

*Help those who fought for our freedom,  
America's Veterans.*



*7th Annual*

# *Big Thunder Run*

**October 5th 2008**

# AVERAGE FIGHTING SOLDIER



The average age of the military man or woman is 19 years. He or she is a short-haired, tight-muscle kid, who under normal circumstances is considered by society as half man/woman, half boy/girl. Not yet dry behind the ears, not old enough to buy a beer, but old enough to die for his/her country. He or she never really cared much for work and he or she would rather wax his own car than wash his/her father's, but he or she has never collected unemployment either. They are recent High School graduates; they were probably an average student, pursued some form of sport activities, drives a ten year old jalopy, and has a steady girlfriend/boyfriend that either broke up with them when they left, or swears to be waiting when they return from half a world away. They listen to rock and roll or hip-hop or rap or jazz or swing, and a 155mm howitzer. They are 10 or 15 pounds lighter now than when they were at home because they are working or fighting from before dawn to well after dusk. They have trouble spelling, thus letter writing is a pain for them, but they can field strip a rifle in 30 seconds and reassemble it in less time in the dark. They can recite to you the nomenclature of a machine gun or grenade launcher and use either one effectively if they must. They dig foxholes and latrines and can apply first aid like a professional. They can march until they are told to stop, or stop until they are told to march. They obey orders instantly and without hesitation, but they are not without spirit or individual dignity. They are self-sufficient. They have two sets of fatigues: they wash one and wear the other. They keep their canteens full and their feet dry. They sometimes forget to brush their teeth, but never to clean their rifle. They can cook their own meals, mend their own clothes, and fix their own hurts. If you're thirsty, they will share their water with you; if you are hungry, their food. They will even split their ammunition with you in the midst of battle when you run low. They have learned to use their hands like weapons and weapons like they were their hands. They can save your life - or take it, because that is their job. They will often do twice the work of a civilian, draw half the pay, and still find ironic humor in it all. They have seen more suffering and death than they should have in their short lifetime. They have wept in public and in private, for friends who have fallen in combat and are unashamed. They feel every note of the National Anthem vibrate through their body while at rigid attention, while tempering the burning desire to "square-away" those around them who haven't bothered to stand, remove their hat, or even stop talking. In an odd twist, day in and day out, far from home, they defend their right to be disrespectful. Just as did their Father, Mother Grandfather, Grandmother, Great-grandfather and Great-grandmother, they are paying the price for our freedom. Beardless or not, they are not a boy or girl. They are the American Fighting Soldier that has kept this country free for over 200 years. They have asked nothing in return, except our friendship and understanding. Remember them, always, for they have earned our respect and admiration with their blood.

Let Us Pray:

"Lord, hold our troops in your loving hands. Protect them as they protect us. Bless them and their families for the selfless acts they perform for us in our time of need. Amen."

Written by Unknown, Designed by Some Guy



# SUPPORT OUR TROOPS

Written by Unknown, Designed by Some Guy

Rolling Thunder®  
POW/MIA



## Gold Star Pin



Just a tiny gold pin. A token from this country in return for the life given for our freedom. This pin is sent to the widow, parents and other next of kin of a military person killed in action or serving during a military conflict.

It began with WWI, from April 6, 1917 to March 3, 1921; WWII, from September 8, 1939 to July 25, 1947; Korea, from June 27, 1950 to July 27, 1954; military conflict from June 30, 1958 'till the Vietnam War July 1, 1958 to the present.

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## What is a Gold Star Mother?

What is a Gold Star Mother?

- A Mother whose grieving heart reaches out to comfort another.
  - A Mother who feels compassion when casualty lists are read.
  - A Mother who suffered the heartache of hearing her son was dead.
  - A Mother whose dreams were shattered on a battlefield afar.
  - A Mother who has the privilege of wearing the little gold star.
  - A Mother who walks so bravely to a fallen hero's grave.
  - A Mother who loves the nation her son gave his life to save.
- This is a Gold Star Mother —  
A Mother with courage and pride, whose son went forth to battle and in line of duty died.

Author unknown



LARRY J NICHOLSON  
 JOHN D RICHARDS III  
 VICTOR B SUTTON  
 RICHARD P VALADEZ  
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 WINS C ALL L BARNES  
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## **"It is the Soldier"**

***It is the soldier,  
not the reporter  
Who has given us  
freedom of press.***

***It is the soldier,  
not the poet  
Who has given us  
freedom of speech.***

***It is the soldier,  
not the campus organizer  
Who has given us the  
freedom to demonstrate.***

***It is the soldier,  
not the lawyer  
Who has given us  
the right to a fair trial.***



***It is the soldier  
Who salutes the flag,  
Who serves under the flag,  
Whose coffin is draped in the flag,  
Who allows the protester to burn  
the flag.***

**- Charles M. Province**

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Getty photo by Dennis Brack-Pool

Lynne Jenks Spencer (left) of Rolling Thunder slips President George W. Bush a coin as the motorcycle group visited the White House on Sunday. The group pushed veterans benefits.

## Rolling Thunder rides to White House

WASHINGTON — Members of the Rolling Thunder motorcycling group roared into town for a White House visit Sunday, where they presented President Bush with his own cowhide vest jacket and pushed for increased veterans benefits.

For 21 years, Rolling Thun-

der has led a "Ride for Freedom" along the National Mall during Memorial Day weekend, a demonstration in support of soldiers held captive or missing in action.

In Kansas City, the last known living American-born veteran of World War I was honored Sunday.



107-year-old Frank Buckles is the last known living American-born veteran of World War I.

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On August 24, 2008 Rolling Thunder<sup>®</sup>, Inc. Virginia Chapter 1 rode to a farm house outside Charles Town, WV to deliver a vest and Honorary Membership to Frank Buckles. At the age of 107, Mr. Buckles is the last surviving U.S. Veteran of WWI, and former WWII Prisoner of War. Virginia 1 Chapter members presented Mr. Buckles with a leather vest with a full set of patches, a POW/MIA Ball Cap and a POW/MIA Tee-Shirt. For more than 90 minutes Mr. Buckles shared stories of his military and civilian life recalling details that left all members amazed and astonished. Everyone walked away saying this was the most memorable day of their lives.

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**POW★MIA**



**YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN**

# History of the National League of POW/MIA Families' POW/MIA Flag

In 1971, Mrs. Michael Hoff, an MIA wife and member of the National League of Families, recognized the need for a symbol of our POW/MIAs. Prompted by an article in the Jacksonville, Florida Times-Union, Mrs. Hoff contacted Norman Rivkees, Vice President of Annin & Company which had made a banner for the newest member of the United Nations, the People's Republic of China, as a part of their policy to provide flags to all United Nations members states. Mrs. Hoff found Mr. Rivkees very sympathetic to the POW/MIA issue, and he, along with Annin's advertising agency, designed a flag to represent our missing men. Following League approval, the flags were manufactured for distribution.

On March 9, 1989, an official League flag, which flew over the White House on 1988 National POW/MIA Recognition Day, was installed in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda as a result of legislation passed overwhelmingly during the 100th Congress. In a demonstration of bipartisan Congressional support, the leadership of both Houses hosted the installation ceremony.

The League's POW/MIA flag is the only flag ever displayed in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda where it will stand as a powerful symbol of national commitment to America's POW/MIAs until the fullest possible accounting has been achieved for U.S. personnel still missing and unaccounted for from the Vietnam War.

On August 10, 1990, the 101st Congress passed U.S. Public Law 101-355, which recognized the League's POW/MIA flag and designated it *"as the symbol of our Nation's concern and commitment to resolving as fully as possible the fates of Americans still prisoner, missing and unaccounted for in Southeast Asia, thus ending the uncertainty for their families and the Nation"*.

The importance of the League's POW/MIA flag lies in its continued visibility, a constant reminder of the plight of America's POW/MIAs. Other than "Old Glory", the League's POW/MIA flag is the only flag ever to fly over the White House, having been displayed in this place of honor on National POW/MIA Recognition Day since 1982. With passage of Section 1082 of the 1998 Defense Authorization Act during the first term of the 105th Congress, the League's POW/MIA flag will fly each year on Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day, National POW/MIA Recognition Day and Veterans Day on the grounds or in the public lobbies of major military installations as designated by the Secretary of the Defense, all Federal national cemeteries, the national Korean War Veterans Memorial, the National Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the White House, the United States Postal Service post offices and at the official offices of the Secretaries of State, Defense and Veteran's Affairs, and Director of the Selective Service System.

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For more information visit [www.pow-miafamilies.org](http://www.pow-miafamilies.org)

# The Rolling Thunder Story

By Anne Nicholson

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## The Beginning

In the fall of 1987, in a little diner in Somerville, New Jersey, two Vietnam veterans met to discuss their personal concerns about the prisoners of war (POW's) and military service personnel missing in action (MIA's) from the Vietnam War. Having honorably served their country, and having taken an oath to "support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies..." and to "...bear true faith and allegiance to the same", they were dismayed at how their brothers were left behind in captivity by the very leaders who sent them into battle, brothers who fought for America's freedoms who found themselves alone without anyone to fight for them. These two veterans discussed the more than 10,000 reported sightings of live Americans living in dismal captivity, which intelligence reports were generally ignored by the government and mainstream media. Those two veterans were Artie Muller and Ray Manzo.

The era of the Vietnam War was a dark time in our nation's history. The country became divided over issues of peace and war, and a distrust of government grew. In the years following, patriotism continued to wane as apathy and complacency set in. It was unfathomable for most that a civilized government such as the United States could knowingly leave their sons behind at the mercy of their cruel captors, or erroneously "kill on paper" those classified as MIA. Any talk of the government's failure to positively identify the remains of those killed or missing in action by deceptively returning misidentified bones to unsuspecting families only sounded of paranoia to most. It seemed that everyone wanted to ignore the facts and forget our heroes. That is, except for Artie and Ray.

