



- 29 Marine Corps Birthday



September

National Suicide Prevention Month

National Service Dog Month



- 2 V-J Day, Victory over Japan
- 4 Labor Day
- 15– Oct 15 Hispanic Heritage Month

15-17 Rosh Hashanah (Begins at Sunset on the 15th)

15 National POW/MIA Recognition Day

18 Air Force Birthday (USAF)

18 Office of the Sec. of Defense Birthday

18 Air National Guard Birthday

29 VFW Day

30 National Gold Star Mother's Day



14 July Ted Makarewicz
18 July Don DeLardo

10 August Jill Kosuta
15 August Kim Niccolai
24 August Greg Smith
29 August Robert Pullman

9 September Andy Haszlakiewicz
11 September Mary Kirkpatrick
12 September Garret Petersen

Happy Birthday to
Our Great
Americans!



Happy Days to our Chapter Celebrities for July, August
and September

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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