

The Thunder Gazette

Published by Rolling Thunder® Inc. Chapter 1 Ohio

May, 2017

PLEASE NOTE

BIKE BLESSING & VETERANS TRIBUTE SERVICE

**HAMBDEN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
13840 GAR Highway (Rt. 6)
Hambden Twp.**

Sunday, May 21, 2017

**Meet at Chardon Square at 9:30 a.m.
departure at 9:45 a.m.
Service to start by 10:15 a.m.**

**Picnic to follow the service at Hambden Twp.
Park. Bring a dish to share.**

**The membership meeting will follow the picnic at
Hambden Twp. Park (1:00 p.m.)**

To be a member in good standing, one must:

- a. Attend at least 3 meetings & 3 events per year;
- b. Pay the annual membership dues of \$30/yr;
- c. Abide by the Membership Patch rules;
- d. Remain loyal to Rolling Thunder® in word, deed and action;
- e. Conduct him/herself in a professional and courteous manner at all times.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, May 20, 2017 - Flag raising at Bedford, OH fire department - 1:00 p.m.

Sunday, May 21, 2017 - Bike blessing & veterans tribute, Hambden Congregational Church - see above information

Memorial Day Weekend - Run to the Wall - Washington, DC

Friday, June 9 - 11, 2017 - Bedford Strawberry Festival

Saturday, June 10, 2017 - Military Night at Lake County Captains, Eastlake, OH

Sunday, June 11, 2017 - Board / Membership Meeting - 1:00 / 2:00 p.m.

Saturday, June 17, 2017 - Cookout at the Domicillary - set-up at 10:30 a.m.; serve at noon.

Saturday, June 17, 2017 - State Run

Saturday, June 24 and Sunday, June 25 - Macedonia Walmart - 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Education Team Schedule

Thursday, June 1, 2017 & Friday, June 2, 2017 - South East High School, Ravenna, OH - 7:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

"The American Flag does not fly because the wind moves past it. The American Flag flies from the last breath of each military member who has died protecting it."



**CHAPTER OFFICERS, BOARD MEMBERS
AND PLATOON LEADERS**

PRESIDENT WINSTON BAILEY 440-639-2222

VICE-PRES DAVE BUSH 216-408-2639

SECRETARY CHERYL PILNY 440-543-8468

TREASURER ANDY KLUSH 330-620-6047

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
LEW BALLARD 440-942-1688

BOARD MEMBERS

TED PILNY 216-346-6407
LARRY FELEAN 440-439-4914
CHUCK KETTLER 216-401-4984
TOM TROJAN 440-384-0744
MIKE NEILAN 440-241-2655
(ALTERNATE) JEFF BRADY 440-669-1794

CHAPLAIN DAN MCGINNIS 330-618-1720

RUN COORDINATOR OPEN

MEMBERSHIP SUSAN BAILEY 440-639-2222

QUARTERMASTER
FRANK FOX 440-494-7165
GERI PHILLIPS 440-494-7165

ASST. QUARTERMASTER
LEW BALLARD 440-942-1688

SARGENT AT ARMS
OPEN

NEWSLETTER STAFF
CHERYL PILNY 440-543-8468

PLATOON LEADERS:

#1 MIKE NEILAN 440-241-2655

#2 RONNIE DINGER 216-799-5539

#3 TOM BLECHSCHMID 440-349-2470

#4 SALLY FELEAN 440-439-4914

#5 TOM TROJAN 440-384-0744

#6 VIKKI CARROLL 440-283-7766

#7 SUSAN BAILEY 440-639-2222

STATE LIASION TY GEISER 330-466-0086

ASST. STATE LIASION
AL KECK 216-374-3310

WE CARE YVONNE GIERMAN 440-285-3864
arphersfolks@windstream.net

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS
CLAUDETTE WLASUK 216-281-8810
VIKKI CARROLL 440-283-7766

COORDINATOR FOR WADE PARK VISITS
VICKI CARROLL 440-283-7766

EVENTS CHAIR JEFF BRADY 440-669-1794

PUBLIC RELATIONS CHUCK KETTLER 216-401-4984

EDUCATION CHAIR DAN MCGINNIS 330-618-1720

Address: Rolling Thunder Chapter 1 Ohio
P. O. Box 1145
Mentor, OH 44060

Web Site Address: www.rollingthunder1ohio.org
Webmaster: CHIP KETTLER 330-472-0871
Please send any pictures you may have to Chip at
ckkettler@yahoo.com

**Check us out on Facebook: Rolling Thunder
Chapter1 Ohio**

MISSION STATEMENT

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.