## The First Rolling Thunder Demonstration

Artie and Ray were ordinary men who understood they had a right to have their voices heard, so they proceeded to lay down the plans for a demonstration at the Capitol building in Washington, D.C. during the 1988 Memorial Day weekend. They reached out to their families, fellow veterans and veterans' advocates to unify and form a march and demonstration in the nation's Capitol. They would announce their arrival with the roar of their Harley Davidsons, a sound not unlike the 1965 bombing campaign against North Vietnam dubbed *Operation Rolling Thunder*. So they would call themselves "Rolling Thunder", a title that would endure time and be trademarked in 1990. Word spread quickly and by Memorial Day weekend in 1988, approximately 2500 motorcycles from all over the country converged on Washington, D.C. to demand from our leaders a full accounting of all POW/MIA's. As they made their stand that day in front of the Capitol, Artie and Ray reflected on what they had accomplished that day and the support they received from their friends and other compatriots-in-kind who came to support the cause. This was Rolling Thunder's first demonstration, and only until all POW/MIA's are accounted for, it would not be their last. On that day, the foundation was laid for the annual "Ride for Freedom" to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall (also referred to as the "Ride to the Wall").

Ordinary individuals created an extraordinary unity that would only gain strength with time. The commendable efforts of Rolling Thunder have brought them into the 21st Century. Since the first demonstration, Rolling Thunder has been actively involved in the POW/MIA cause relating to wars and conflicts subsequent to the Vietnam War. After the horrific September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on America and the War in Iraq, Rolling Thunder will continue to work to ensure that all future service personnel are accounted for. With well over 2000 MIA/POW's from the Vietnam War, 41 from the 1991 Persian Gulf War, 14 from the Bosnia conflict, and those unaccounted for from other military operations and the War in Iraq, their mission is sadly far from over.

Thunder has been actively involved in the POW/MIA cause relating to wars and conflicts subsequent to the Vietnam War. After the horrific September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on America and the War in Iraq, Rolling Thunder will continue to work to ensure that all future service personnel are accounted for. With well over 2000 MIA/POW's from the Vietnam War, 41 from the 1991 Persian Gulf War, 14 from the Bosnia conflict, and those unaccounted for from other military operations and the War in Iraq, their mission is sadly far from over.

## Rolling Thunder Today

Rolling Thunder's increased notoriety has not been without its consequences and critics. Since motorcycles have been synonymous with the Rolling Thunder name, it has created a misconception of the organization's true objectives and purpose, and has sometimes overshadowed their many accomplishments and contributions to veterans and our communities. For those who know and support Rolling Thunder, they are keenly aware that the organization's advocacy of the POW/MIA issue does not begin and end each year with the Memorial Day weekend. Rolling Thunder members are active year-round promoting legislation to increase veteran benefits and resolve the POW/MIA issue from all wars, and their generosity of time, food, and clothing to veterans and their local communities is continuous throughout the year (see, *Fact Sheet*).

## Non-Profit Status & Membership

Rolling Thunder was incorporated as a class 501 C-4 non-profit organization in 1995, and is headquartered in New Jersey. Today, the organization has over 7,000 members throughout the United States, with a few in Canada, Australia and Europe. There are over 50 chartered Rolling Thunder chapters in the continental United States, and the numbers continually grow. The Rolling Thunder membership is comprised of veterans from all wars and times of peace. Their veteran members have earned such distinctions as the Medal of Honor, Medal of Valor, Bronze Star, Silver Star, Purple Heart, and others. Their membership also consists of non-veteran advocates of all ages, generations and backgrounds. Rolling Thunder also teaches the values of patriotism and community service to its youth. The National Chapter of Rolling Thunder has almost 80 junior members (ages 18 and under) who actively participate in visits to the local VA hospital, food and clothing collection for homeless veterans, and fundraising.

## Constitution and By-Laws

The Constitution and By-Laws of the organization strictly chapters, with committee members working on issues that include Government Affairs for the POW/MIA issue, Gulf War and Korean War affairs, Veteran/Community assistance, School education, and overall public awareness of the POW/MIA issue and veterans' needs. The Constitution prohibits alcoholic beverages at any Rolling Thunder sanctioned event, and violators could be subject to retraction of membership or even the dissolution of a chapter.

## Mission Statement

Skeptics of the POW/MIA cause say that any efforts to retrieve POW's are in vain. Some government officials feel it is senseless to risk the lives of soldiers to search for "old bones", as one senior military officer put it when responding to a proposal to retrieve POW's are in vain. Some government officials feel it is senseless to risk the lives of soldiers to search for "old bones", as one senior military officer put it when responding to a proposal to conduct a search and rescue of Lt. Commander Michael "Scott" Speicher (USN), the first casualty of the 1991 Persian Gulf War. When Scott's plane crashed in 1991, he was assumed dead and classified as KIA. He was "killed on paper". Years later, convincing evidence revealed Scott survived the crash, and in an unprecedented move in 2001, 10 years after Scott's plane went down, the U.S. Navy reclassified Scott from KIA to MIA, then more recently to POW as evidence of his survival and captivity in Baghdad grew. Again people found it hard to believe that we would leave a son or daughter behind, but it happened. Unfortunately Scott's story is not unique, as there are many others from past wars who suffered the same heartbreaking fate as Scott, and there is convincing evidence that some POW's from Vietnam are alive today and even possibly from the Korean War. Is Scott still alive in 2003? We don't know, but just because we don't know doesn't mean we forget about him, or forget about the others whose status remains MIA or POW. It's easy to just go on with our lives and not think of those poor souls left behind, but we can't forget.... If it were your husband or wife, brother, daughter, son or friend, would you forget???? Could you forget??? Scott's tragedy validates Rolling Thunder's position on the POW/MIA

issue, and further strengthens their mission statement that vows "...to publicize the POW/MIA issue, educate the public that many American prisoners of war were left behind after all past wars, help correct the past and to protect future veterans from being left behind should they become prisoners of war or missing in action, and secondly to help American veterans from all wars".

Rolling Thunder will continue to fight for the timely return of all POW's and the continued investigation into the fate of all MIA's from all wars. Rolling Thunder passionately follows the Army Ranger Creed that vows: "I will never leave a fallen comrade to fall into the hands of the enemy..." Rolling Thunder will continue to grow and gain strength as long as even one person remains unaccounted for.

## Number of Americans Missing & Unaccounted for from Each State as of 9-Aug-05

Alabama	34	Maryland	26	South Carolina	29
Alaska	2	Massachusetts	41	South Dakota	7
Arizona	18	Michigan	55	Tennessee	33
Arkansas	20	Minnesota	37	Texas	120
California	183	Mississippi	12	Utah	16
Colorado	29	Missouri	38	Vermont	5
Connecticut	28	Montana	19	Virginia	48
Delaware	4	Nebraska	19	Washington	45
D.C.	9	Nevada	8	West Virginia	17
Florida	60	New Hampshire	6	Wisconsin	30
Georgia	35	New Jersey	51	Wyoming	5
Hawaii	7	New Mexico	12	Canada	2
Idaho	10	New York	118	Panama	1
Illinois	73	North Carolina	44	Philippines	4
Indiana	58	North Dakota	10	Puerto Rico	1
Iowa	28	Ohio	83	Virgin Islands	0
Kansas	30	Oklahoma	40	Civilians*	8
Kentucky	14	Oregon	39		
Louisiana	24	Pennsylvania	98	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,815</b>
Maine	14	Rhode Island	8		

\*These 8 civilians do not have a listed home of record.

For more information about Rolling Thunder, or to learn how to become a member or supporter, please contact Rolling Thunder National headquarters at (908) 369-5439.

## FACT SHEET

> Incorporated in 1995, Rolling Thunder is a class 501 C-4 non-profit organization with over 70 chartered chapters throughout the United States and members abroad, while new chapters continue to form.

### VETERAN & COMMUNITY SERVICE

> In 2002, Rolling Thunder National Chapter donated over \$50,000 in financial support, food, clothing and other essentials to sanctioned veterans' groups, veterans and veterans' families in need, homeless veteran programs, women's' crisis centers and toys for children.

> In 2002, Rolling Thunder expended over \$ 170,000 educating the public and increasing the awareness about the POW/MIA issue and other injustices suffered by veterans from all wars, and to improve benefits from all wars.

> Rolling Thunder National sponsors search and retrieval missions into Southeast Asia for POW's, MIA's and the remains of those killed in action.

> Over 4,000 hours were logged in by members of the Rolling Thunder organization in the year 2002 at local VA hospitals around the country; members visited with and provided moral support to nursing home veterans, patients suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and homeless veterans.

> Rolling Thunder veterans regularly speak to youth and parents of their communities at local area schools, ROTC programs, and other community gatherings about the honor of serving their country and educating them about the POW/MIA issue.

> The organization regularly donates POW/MIA flags to local schools, various organizations and interest groups, and organizes flag raising ceremonies promoting public awareness about the POW/MIA issue.

> Rolling Thunder greatly facilitated the publishing of a POW/MIA U.S. postage stamp through the U.S. Postal Service that displayed dog tags with the declaration, "POW & MIA - NEVER FORGOTTEN".

> Rolling Thunder is on the Board of Directors of the Ride to the Wall Foundation, a veterans' fund established through the sales of the musical C.D., "Ride to the Wall", produced for Rolling Thunder XIV by the legendary Paul Revere and the Raiders in cooperation with Rolling Thunder, Inc. Proceeds of the sale of the C.D. are donated to the Homeless Veterans Foundation established by Miss America 2000 Heather French-Henry (presently the Second Lady of Kentucky).

### LEGISLATION

Rolling Thunder has advocated and co-authored legislation on the POW/MIA issue and other veteran concerns and interests.

#### Missing Service Personnel Act of 1997

Since the mid-1980's, Rolling Thunder has worked tirelessly on this bill that would guarantee missing servicemen or women could not be arbitrarily "killed on paper" by the U.S. government without credible proof of death. The bill was originally sponsored by Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell (Colorado) in 1993. Rolling Thunder co-wrote 17 resolutions to revive the bill after it was gutted by former POW, Senator John McCain. Rolling Thunder's efforts helped facilitate passing of a majority of the resolutions, and efforts continue to restore the law as it was originally written.

## Bring Them Home Alive Act of 2000

©2003 - Rolling Thunder National

Rolling Thunder also co-authored the *Bring Them Home Alive Act of 2000*, which was co-authored and sponsored by Senator Nighthorse-Campbell. The Act provides for the granting of refugee status in the United States to nationals of certain foreign countries in which American Vietnam War POW/MIAs or American Korean War POW/MIAs may be present, if those nationals assist in returning POW/MIAs alive.

## Persian Gulf War POW/MIA Accountability Act of 2002, S.1339

First introduced by Campbell on August 2, 2001, the legislation amends the *Bring Them Home Alive Act of 2000* which was signed into law in November of 2001. That law provides for the granting of refugee status in the United States to nationals of certain foreign countries in which American Vietnam POW/MIAs or American Korean War POW/MIAs may be present, if those nationals assist in returning POW/MIAs alive. The new law extends the granting of refugee status in the United States to nationals of Iraq or the greater Middle East region. It provides for the International Broadcasting Bureau, which includes Voice of America, to broadcast information about the law in the Middle East.

The necessity of this legislation is illustrated by the case of Captain Scott Speicher, a Persian Gulf War Veteran who has been missing for more than Ten Years. Speicher was originally listed as Killed in Action and is now officially listed as Missing in Action/Captured.

## The POW/MIA Memorial Flag Act (S-1226)

This bill was signed into legislation by President George W. Bush in part due to Rolling Thunder's lobbying efforts. The main force behind this bill was Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell and Congressman Dan Burton. The POW/MIA flag will fly below the American Flag any day the American flag is flown in Washington, DC at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Korean Memorial and the WWII memorial when it is completed.

### **God and the Soldier**

**God and the soldier  
All men adore  
In time of trouble,  
And no more;  
For when war is over  
And all things righted,  
God is neglected -  
And the old soldier  
slighted!!!**

*P-body (recovered)  
Author Unknown*



**Rolling Thunder® , Inc.**  
A non-profit organization for  
POW/MIAs and all American veterans

Rolling Thunder®, Inc's major function is to publicize the POW/MIA issue. To educate the public of the fact that many American prisoners of war were left behind after past wars. To help correct the past and to protect the future veterans from being left behind, should they become prisoners of war-missing in action. We are committed to helping American veterans from all wars.

# young vets in focus

## SEAL Earns Nation's Highest Military Honor in Iraq

Petty Officer 2nd Class Michael A. Monsoor saved the lives of his fellow SEALs when he made the ultimate sacrifice. As a result, he became the first sailor to receive the Medal of Honor for combat in Iraq. **By Kelly Lanigan**

**U.S.** Navy SEAL Petty Officer 2nd Class Michael A. Monsoor came from a family of military service. His father, George, and older brother, James, were Marines. So when Michael enlisted in the Navy in March 2001 and later trained to become a SEAL, it just made sense.

His younger brother, Joe, told the *Los Angeles Times* that Michael had to quit the SEAL training program his first time through because of a broken heel. Michael was assigned to Europe for two years before attempting training once more.

"He tried again and made it the second time," Danny Wright, Michael's friend, told *The Orange County Register*. "He was very proud of what he had accomplished."

Michael became a SEAL in March 2005 and deployed with SEAL Team 3 to Iraq in April 2006.

### 'Never Took His Eye Off the Grenade'

Fast-forward to Sept. 26, 2006. Michael's family was expecting him to come home in a week to watch Joe play in a Minot State University football game in North Dakota, according to the *Los Angeles Times*. Meanwhile, 25-year-old Michael stood on the roof of a house in Ramadi with three other SEALs and eight Iraqi Army soldiers. They were working with Iraqi soldiers to provide sniper security while U.S. and Iraqi forces conducted missions in the area.

When a live grenade landed on the rooftop, Michael did not hesitate. He threw his body on the grenade, saving the lives of his comrades, and sacrificing his own in the process. "He was thinking, 'I could run for it, or I could throw it,'" George Monsoor told the Associated Press. "Instead, he fell on it."

Two of the other SEALs were wounded but survived, and the other was unhurt. "He undoubtedly saved mine and the other SEALs' lives, and we owe



**Name:** Michael A. Monsoor  
**Age:** 25 at time of death  
**Service:** U.S. Navy, Delta Platoon, SEAL Team 3  
**Married:** No  
**Children:** No

him," one of the survivors told the Associated Press.

One SEAL lieutenant, who asked not to be identified for security reasons, watched Michael's heroic actions. "Mikey had the best chance of avoiding harm altogether," the officer told the Associated Press. "But he never took his eye off the grenade."

For Michael's actions, he received the Medal of Honor on April 8. His family, who accepted his posthumous award on his behalf, expected no less of his service.

"We just knew that if Mike was put in a situation like he was, he wouldn't hesitate," his mother, Sally Monsoor, told the Associated Press.

His sister, Sara, told the *Los Angeles Times*: "We knew if things were difficult there and if anything happened, Mike would be the first to jump in and try to make it better."

### 'Just a Fun-Loving Guy'

Growing up in Garden Grove, Calif., in Orange County, Michael played high school football. Patrick Barnes, one of his friends, told *The Orange County Register* that he enjoyed snowboarding, driving his Corvette, motorcycles and Halloween.

"Last Halloween [2005], he was one of the Super Mario Brothers," Barnes said upon Michael's death. "This year [2006], we were supposed to dress up as sumo wrestlers."

Friends, family and fellow sailors remember Michael as a joking but loyal person.

"He was just a fun-loving guy," said a sailor who went through SEAL training with Michael. "Always got something funny to say, always got a little mischievous look on his face."

Michael's few friends were as close as family. "He was selective about the friends he made," Barnes told *The Orange County Register*. "But when you became his friend, you became his brother."

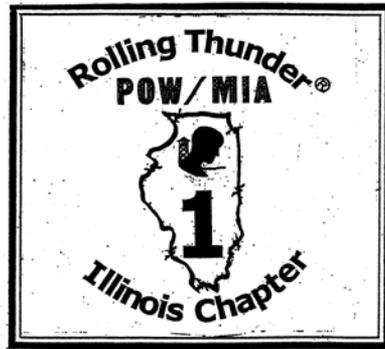
Neighbor Patricia Stanton recalled, "He was friendly and would wave whenever he did the lawn outside. He was nice, very sweet and I know he was dedicated to the service."

Immediate family members seek comfort in knowing that Michael died conducting what Rear Adm. Joe Maguire, commander of the Naval Special Warfare Command, called "some of our military's most important missions."

"He knew what he believed in and would stand by what he believed in," Joe Monsoor told the *Los Angeles Times*. "Of this, he couldn't be corrupted."

Michael, a heavy weapons machine gunner, also received a Silver Star for pulling a wounded SEAL to safety during a May 9, 2006, firefight in Ramadi. He is survived by his parents, two brothers, a sister, nieces and nephews. ☐

E-mail [klanigan@vfw.org](mailto:klanigan@vfw.org)



## **Rolling Thunder**

*by Marsha Burks Megehee*

**A thundering vigil of truth, trust and honor  
Of brothers chained, forgotten and denied  
Thank God the sounds of Rolling Thunder  
Grow louder than the presidents who lied.**

**Forgotten heroes, made to be remembered  
By a nation that sacrificed their souls to war  
This roaring fire of freedom, from just an ember  
A brother's promise - brought from near and far.**

**A parade of truth, Memorial Bridge is sighted  
Old Glory's promise flying in the wind  
Tattooed Angels, CEO's, GI Joes united  
Cry "Freedom! We have not forgotten them!"**

**The Run to The Wall where many secrets slumber  
Names, roses, gifts and loved one's tears  
On Capitol Hill they're only just a number  
Lost names no politician ever hears.**

**They thunder past the bridge at Arlington  
Phantom soldier coffins, row on row  
False tombs holding paper fathers, sons  
While secret sins of betrayal rest below.**

**Past the White House, flag of POW/MIAs  
Somber Black, head bowed, a prisoner of the past  
Rolling Thunder's promise will never go away  
Until their missing brothers - come home at last. . .**

# Homeless shelter to grow

## Wheaton approves veterans facility plans

By Clifford Ward  
SPECIAL TO THE TRIBUNE

DuPage County's only homeless shelter for veterans will triple in size after the Wheaton City Council this week approved the plan.

The Midwest Shelter for Homeless Veterans, which opened a five-person shelter in a small house last year, is planning a \$1 million addition that will increase its capacity to 15 veterans, and for the first time will include space for women veterans.

"We can help six more men and four women get off the streets and give them the opportunity to be part of the community," said shelter Executive Director Tom Mouhelis, also a City Council member.

"We've got more and more women coming home from the war every day," Robert Adams, the shelter's president and clinical director, said after Monday night's council vote.

The not-for-profit shelter at 119 N. West St. provides transitional services for veterans, including counseling, educational and job-training services. So far, about 16 men have used the shelter in the 18 months since it opened.

Adams and Robert Gahl-



Tribune file photo by Terry Harris

**The shelter at 119 N. West St. in Wheaton will be expanded to accommodate 11 male and four female homeless veterans.**

berg, a shelter adviser, said there are between 18,000 to 20,000 homeless veterans on the street each night in Illinois.