EACH AND EVERY INDIVIDUAL DONATES HIS OR HER TIME BECAUSE THEY BELIEVE IN THE ISSUES AT HAND.

Our Adopted MIA/POW – Gregory Harris



Remains Identified

WWII Remains Identified:

U.S. Army Air Forces 1st Lt. Ewart T. Sconiers
U.S. Navy Ensign William M. Thompson
U.S. Army Tech. 4th Grade John Kovach, Jr.
U.S. Army Air Forces Pvt. Harold S. Hirschi
U.S. Navy Seaman 1st Class Milton R. Surratt
USMC 2nd Lt. George S. Busse
U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Michael Aiello
U.S. Army Pfc. Lonnie B.C. Eichelberger

Korean War Remains Identified:

U.S. Army Cpl. Daniel F. Kelley
U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Richard G. Cushman
U.S. Army Cpl. Leslie R. Sutton
U.S. Army Pvt. Walter F. Piper
U. S. Army Cpl. Richard J. Seadore
U.S. Army Cpl. Frank L. Sandoval
U.S. Army Cpl. John Lane
U.S. Army Cpl. Glen E. Kritzwiser

Government Affairs by Gus Dante (Federal Legislative & Government Affairs for National chapter)

The 115th Congress has begun January 3, 2017. All legislation that was introduced in the 114th congress will have to be reintroduced with ALL new bill numbers. Gus contacted Rep. Leonard Lance's (R-NJ 7) office on reintroducing H.R. 4910. This is now The Bill reads as follows: "To Amend Title 36 US Code to require that the POW/MIA Flag to be displayed ALL DAYS that the US Flag is Displayed, especially over the US White House and the US Capitol."

Gus is working on a companion bill in the Senate and has contacted New Jersey Senator Cory Booker's office in which he spoke to Michael Songer, a Military Advisor who will work with Rep. Lance's office. ALL Chapters of Rolling Thunder®, Inc. throughout the country will be notified to help make this legislation Law. We must continue to pressure our representatives to promote and pass legislation that pertains to the POW/MIA and Veteran related issues.

Gus is also working with the AOC (Architect of the Capitol) on the placement of the POW/MIA Chair of Honor Memorial. The manufacturing and cost of the plaque is the only obstacle and this obstacle is expected to be resolved soon.

Remember: You are the voice of our POW and MIAs.

Below is a listing of the Ohio representatives.

District	Name	Room	Phone
1	Chabot, Steve	2371 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515	202-225-2216
2	Wenstrup, Brad	2419 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515	202-225-3164
3	Beatty, Joyce	133 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515	202-225-4324
4	Jordan, Jim	2056 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515	202-225-2676
5	Latta, Robert E.	2448 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515	202-225-6405
6	<u>Johnson, Bill</u>	1710 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515	202-225-5705
7	Gibbs, Bob	2446 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515	202-225-6265
8	Davidson, Warren	1004 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515	202-225-6205
9	Kaptur, Marcy	2186 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515	202-225-4146
10	Turner, Michael	2368 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515	202-225-6465
11	Fudge, Marcia L.	2344 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515	202-225-7032
12	Tiberi, Pat	1203 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515	202-225-5355
13	Ryan, Tim	1126 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515	202-225-5261
14	Joyce, David	1124 ongworth House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515	202-225-5731
15	Stivers, Steve	1022 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515	202-225-2015
16	Renacci, Jim	328 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515	202-225-3876

Contacting Representatives by phone

Hello, my name is _____, and I'm calling today from Rolling Thunder® Inc. Chapter 1 Ohio. I would like to speak with the Staffer who handles Military/Veterans Affairs.

Make sure you make clear why you are calling:
If you make contact with the **MA (Military Affairs)** staffer, tell them you would like for their boss Congressman/woman _____ to cosponsor:
H.R. 504- To amend title 36, US Code, to require that the POW/MIA flag be displayed on ALL DAYS that the flag of the United States is displayed.

If you don't make contact, leave **Voice Mail message** **Why you are calling** and have them call you back.

More than likely they will want you to **email them**, but leave **Voice Mail** and also email them. **Get the spelling of the MA.** House emails are usually. john.doe@mail.house.gov

After your email, and speaking with the MA, give them about a week. If you don't hear back from them, then call back to see if they are going to cosponsor H.R. 504.