"Finding veterans is not our problem," Adams said.

The addition will increase the shelter from 2,400 to 7,400 square feet. The shelter plans to begin expansion in May and finish by October 2009, Mouhelis said. DuPage County has offered a matching grant that will pay half the cost, and the shelter is fundraising for the rest.

The City Council, with Mouhelis abstaining, approved the project unanimously and with no debate or comment. The project created little stir at the planning lev-

el, where it was unanimously recommended.

Adams said the lack of opposition indicated how well and quietly the shelter, which has a rigorous screening process, has melded into its near-downtown neighborhood.

"People come in with concerns, and they leave as volunteers," he said.

## How to contact us

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# POW/MIA

## Remembrance Table

Rolling Thunder Illinois Chapter 1 performs our Remembrance Table ceremony at many events.

Our Remembrance Table is set for (5). This place setting symbolizes all Prisoners of War and those men and women still listed as Missing in Action from all wars from the (5) branches of service.

*The chairs are empty.*

*They are not with us today.*

### **Remember**

*The tablecloth is white,  
symbolizing the purity of the  
soldiers as they went off  
to serve their country.*

### **Remember**

*The bread plates are sprinkled  
with salt, symbolizing the tears shed  
by the families as they await  
the fate of their loved ones.*

### **Remember**

*There is a lemon on each plate,  
indicative of the bitterness  
these soldiers must feel at  
being left behind by  
their country.*

### **Remember**

*The glasses are inverted.  
They cannot toast with us  
this season.*

### **Remember**

*The red rose, symbolizes the love the  
families and their fellow comrades  
have for these soldiers.*

### **Remember**

*The red ribbon on the vase, symbolizes  
the hope we all have. That someday  
these brave men and women will  
be returned to their families  
and their country.*

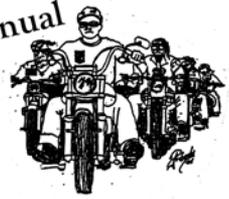
**Remember. . . .**



## Schedule of Events

8 AM – 10:00 AM	Registration and Breakfast (Available by VFW)
10:30 AM	Vendors set up
11:00 AM	Last Bike Out
1:00 PM	Bikes return/Parking in rear
1:00 PM – Close	Band – Blue Dog
4:00 PM	Last Poker Hand In
4:30 PM	Remembrance Table Ceremony
5:00 PM	Poker Hand Results
5:10 PM	Bike Show Winners Announced
5:20 PM	Mystery Raffle Results
5:30 PM	Bike Raffle Announced

7th Annual



## **“Big Thunder” Run**

October 5th 2008

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# Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office

## U.S. Unaccounted-For from the Vietnam War

Prisoners of War, Missing in Action and Killed in Action/Body not Recovered  
Report for: Illinois

Military Service	Country of Casualty	Name	Loss Rank	Status	Date of Incident	Home of Record
USMC	S. Vietnam	ALWAN, HAROLD JOSEPH	O4	XX	1967/02/27	PEORIA, IL
USAF	Laos	ANDERSON, GREGORY LEE	E4	BB	1970/01/28	WHEATON, IL
USAF	Laos	BEUTEL, ROBERT DONALD	O2	XX	1971/11/26	TREMONT, IL
USA	S. Vietnam	BIBBS, WAYNE (NMN)	E3	BB	1972/06/11	BLUE ISLAND, IL
USN	N. Vietnam	BROWN, THOMAS EDWARD	O2	BB	1966/04/29	DANVILLE, IL
USA	S. Vietnam	BROWNLEE, ROBERT WALLACE	O6	XX	1972/04/24	CHICAGO, IL
USAF	S. Vietnam	BUCHER, BERNARD LUDWIG	O4	BB	1968/05/12	EUREKA, IL
USN	N. Vietnam	BUELL, KENNETH RICHARD	O4	XX	1972/09/17	KANKAKEE, IL
USAF	Laos	BUNKER, PARK GEORGE	O3	BB	1970/12/30	HOMEWOOD, IL
USMC	S. Vietnam	BURKE, MICHAEL JOHN	E3	XX	1966/10/19	CHICAGO, IL
USAF	Laos	BYRNE, JOSEPH HENRY	O4	BB	1968/03/13	EVANSTON, IL
USAF	S. Vietnam	CARLSON, JOHN WERNER	O3	BB	1966/12/07	CHICAGO, IL
USAF	N. Vietnam	CAUSEY, JOHN BERNARD	O3	BB	1966/02/25	GRANITE CITY, IL
USA	S. Vietnam	CLINTON, DEAN EDDIE	W1	XX	1967/06/11	DIX, IL
USN	S. Vietnam	COBBS, RALPH BURTON	O4	BB	1966/06/17	EAST ST LOUIS, IL
USAF	S. Vietnam	COLLINS, WILLARD MARION	O3	BB	1966/03/09	QUINCY, IL
USA	S. Vietnam	CUNNINGHAM, KENNETH LEROY	E2	XX	1969/10/03	ELLERY, IL
USA	S. Vietnam	CZERWIEC, RAYMOND GEORGE	E5	XX	1969/03/27	CHICAGO, IL
USA		DALTON, RANDALL DAVID	E4	BB	1971/07/24	COLLINSVILLE, IL
USA	S. Vietnam	DAYTON, JAMES LESLIE	W1	BB	1968/05/06	GRANITE CITY, IL
USN	Laos	DEUTER, RICHARD CARL	O2	XX	1969/11/22	CHICAGO, IL
USA	S. Vietnam	EADS, DENNIS KEITH	W1	XX	1970/04/23	PROPHETSTOWN, IL
USN	S. Vietnam	FARRIS, WILLIAM F	E4	BB	1968/02/06	WEST SALEM, IL
USN	N. Vietnam	GALVIN, RONALD E	E2	XX	1967/03/08	RIVER FOREST, IL
USMC	S. Vietnam	GATEWOOD, CHARLES HUE	E3	XX	1968/05/31	CHICAGO, IL
USN	N. Vietnam	GERSTEL, DONALD ARTHUR	O4	XX	1972/09/08	MATTESON, IL
USN	Laos	GOLZ, JOHN BRYAN	O2	BB	1970/04/22	ROCK ISLAND, IL
USA	S. Vietnam	HERREID, ROBERT D	E5	XX	1968/10/10	AURORA, IL
USMC	S. Vietnam	HILL, JOSEPH ARNOLD	E3	BB	1968/05/28	TAYLORVILLE, IL
USA	S. Vietnam	HOUSH, ANTHONY F	E6	XX	1968/04/19	NEWTON, IL
USA	S. Vietnam	JABLONSKI, MICHAEL JAMES	E3	BB	1969/06/27	CHICAGO, IL
USMC	Laos	JANOUSEK, RONALD JAMES	O2	BB	1969/08/09	POSEN, IL
USN	N. Vietnam	KELLER, JACK ELMER	O4	XX	1966/04/21	CHICAGO, IL
USN	N. Vietnam	KNABB, KENNETH KEITH JR	O3	XX	1968/10/21	WHEATON, IL
USAF	Laos	LEMON, JEFFREY C	O3	XX	1971/04/25	FLOSSMOOR, IL
USMC	S. Vietnam	LEWANDOWSKI, LEONARD J JR	E2	XX	1966/10/19	DES PLAINES, IL
USAF	N. Vietnam	MADDOX, NOTLEY G	O4	XX	1967/05/20	ROCKFORD, IL
USAF	S. Vietnam	MARSHALL, RICHARD CARLTON	O3	BB	1965/09/05	CHICAGO, IL
USA	S. Vietnam	MASON, JAMES PHILIP	E5	BB	1968/10/17	DE KALB, IL
USAF	S. Vietnam	MCCORMICK, CARL OTTIS	O5	BB	1972/10/06	PERIOA, IL
USA	Laos	MCELROY, GLENN DAVID	O5	BB	1966/03/15	SIDNEY, IL
USN	N. Vietnam	MEYERS, ROGER ALLEN	O4	BB	1969/02/09	CHICAGO, IL
USAF	S. Vietnam	MOORE, WILLIAM JOHN	E4	BB	1966/05/18	MONMOUTH, IL
USAF	Laos	NEWBERRY, WAYNE ELLSWORTH	O3	BB	1968/09/29	EAST ST LOUIS, IL
CIVILIAN	S. Vietnam	NIEHOUSE, DANIEL LEE		KK	1966/11/25	IL
USN	N. Vietnam	NIGHTINGALE, RANDALL JOHN	E5	BB	1968/03/17	ONARGA, IL
USA	S. Vietnam	NOLAN, JOSEPH PAUL JR	O2	XX	1971/05/16	OAK PARK, IL
USA	S. Vietnam	OLSEN, FLOYD WARREN	O3	XX	1968/04/21	WHEATON, IL
USA	S. Vietnam	ORR, WARREN ROBERT JR	O3	XX	1968/05/12	KEWANEE, IL
USMC	S. Vietnam	PARTINGTON, ROGER DALE	O3	BB	1969/11/01	SPARTA, IL
USN	N. Vietnam	PERISHO, GORDON SAMUEL	O3	XX	1967/12/31	QUINCY, IL
USA	S. Vietnam	PHIPPS, JAMES L	W1	XX	1968/01/09	MATCON, IL
USN	N. Vietnam	PILKINGTON, THOMAS HOLT	O2	XX	1966/09/19	MORTON GROVE, IL

<b>Status Codes:</b>	AR - AWOL/Deserter/Collaborator/Returnee	KK - Died in Captivity, Remains Not Returned	PP - Prisoner (Civilians Only)
	BB - Killed in Action, Body Not Recovered	KR - Died in Captivity, Remains Returned	RR - POW Returnee
	BR - Body Recovered	MM - Missing (Civilians Only)	XX - Presumptive Finding of Death
	EE - Escapee	NR - Remains Returned/Remains Recovered	

This Vietnam War missing personnel report was prepared by the Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO).  
Please visit our web site at <http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo> for updates to this report and other official missing personnel reports.

Report Prepared: 2007/02/08

Page Number: 1

**Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office**

U.S. Unaccounted-For from the Vietnam War - Prisoners of War, Missing in Action and Killed in Action/Body not Recovered

Military Service	Country of Casualty	Name	Loss Rank	Status	Date of Incident	Home of Record
USMC	N. Vietnam	PRICE, WILLIAM MARSHALL	O2	XX	1972/10/12	KEWANEE, IL
USA	Laos	RATTIN, DENNIS M	E4	XX	1969/10/16	BRADLEY, IL
USAF	N. Vietnam	REXRoad, RONALD R	O3	XX	1968/04/03	RANKIN, IL
USAF	S. Vietnam	RIGGINS, ROBERT PAUL	O4	BB	1968/04/22	CHAMPAIGN, IL
USAF	S. Vietnam	ROTH, BILLIE LEROY	E5	BB	1965/06/27	LACON, IL
USN	Laos	SAGE, LELAND CHARLES COOKE	O2	BB	1969/06/23	WAUKEGAN, IL
USA	S. Vietnam	SANDS, RICHARD EUGENE	E3	BB	1968/05/12	SPRINGFIELD, IL
USA	S. Vietnam	SCOTT, DAVID LEE	E4	BB	1968/04/25	CARLOCK, IL
CIVILIAN	S. Vietnam	SHIMKIN, ALEX		MM	1972/07/12	IL
USMC	S. Vietnam	SKIBBE, DAVID WILLIAM	O1	BB	1970/03/02	DES PLAINES, IL
USAF		SMITH, JOSEPH STANLEY	O1	BB	1971/04/04	ASSUMPTION, IL
USA	S. Vietnam	STORY, JAMES CLELLON	E2	BB	1969/06/13	BERWYN, IL
USAF	N. Vietnam	STPIERRE, DEAN PAUL	O3	XX	1968/05/22	KANKAKEE, IL
USAF	N. Vietnam	SWANSON, JOHN W JR	O3	XX	1967/06/15	ARLINGTON, IL
USMC	S. Vietnam	SWITZER, JERROLD ALLEN	E2	BB	1968/03/18	PARIS, IL
USA	S. Vietnam	SYKES, DERRI	E3	KK	1968/01/09	CHICAGO, IL
USA	S. Vietnam	TERRY, ORAL R	E3	XX	1968/05/03	MASCOUTAH, IL
USN	N. Vietnam	TROWBRIDGE, DUSTIN COWLES	O2	BB	1969/12/26	WAYNE, IL
USAF	Laos	WHITT, JAMES EDWARD	O4	BB	1972/03/23	PENFIELD, IL
USA	S. Vietnam	WILEY, RICHARD DENNIS	E4	BB	1972/06/12	DECATUR, IL

**Report Totals:**

Total BB - Killed in Action, Body Not Recovered:	38
Total KK - Died in Captivity, Remains Not Returned:	2
Total MM - Missing (Civilians Only):	1
Total PP - Prisoner (Civilians Only):	0
Total XX - Presumptive Finding of Death:	32
<b>Total:</b>	<b>73</b>

<b>Status Codes:</b>	AR - AWOL/Deserter/Collaborator Returned	KK - Died in Captivity, Remains Not Returned	PP - Prisoner (Civilians Only)
	BB - Killed in Action, Body Not Recovered	KR - Died in Captivity, Remains Returned	RR - POW Returnee
	BR - Body Recovered	MM - Missing (Civilians Only)	XX - Presumptive Finding of Death
	EE - Escapee	NR - Remains Returned/Remains Recovered	

This Vietnam War missing personnel report was prepared by the Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO).  
Please visit our web site at <http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo> for updates to this report and other official missing personnel reports.

Report Prepared: 2007/02/08

Page Number: 2

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Families of MIAs:

# Keeping the Candle of Hope Burning

Families of MIAs are on a quest for answers that can lead to closure. But in some cases, it raises even more questions. Beyond a doubt, the loss felt by the family is everlasting.

BY ROBERT WIDENER

At night after her children were put to bed, Sharon Taylor would read one of the hundreds of love letters her father, 1st Lt. Shannon Estill, had written to her mother during WWII. She savored each one, hoping to understand a father she never knew.

"I was three weeks old when he was killed," said Taylor. "I don't remember a time when my mother and grandparents didn't talk about him. I knew the story."

Estill's P-38 Lightning fighter was struck by anti-aircraft fire while attacking targets in eastern Germany on April 13, 1945, just a few weeks before the war ended in Europe. But because the crash site was within the Russian-controlled sector of occupied Germany, U.S. military personnel could not recover the 22-year-old's remains after the war.

"No one knew for sure what happened to him," Taylor said, "so there was that lingering overlay that he would show up because some men did after the war. It was always an unspoken possibility."

For as many MIAs still unaccounted for today, there are a similar number of families just like Taylor's seeking answers. Tasked with fulfilling that mission is the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) in Hawaii and the Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) in Washington, D.C.

Through these agencies' combined efforts, wives, mothers, brothers and sisters come closer to knowing the fate of their missing loved ones. Some families are fortunate to find resolution when identifications are made. But others must keep



"MY FATHER'S QUEST" DRAWING BY JAMES B. SWARTZ

Love letters from Sharon Taylor's father, 1st Lt. Shannon Estill, to her mother during WWII took her on a quest to resolve his fate. Her effort led to the discovery of his crash site in 2003.

the candle of hope burning for answers that may never come.

## Love Letters Initiate a Quest

The letters from Taylor's father became her only tangible link to him over the years. In the course of reading them, Taylor came across the names of his crewmembers. In the early 1990s, she tracked down her father's crew chief, Henry

Hamm, who told stories about her father during their service together. The experience sparked the thought that with further research, she might find clues to his crash site.

"I always did everything on my own," said Taylor. "I pieced together everything because that's the way I operate. It was a process that I had to do myself."

Hamm provided Taylor with the name of a German WWII researcher, Hans Guenther Ploes, who also was an expert on WWII crash sites. Taylor traveled to Germany in 2001 and met with Ploes who took up her quest. In 2003, when examining a possible crash site in a farmer's field near Elsnig, Germany, Ploes discovered an aircraft part that matched her father's P-38. Human remains also were found.

With such strong physical evidence and Taylor's research, JPAC sent a recovery team to the site in August 2005. Taylor was allowed to join the team because of her relations with the German government over the years and her overwhelming drive to find her father.

"I spoke to team members the first day and said 'I'm here to do whatever I can,'" she said. "They loved that and handed me a shovel and said 'Here you go.'"

She had special caps made for each member along with a flag that was posted at the site each day. The caps and flag read "Team Estill." She also gave a photo of her father to each of them.

The team had two items it hoped to recover—Estill's dog tags and a baby shoe.

"My father carried one of my baby shoes in his plane," Taylor said. "The team started to get emotionally upset that they couldn't find it for me." Despite their efforts, neither item was found.

JPAC's Central Identification Lab identified remains from the recovery as Estill's in 2006. He was buried in Arlington National Cemetery that October.

Closure, however, is not a word Taylor uses to describe the end result.

"I don't think that circle ever closes totally," she said. "You always have your missing dad. When you're sitting in your house and it's all over, and everything is in boxes or files, it feels the same—you know more."



Capt. Charles J. Scharf went missing in action in 1965 during the Vietnam War.

### Love Letters Provide Final Proof

"Mayday, Mayday, Mayday!" came the transmission from the F4C Phantom II in flames. Piloted by Capt. Charles J. Scharf and co-pilot 1st Lt. Martin J. Massucci, the jet had been hit by anti-aircraft fire on Oct. 1, 1965, while on a reconnaissance mission over Son La province, North Vietnam.

Squadron members remember seeing only one chute, later determined to be a drag chute, before the plane crashed. No further contact with the downed pilots occurred, even though search efforts were made that day and afterward. Scharf and Massucci had simply vanished.

"I hoped that he was alive," said his wife, Patricia, when she heard about the shootdown. "He was a survivor, a hunter and a fisherman. And I just couldn't conceive that he would go."

When he was not among the POWs repatriated at the war's end, doubt of her husband's survival loomed for Scharf.

She took solace from the hundreds of love letters he had sent her. They had sometimes arrived two or three at a time. He wrote of a new life for the two of them, especially about starting a fam-

ily when his military service was over.

The pair had met when they were 16, and married at 18. During their 11-year marriage, they had one baby girl, but she had died shortly after childbirth.

JPAC sent three recovery teams to the site between 1992 and 2004 that yielded human remains and other artifacts indicating Scharf had been found. Among the recovered items was a Catholic scapular, a religious cloth.

"We were married in 1953, and the priest gave each of us one at the altar," said Scharf. "Chuck carried his in his wallet."

That particular scapular was unique to the time period and helped to provide one layer of confirmation. Positive identification was hampered, though, when a mitochondrial DNA sample from one of Scharf's maternal relatives came back inconclusive. The scientists then approached Scharf for any personal items she may still have of his.

"I said 'How about the envelopes from the love letters he had sent me?'" she said. "I had a box full of them."

The experts at the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory were able to extract DNA from the saliva on the stamps and envelopes Scharf had licked. It was the proof they needed.

"When I got the word that Chuck had been identified, I had great relief," said Scharf, "because in the back of my mind, I knew he never suffered."

Scharf visited JPAC in October 2006 to claim her husband's remains. In a chapel at the facility, she had time to be alone with the casket.