To contact by mail or email:

To:

Subject: Cosponsoring H.R.504

My name is _____ member of Rolling Thunder®, Inc. Chapter 1 Ohio. I am emailing you to have your Boss, Rep. _____ to cosponsor

H.R.504- To amend title 36, United States Code, to require that the POW/MIA flag be displayed on all days that the flag of the United States is displayed on certain Federal property.

This is a bipartisan issue and a 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." This will be a reminder that the families of our missing and the public that our government has not forgotten those that did not come home.

I appreciate your time in this matter.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Your Name: _____

To date there are still only two co-sponsors to this bill—none from OHIO. Get those letters sent!

Other bills that are being worked on:

H. Res. 219- Rep. Walker R-NC-6: Establishing a Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs.

H. Res. 129/ S.61: Calling on the DOD, other elements of the federal Government and foreign governments to intensify effort to investigate, recover, and identify all missing and unaccounted for US personnel.

H.R. 299/ S. 422: Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2017.

For information on these bills go to links:

<https://www.congress.gov> or <https://www.govtrack.us/accounts/login>

More information may be found on the Rolling Thunder, Inc. National's website under the heading "Government Affairs" www.rollingthunder1.com The Toxic Exposure Bill known as HR1769 and companion SR901 was added to a veteran package Bill HR5416 which passed in the 114th Congress on December 16, 2016. Thank you to all who called and emailed their elected representatives in advocating for its passage. Also very instrumental in passing the Bill was our Capitol Hill visits during Conference in November. Gus also pointed out that Ed Rutledge of Indiana will be working on Government Affairs. Ed's report may be found on the RT website under "Government Affairs".

Korean War veteran's 'final mission' is to find POWs he helped free

POSTED 7:25 PM, MAY 3, 2017, BY [TRIBUNE MEDIA WIRE](#)

NOBLESVILLE, Ind.-- Sgt. Charles Layton was 6,000 miles from home and 21-years-old when he became a prisoner of war.

In the early 1950s he spent four months in captivity in the bitter cold, suffering daily beatings.

"The pain was so intense," said Layton. "I couldn't speak for several days. I wish I could rip it from my memory out of my head. Even with shoes on I can still feel the pain."

The memories, now 65 years old, haunt him still.

"I knew I had to do it for us to escape. I had no alternative but to kill the guards," he said. "Taking somebody's life is not a happy memory, and I felt tremendously guilty and carried that guilt a long, long, long time."

He thought he was going to die.

"They were butchers," Layton told CBS4. "They would slap you. They would hit you. They would punch you. They would kick you."

He survived, and so did dozens of others because of his heroism. He led a group of POWs into the fight for their lives.

"When the guards came on duty and got warm and they were intoxicated we made a noise at the back guard. And he came in and we took him down," said Layton.

It took more than 60 years for the hero to share the story. No one knew, including his wife and children, until he wrote it in his book.

Today, the Purple Heart recipient lives in Noblesville, Indiana. Unfortunately, he can't find the heroes he helped escape captivity.

"My goal has been to try to find somebody that was with me, and I have been unsuccessful," he said.

He knows there were 36 others. Two of them were French, but he didn't know anyone's names.

"The guys that I was with, I never saw a face because we were bearded, dirty, filthy," he said.

He's worried this mission to find his friends could fail.

"I want to hug 'em. I would be pleased as punch to find one. I'm 88. What are my chances?" he asked.

Layton's wife and friends are concerned they're running out of time.

There aren't many resources for situations like this. The V.A. and a Korean War veterans non-profit put out word with no luck.

Here are some essential components of his story:

- Layton was captured early November 1951 and held until late February 1952
- He was approximately 12 miles north of the 38th Parallel
- Layton served with the 22nd Ranger Battalion and was with both the 2nd Infantry Division and 7th Division
- Friendly forces picked up Layton and the others after an L-19 airplane spotted them; he doesn't know how far they walked but said the walk lasted about five hours

If you'd like to help, share this story on social media.

Ohio History -- Did You Know? Johnson's Island

When the Civil War began, the Union felt the war would be over quickly. After the early battles in 1861, the War Department changed its thinking, realizing that the south had enough determination, men, and materials to continue the war for several months. Also, the Union was able to see that the war would involve the capture of thousands of Confederate prisoners. As a result, Col. William Hoffman was ordered to establish a system of prisons in the north to incarcerate the prisoners of war.

The Great Lakes area was seen to be a good location for a Prisoner Of War depot. The area was separated from Canada by the Great Lakes and far enough away from the southern battlefields to decrease the possibility of raids to release the prisoners. Also, the area was accessible for the transportation of prisoners.