"He was buried with a new uniform and his medals," she said. "Inside the casket I placed a few of the love letters, a note from me and a picture of when we were last together in Hawaii."

Her trip took another emotional turn when traveling back to Virginia. The plane landed in Texas, but before passengers were allowed to leave, the stewardess announced that they were bringing back the remains of a Vietnam War MIA. The passengers listened quietly, and then applauded. That's when the stewardess pointed out Scharf, who stood and spoke to them.

"I am so honored that you feel proud that you have men fighting for you," she told them. "And we do bring back our

PHOTO COURTESY PATRICIA SCHARF

men. There will be other men brought back and please honor this. They are there so that we can sleep at night and be at peace."

#### **DPMO's Family Update Program**

A large number of families are not as fortunate as those of Taylor and Scharf. For them, the answers will be a lifetime in coming, if at all. In order to keep them apprised of developments, DPMO has hosted briefings for family members since 1995.

Annually, eight such gatherings are conducted in cities across the U.S., and two in Washington, D.C. They afford the families an opportunity to hear firsthand from representatives of Department of Defense agencies and the service casualty offices involved in the MIA effort.

Helen Famuliner, a VFW Ladies Auxiliary member, attended one of the meetings in Kansas City in August 2007. She had questions concerning her first husband, Pfc. Ralph K. King. The 24-year-old was reported missing during the Korean War when he and another soldier were helping a wounded

buddy back to their lines. None of them made it back, though.

"They found no trace of my husband or his equipment, so I was led to believe he was taken prisoner," said Famuliner. She found out in 1998 that the wounded soldier her husband had helped was a POW repatriated at the war's end.

"I didn't get to talk to him because I didn't learn about the details until after he had died," she said.

King's brother, Don, along with nine other family members, also attended the update program. Several of King's children are interested in continuing to seek answers because King was lost in North Korea, which has barred MIA searches since 2005.

King says the update program "gives some hope that someday they might find him."

Thomas Klingner, also at the Kansas City meeting, keeps hope, too, that someday they'll find his brother, Capt. Michael Klingner, an F-100 jet pilot. He was shot down over Laos on April 6, 1970.

"Other people don't come back—but not my brother," said Klingner.

JPAC has been to Klingner's crash site several times, but other than his identification card, no remains were found. His blood chit, an aviator's personal information scarf, curiously turned up in Vietnam's Hue Military Museum in 1992. Officials there, however, are not cooperating.

According to the deputy assistant secretary of Defense, DPMO, Ambassador Charles Ray, the family update programs are "a creation of the desire of people in America to have answers.

"The one thing that might not seem obvious to people is despite how long ago a loss took place," Ray said, "the emotion and sense of loss is greater with the passage of time when they don't have answers.

"It's important for those who don't have missing family members to understand the importance of this mission. The freedoms that we enjoy and take for granted were built on the sacrifices of these men and women. Our freedoms were paid for in blood." ❁

*E-mail [rwidener@vfw.org](mailto:rwidener@vfw.org)*

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## **The history of "POW-MIA Recognition Day"**

Until July 18, 1979, no commemoration was held to honor America's POW/MIAs, those returned and those still missing and unaccounted for from our nation's wars. That first year, resolutions were passed in the Congress and the national ceremony was held at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. The Veterans Administration published a poster including only the letters "POW/MIA" and that format was continued until 1982, when a black and white drawing of a POW in harsh captivity was used to convey the urgency of the situation and the priority that President Ronald Reagan assigned to achieving the fullest possible accounting for Americans still missing from the Vietnam War.

National POW/MIA Recognition Day legislation was introduced yearly, until 1995 when it was deemed by Congress that legislation designating special commemorative days would no longer be considered by Congress. The National League of Families proposed the third Friday in September as National POW-MIA recognition day. The President now signs a proclamation each year.

Recognition Day Ceremonies are now held throughout the nation and around the world on military installations, ships at sea, state capitols, at schools, churches, national veteran and civic organizations, police and fire departments. The League's POW/MIA flag is flown, and the focus is to ensure that America remembers its responsibility to stand behind those who serve our nation and do everything possible to account for those who do not return.

## “ 13 FOLDS OF THE AMERICAN FLAG. “

**First** fold of our flag is a symbol of life.

**Second** fold is a symbol of our belief in the eternal life.

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**Fourth** fold represents our weaker nature, for as American citizens trusting in God, it is to Him we turn in times of peace as well as in times of war for His divine guidance.

**Fifth** fold is a tribute to our country, for in the words of Stephen Decatur, "Our country, in dealing with other countries, may she always be right; but it is still our country, right or wrong."

**Sixth** fold is for where our hearts lie. It is with our heart that we pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

**Seventh** fold is a tribute to our Armed Forces, for it is through the Armed Forces that we protect our country and our flag against all her enemies, whether they be found within or without the boundaries of our republic.

**Eighth** fold is a tribute to the one who entered in to the valley of the shadow of death, that we might see the light of day, and to honor mother, for whom it flies on mother's day.

**Ninth** fold is a tribute to womanhood; for it has been through their faith, love, loyalty and devotion that the character of the men and women who have made this country great have been molded.

**Tenth** fold is a tribute to father, for he, too, has given his sons and daughters for the defense of our country since they were first born.

**Eleventh** fold, in the eyes of a Hebrew citizen, represents the lower portion of the seal of King David and King Solomon, and glorifies, in their eyes, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

**Twelfth** fold, in the eyes of a Christian citizen, represents an emblem of eternity and glorifies, in their eyes, God the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost.

When the flag is completely folded, the stars are uppermost, reminding us of our national motto, "In God we Trust."

After the flag is completely folded and tucked in, it takes on the appearance of a cocked hat, ever reminding us of the soldiers who served under General George Washington and the sailors and marines who served under Captain John Paul Jones who were followed by their comrades and shipmates in the Armed Forces of the United States, preserving for us the rights, privileges, and freedoms we enjoy today.

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By Thom Wilborn



## Every Day Is POW-MIA Recognition for Families

The taxi parks in the darkness near the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. Deanna Klenda steps out carrying a bouquet of wheat and a personal note to her brother Dean. She begins what she describes as the long walk to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. There on the second panel is the name: Maj. Dean A. Klenda. It's a journey she has made every year for 23 years.

Tears flow as Deanna tells her story of the special day of remembrance for her missing brother, even though she thinks of him daily. She places the bouquet of wheat from their family farm in Marion, Kan., at the base of the panel inscribed with Dean's name. "That is where I really have contact with him," she said.

"The neat part of it is while I stand there quietly, there is always someone, no matter what time of night, who comes over to put an arm around me and ask if I need a hug. One time a little girl came over and said, 'Lady, do you need a hug?' It really tore my heart out."

Maj. Klenda was the pilot of an F-105 Thunderchief shot down over then North Vietnam on Sept. 17, 1965. He was last seen ejecting from his aircraft. Nothing of him has been found despite three excavations near the crash site.

Jo Anne Shirley of Dalton, Ga., remembers her brother, Maj. Bobby M. Jones, most on his birthday.

"It's his day," she said. "But I remember him every day." Jones, a flight surgeon, was aboard an F-4 Phantom that disappeared from radar as it approached Da Nang Air Base in Vietnam on Nov. 28, 1972. He is still missing. "My biggest motivation is that someday my brother and I will meet face-to-face again. I want him to know I did all I could for him. I want him to be proud of me."

National League of POW/MIA Families Executive Director Ann Mills Griffiths remembers her brother U.S. Navy Reserve Lt. Cdr. Jim Mills, on special occasions like Memorial Day, Veterans Day, POW/MIA Recognition Day, and his birthday. "Those are the kind of days that you automatically think about him and what if he was here," she said.

"I can't afford to think about him all the time," said Griffiths. "My interest is for everybody else. If I focused on my brother it would affect the accountability of everyone else."



Deanna Klenda holds her brother Dean's portrait, decorations and his folded American flag.

Lt. Cdr. Mills disappeared in an F-4 Phantom while on a night low-level bombing mission on Sept. 21, 1966. For 40 years, there's been no word on what happened to him.

Dean Klenda, Bobby Jones and Jim Mills are among the 1,802 missing from the Vietnam War. Their sisters are among the thousands of siblings, parents and children who yearn for closure to the loss of their loved ones. For some, closure has come. For others, members of the Department of Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) will continue the search.

This was true for Terri Knudsen, whose uncle, Walter S. "Daisy" Knudsen, was lost during World War II, but his remains were recovered 60 years later. "He was never forgotten by the family," she said. "He was a huge void in our lives. His birthday was the day we remembered him more than any other."

"The pain and abandonment the MIA families feel cannot be easily healed," said National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson. "They live each day with hope that diminishes little by little over decades. They hope and dream, and in some cases the remains of their loved ones are found. But it is the families of those who are never found that will continue to suffer."

On Sept. 15, the nation will commemorate National POW/MIA Recognition Day in honor of the thousands of Americans who were prisoners of war or who remain missing. For the families of those missing it is an important day in which the service and sacrifices of POWs and MIAs are acknowledged and remembered. But each family has a personal day—a day in which their loved ones are remembered in a special way.

"While Memorial Day and Veterans Day honor all of our soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines, this observance specifically honors those Americans who were or who are prisoners of

war or missing in action," said Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of DPMO Robert J. Newberry. "I believe it also helps remind our nation about those who remain missing and helps ensure that they are not forgotten."

"These families watched one day as their loved one left and never returned," said DAV Interim POW/MIA Committee Chairman William B. Taylor. "They think about their loss constantly. It's a great void inside which you cannot fill."

Deanna lives only 30 yards from a creek where she and her brother used to fish. "He left his legacy around the farm," she said. "I still have a void in my life."

After her brother disappeared, Deanna volunteered at the Oakland, Calif., Naval Hospital. "That helped me fill the void of Dean's loss for many years," she said.

She also became a flight attendant for World Airways, which took millions of American service members to Vietnam, and then home again. "I always wondered 'what if he showed up and got on my plane?'" she said. "When I was flying over Vietnam, I thought, 'He's down there somewhere.'"

The members of the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) will return to Vietnam to scour the "somewhere" for Maj. Klenda's remains. "They have new evidence," she said. "He stays alive because there are people looking for him. Every year my hopes go up again. If they bring even a piece of bone home, that would be enough because we would know he would be home. It would bring closure. I'd have him very near to me."

JPAC teams will also be searching for Maj. Jones. "I haven't abandoned hope, but I'm realistic," said Shirley. "I think our goal is to account for Bobby. I have seen many miracles in the 34 years we've been involved with this. I won't rule out that I will never get an answer, but I have become very realis-

tic about what the chances are."

Bobby Jones was two years older than his sister Jo Anne. "We were very close," she said. "At first you think they will find him. That didn't happen. In my opinion, he's still serving."

"I feel we have an obligation to bring them all home," she said. "Having a MIA in a family gives you an appreciation of the sacrifices being made today for our freedom. It's what makes us free."

"I say every day is POW-MIA Day for me," she said. As Board Chairman for the National League of POW/MIA Families, Shirley does what she can do to resolve issues for those who have lost loved ones U.S. Army Air Corps Staff Sgt. Knudsen,



Staff Sgt. Walter S. "Daisy" Knudsen, who was aboard a bomber that crashed into a jungle mountainside during a routine training flight in New Guinea during World War II, was returned home to his family 61 years later.

nicknamed "Daisy" because of his flowing blond hair, disappeared on his first training mission near Paupa, New Guinea in 1944. It was believed the B-24 Liberator bomber named *Five by Five* encountered bad weather and crashed in a jungle mountain. Six decades later, his remains were recovered

*(Continued on page 27)*

## POW/MIA

(Continued from page 17)

by members of JPAC.

"When we got that call, I cried," said Terri Knudsen. "It was unbelievable they found his remains 61 years later. I told my dad the plane had been found and he was speechless. For him 1944 was like yesterday."

"I think the family thought of him most on his birthday and they never knew what happened to him," she said. The family provided DNA samples in case remains were ever found.

The family found closure when DPMO Mortuary Affairs Specialist Paul A. Bethke briefed the family. "It was very emotional," said Knudsen. "We were finding out what happened and saw the irrefutable evidence they had."

"Bethke presented the horrible facts surrounding the accident, a terrible crash and fire," she said. "Then he handed over a silver identification bracelet, and my Dad said, 'that's him.'"

Sgt. Knudsen was buried April 22, 2006, in Sioux City, Iowa. For the family, the story had ended.

"Many of the families tell us they were astounded to learn that anyone remembered, and even more amazed that our specialists were able to find and identify the remains of their miss-



Painting of U.S. Navy Reserve Lt Cdr. Jim Mills painted by noted artist Tom Nielsen.

ing loved ones," said DPMO's Newberry. "Some have told us they never knew DNA could play a role in the identification, and they appreciate the fact that we sought them out."

"I think DAV does will in its mission for the fullest possible accounting of MIAs," said Taylor. "DAV must continue to do more and do better. We must always remind our leaders in government to help bring our missing home to their loved ones."

"I think it's hardest on parents and siblings because they know the loved ones best," she said. "Many of the children were younger and don't remember. But those who were older have suffered greatly."

Proud of her work for the POW/MIA families, Griffiths focuses on the missing loved ones of others. "We have today 781 accounted for out of the Vietnam War, and that's hundreds more than anyone thought we'd ever get," she said. "I think that's important to today's veterans and active duty service members. What we started will be there for them."

As for finding Jim Mills, she believes there's "no reason to be overly optimistic, but no reason to believe he won't be found."

"What we started has become an obligation of the U.S. government," said Griffiths. "Even if I never get answers about my brother, we have created a legacy that goes on."

"Every family member of a POW or MIA must deal with their lost loved ones in their own way," said Violante. "It is our goal that as many families as possible get the answers they are searching for and as many MIAs as possible can be recovered."

"POW/MIA Recognition Day is an important event for thousands of families," Violante said. "It is a time that our nation remembers the promise, as the DAV does, that as many as possible will be brought home." **D V**

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# young vets in focus

## Woman Medic Earns Silver Star in Afghanistan

In the midst of a severe firefight, Spc. Monica Brown calmly treated the wounded, proving her mettle.

By Janie Blankenship

At 18 years old, Army Spc. Monica Brown found herself dodging bullets and using her body as a shield to protect wounded troops in battle. For her actions on April 25, 2007, in the Jani Khail district of Afghanistan, the medic received the Silver Star, the first for a woman serving in Afghanistan.

Incidentally, Brown is only the second woman to earn that honor since WWII. (Sgt. Leigh Ann Hester of the 617th Military Police Company received the Silver Star in 2005 for gallantry during an insurgent ambush in Iraq.)

A member of the 782nd Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Brown was based at Camp Salerno, near the Pakistan border. But when C Troop of the 4th Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment, was set to go out on patrol, it needed a medic because theirs was on leave.

"We had other medics to choose from," Capt. Todd Brook, C Troop's commander, told *Paraglide*, the publication of the 82nd Airborne Division, "but Brown had shown us that she was more technically proficient than any of her peers."

Having been on patrol for a couple of days, the five-truck convoy was returning to base when the last truck hit an improvised explosive device, which destroyed it. The vehicle in front of the destroyed Humvee stopped. Brown jumped out amid insurgent fire and ran to the burning vehicle with her platoon sergeant, Staff Sgt. Jose Santos.

Brown and the less-wounded soldiers moved the others away from the flames and into a low stream bed. That was still too close as rounds of ammunition began exploding in the truck. More than once, Brown shielded the seriously wounded with her body.



SPC. MONICA BROWN (U.S. ARMY PHOTO)

**Name:** Monica Brown

**Age:** 20

**Service:** Army, 782nd Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division

**"I did not really think about anything except for getting the guys to a safer location and getting them taken care of and getting out of there."**

—Army Spc. Monica Brown

They were caught between enemy fire and blasts from the truck. But Brown continued to treat Spc. Stanson Smith and Spc. Larry Spray, both of whom had life-threatening injuries.

"Rounds were literally missing her by inches," Spc. Jack Bodani, who was providing Brown's cover fire, told *Paraglide*.

Lt. Martin Robbins told *The Washington Post*: "There was small-arms fire coming in from two different machine-gun positions, mortars falling ... a burn-

ing Humvee with 16 mortar rounds in it, chunks of aluminum the size of softballs flying all around. It was about as hairy as it gets. I was surprised I didn't get killed and she'd been over there for 10, 15 minutes longer."

Santos got one of the unit's vehicles and backed it up to Brown's position so the wounded could be loaded and transported a few hundred meters away for medical evacuation.

"I did not really think about anything except for getting the guys to a safer location and getting them taken care of and getting out of there," Brown told *The Associated Press*.

Smith and Spray were eventually flown to the U.S., where they recovered. Sgt. Zachary Tellier received the Bronze Star for pulling Spray out of the burning Humvee, but was killed five months later in a firefight.

"I've seen a lot of grown men who didn't have the courage and weren't able to handle themselves under fire like she did," Staff Sgt. Aaron Best, Robbins' gunner that day, told *The Washington Post*. "She never missed a beat."

Brown, who turned 20 in May, was 17 when she graduated from Brazos River Charter School in Morgan, Texas, and also when she enlisted in the Army. She joined at the same time her brother, Justin, did. While he went into the infantry, Brown wanted to be a medic.

"At first, I didn't think I could do it," she told *Paraglide*. "When I saw my first airway-opening operation, I threw up."

Vice President Dick Cheney presented Brown's Silver Star on March 21, 2008, in Afghanistan.

After her enlistment is finished, Brown hopes to go to nursing school and sign up for ROTC. After earning her degree, she plans to return to the military.

E-mail [jblankenship@vfw.org](mailto:jblankenship@vfw.org)

6 SEPT 2007

BY SARA HOOKER

shooker@dailyherald.com



MARCELLE BRIGHT/mbright@dailyherald.com

Kitty Murphy, owner of the Book Nook, passes out flags Wednesday in downtown Lisle in anticipation of the arrival of the American Veterans Traveling Tribute.

# An exhibition of thanks

Veterans traveling tribute stops in Lisle

LaSalle Bank employee Karen Olynyk stood along Lisle's Main Street Wednesday afternoon holding the American flag — and she knew exactly who she needed to thank for that.

She and about 50 other downtown workers and patrons lined the road to greet the American Veterans Traveling Tribute, a memorial to those who have died for their country, as it rolled into town escorted by more than 75 motorcycles.

"They're the ones who let us stand in the street today," Olynyk said as she helped fold a large American flag. "There should have been more (people to greet the wall), but I think people will be there this weekend."

Bruce Springsteen's "Born In The USA" blasted from one motorcycle as it traveled with the wall from Heritage Harley-Davidson down Ogden Avenue to its position on the old village hall site at Burlington Avenue and Main Street.

The tribute wall, engraved with the names of more than 58,000 fallen members of the armed services, should be seen as a celebration of freedom, organizers say, and not a cemetery.

"This is not a morbid place,"

said Don Allen, CEO of American Veterans Traveling Tribute. "We have an obligation to celebrate that freedom that they gave us. That's what they would have wanted."

The 80 percent replica of the Vietnam Wall in Washington, D.C., stands 8 feet high and 370 feet long and will be open for viewing 24 hours a day through Sunday.

The wall honors all those who died in service during Vietnam and since, including those on Sept. 11, 2001, and in Afghanistan and Iraq.

"It's respect remembering our fallen heroes," Rolling Thunder and ride organizer Steve Pletzke said. "This is why America is a free country — for those 58,000 names."

Throughout the weekend, the wall will serve as an educational experience for children and as the site of several ceremonies, including a memorial to those who died Sept. 11.

The visit is a combined effort among the Ross Bishop VFW Post 5696, the village, the Lisle-Woodridge Fire District, the Lisle Visitors and Convention Bureau, and Rolling Thunder Illinois Chapter 1.

Opening ceremonies begin at 6 p.m. today with the raising of the colors, pledge of allegiance, national anthem, prayer service, and a speech by state Rep. Jim Meyer of Naperville.

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# young vets in focus

## 'Iron-Souled Warrior' Awarded First Medal of Honor for Afghanistan Service

Lt. Michael Murphy receives nation's highest honor for sacrificing his life in an effort to save his fellow SEALs.

By Janie Blankenship

From an early age, Navy Lt. Michael Murphy was known as the "protector" for the way he looked after those who couldn't stand up for themselves. It's a title he kept until the day he died trying to save his fellow SEALs on a remote mountaintop in eastern Afghanistan.

For his heroic actions on June 28, 2005, Murphy was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor—the first awarded for service in Afghanistan and the first for a sailor since the Vietnam War.

In an Oct. 22 ceremony at the White House, parents Dan and Maureen Murphy accepted the medal on behalf of their son. A Patchogue, N.Y., native, Murphy is the 18th Long Islander to be awarded the nation's highest honor.

"It's almost like a snapshot of how he lived his life," Maureen told *Newsday*. "We know how he lived his life, but now the nation knows."

Murphy and his three men were on a mission—*Operation Redwing*—to track a high-ranking Taliban warlord when their cover was blown by a goat herder. Soon they came under attack from dozens of armed insurgents and were pinned down. The 29-year-old Murphy was shot while running into the open to radio Bagram Air Base for help.

Tragically, the rescue helicopter he called in was shot down, killing 16 U.S. troops on board, including eight SEALs. Among those was 28-year-old James Suh, one of Murphy's closest friends. It proved to be the deadliest day for SEALs since the program began in 1962. (Five were killed in an accidental helicopter crash in Vietnam on June 23, 1970.)

Murphy, Sonar Technician 2nd Class Matthew Axelson and Gunner's Mate 2nd Class Danny Dietz were killed as they tried to get down the mountain. Blasted over a ridge by a rocket-prop-



**Name:** Michael Murphy  
**Age:** 29 at time of death  
**Service:** U.S. Navy, SEAL Team 10

pelled grenade, Petty Officer 1st Class Marcus Luttrell is the lone survivor of the firefight, having been rescued by a local shepherd. He later called Murphy "an iron-souled warrior of colossal, almost unbelievable courage."

"Mikey took a bullet straight to the back," Luttrell told *Navy Times*. "I saw the blood spurt from his chest. He slumped forward, dropping his phone and rifle. But he braced himself, grabbed them both and once more put the phone to his ear."

In his book, *Lone Survivor: The Eyewitness Account of Operation Redwing and the Lost Heroes of Seal Team 10*, Luttrell pays tribute to his fallen friends. Axelson, Dietz and Luttrell all were awarded the Navy Cross.

### 'Protector' Lives Up to His Name

Murphy graduated from Penn State in 1998 with degrees in both political science and psychology. Like his father—a Vietnam veteran—had done more than 30 years before, Murphy put law school on hold to join the Navy.

"I think he liked the fact that there were people out there trying to protect other people," Daniel told *Newsday*.

In 1970, Daniel found himself on Nui Ba Den, a dormant volcano northwest of Saigon. It was there he was wounded while serving with the Army. Losing many friends in that war, he said, left him skeptical at the time his son chose to enlist. Today, Daniel says he is proud of his son's accomplishments in Afghanistan.

"I have no regrets," Daniel says, "except that we lost him."

According to Murphy's Navy biography, he was an all-star athlete and honor student, excelling at ice hockey, with reading tastes ranging from Greek historian Herodotus to Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. His favorite book was Steven Pressfield's *Gates of Fire*.

In November 2005, Murphy was to marry his fiancée Heather Duggan, who told *Newsday* that she misses Murphy's friendship more than anything.

Daniel told *Navy Times* that his son carried with him a patch from the New York City Fire Department's Engine Company 53 and Ladder Company 43, known as El Barrio's Finest, as a symbol of why he was in Afghanistan. In that firehouse there is a memorial to Murphy. A photo of Murphy hangs there, and according to Daniel, the firefighters touch it every day for good luck before heading out on a call.

"Michael felt that he was doing something important," Daniel said. "To root out, capture and kill those who were responsible for 9/11." ❧

E-mail jblankenship@vfw.org

**Editor's Note:** If you know of any outstanding young veterans of this caliber, please feel free to let us know.

# Vietnam MIA 'McGoon' coming home for burial

By Richard Pyle  
Associated Press

Chicago Tribune  
— ONLINE EDITION —

October 23, 2006

NEW YORK -- Half a century after he died in the flaming crash of a CIA-owned cargo plane and became one of the first two Americans to die in combat in Vietnam, a legendary soldier of fortune known as "Earthquake McGoon" finally is coming home.

The skeletal remains of James McGovern Jr., discovered in an unmarked grave in northern Laos in 2002, were identified last month by laboratory experts at the U.S. military's Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command.

They are to be flown back to the mainland this week for a military funeral Saturday in New Jersey, said McGovern's nephew, James McGovern III of Forked River, N.J.

Six feet and 260 pounds--huge for a fighter pilot--McGovern carved out a flying career during and after World War II that made him a legend in Asia. An American saloon owner in China dubbed him "Earthquake McGoon," after a hulking hillbilly character in the comic strip "Li'l Abner."

He died on May 6, 1954, when his C-119 Flying Boxcar cargo plane was hit by ground fire while parachuting a howitzer to the besieged French garrison at Dien Bien Phu.

"Looks like this is it, son," McGovern radioed another pilot as his crippled plane staggered 75 miles into Laos, where it cartwheeled into a hillside.

Killed along with "McGoon," 31, were his co-pilot, Wallace Buford, 28, and a French crew chief. Two cargo handlers, a Frenchman and a Thai, were thrown clear and survived.

Ho Chi Minh's communist forces captured Dien Bien Phu the next day.

Although civilians, McGovern and Buford, an ex-World War II bomber pilot, we die in combat in the Asian country where war would kill nearly 60,000 American Vietnamese.

Dr. Thomas Holland, director of JPAC's Central Identification Laboratory, said McGovern was only the second person ever identified through "nuclear" DNA from a male relative--a particularly difficult task with bones that are decades old. Most cases rely on mitochondrial DNA, from female relatives.

In 1944, McGovern went to China as a fighter pilot in the 14th Air Force's "Tiger Shark" squadron, descended from the famous Flying Tigers. According to Felix Smith, a retired pilot of the CIA-owned Civil Air Transport and a McGovern friend, he was credited with shooting down four Japanese Zero fighter planes and destroying five on the ground.

At war's end in 1945, McGovern signed on with Civil Air Transport, or CAT, which was under contract to Chiang Kai-shek's Chinese Nationalist regime, then fighting a civil war against Mao Tse-tung's communists.

Captured by communist troops after a forced landing, "McGoon" was freed six months later. Colleagues joked that his captors got tired of feeding him.

In 1997, an American MIA team investigating an unrelated case found a C-119 propeller at Ban Sot, and a JPAC photo analyst spotted possible graves in aerial photos.

Excavation in 2002 uncovered remains that turned out to be McGovern's.

-----  
About the battle

The Battle of Dien Bien Phu ended in May 1954 after a 57-day siege by Vietnamese communists of a French army base. It signaled the end of French colonial power in Indochina, helping set the stage for the lengthy Vietnam War that ended with the fall of the U.S.-backed South Vietnamese government in 1975.

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www.chicagosuburbannews.com/snapshots/234041 Staff photos by Erica Benson  
 Jim Murray of St. Charles (left), Howard Bushnell of Glen Ellyn and Bill Houghtaling of Naperville, members of Rolling Thunder, discuss ideas for veterans Feb. 21 with 6th District U.S. Rep. Peter Roskam.

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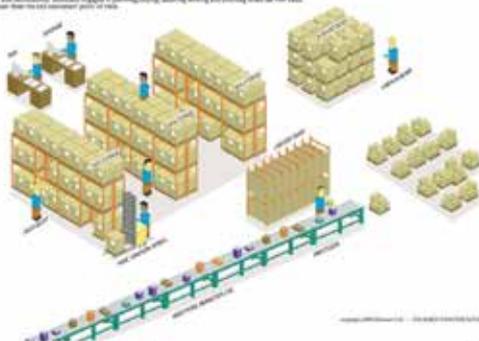
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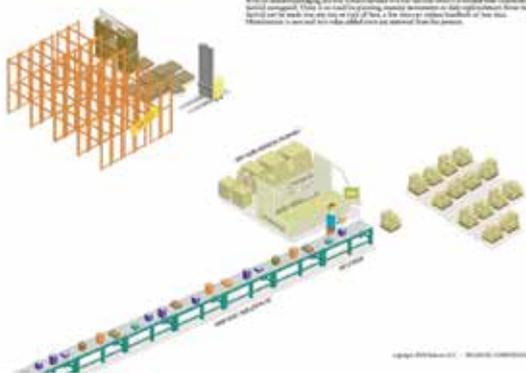


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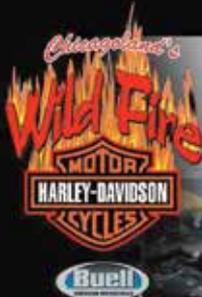
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