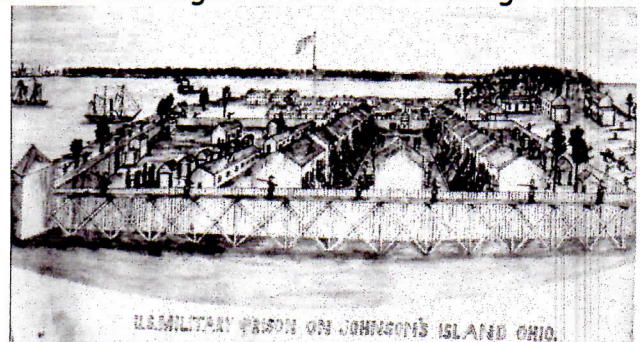
In the fall of 1861, Col. Hoffman toured the north shores of the Union to find suitable sites for prisons. In some instances, existing military camps were enlarged and utilized. In others, new prisons were erected.

Johnson's Island was chosen for a new prison site in the fall of 1861. It was an attractive site for many reasons. It was an island fairly well isolated, yet accessible by boat for most of the year. Accessibility was important to transport the prisoners quickly to the island and to supply food and materials for 3,000 POWs and a standing guard garrison of at least 1,000 soldiers. Also, in the event there ever was a riot or insurrection at the prison, Union Militia could easily reinforce the guard garrison. There was a forty-acre site already cleared on the side of the island facing the city of Sandusky which was only two and one half miles by boat from the island. Sandusky Bay was an excellent source of water for the needs of several thousand prisoners and the guard garrison. The city of Sandusky was a rail head, transferring goods to and from boats. The infrastructure needed for the transportation of several hundred POWs at a time was already in place for the most part. The island was inhabited only by the owner L. B. Johnson and his family. In addition, the military could control ingress and egress to the island. Even the Johnson family had to have permission to leave and return to the island.

In November of 1861, work started on the guard barracks, prison stockade, and barracks for the prisoners. A total of 12 Prison Blocks of various sizes were constructed inside the stockade. An additional block, No. 6, was the prison hospital. Originally, the prison was to hold both officers and soldiers. The first four blocks were divided into smaller rooms to accommodate both officers and soldiers. The War Department then decided to imprison only officers at Johnson's Island, and the remaining blocks were divided into three large rooms on each of the two floors. Each prison block had a kitchen at either end of

the ground floor in which to cook meals. Due to the availability of materials and workmen and, most importantly, good weather, the stockade site was completed enough to accept the first prisoners by mid April of 1862. Most of them were captured at Fort Donelson and Island No. 10. The remaining work was completed after the prison was in use.

During the 40 months the Depot was in operation, over 9,000 prisoners crossed Sandusky Bay to the Federal Docks and then were confined in the twelve prison blocks inside the stockade. Periods of confinement varied depending on when the prisoners arrived. For the most part, the first prisoners in 1862 were exchanged after only five months while those arriving after Gettysburg in July 1863 stayed for 12 to 18 months. The average number of prisoners confined at any one time was probably 2,000 to 2,500. The maximum number confined was approximately 3,200 prisoners in January of 1865. This number was considerably larger than the capacity based on available bed space. After the Civil War ended, the Prison Depot was decommissioned in September 1865. The last nine prisoners, including two diehards who refused to take the oath of allegiance and two who were charged with piracy, left the island on September 5th. The buildings, lumber, and surplus materials and equipment needed to run the prison were auctioned off during 1865 and 1866. Leonard Johnson, owner of the island, was the best bidder for the buildings and lumber, which he eventually sold. A few of the buildings were brought across the ice to Marblehead and used as dwellings. None of the buildings remain.



Chaplain's Corner

(Submitted by Dan McGinnis)

Grace To Be His Ambassadors

"So we are Christ's ambassadors, God making His appeal as if it were through us. We (as Christ's personal representatives) beg you for His sake to lay hold of the divine favor (now offered you) and be reconciled to God. 2 Corinthians 5:20

One time while reading about a famous minister and his great faith, I was deeply impressed by all the wonderful things he did in his ministry. I thought, "Lord, I know I'm called, but I could never do anything like that." Just that quickly, I sensed the Lord speak to my heart, "Why not? Aren't you as big a mess as anybody else?"

You see, we often have it backward. We think God is looking for people who "have it all together." But that is not true. The Word of God says that God in His grace and favor chooses the weak and foolish things of the world in order to confound the wise. (1 Corinthians 1:27) He is looking for those who will humble themselves and allow Him to work His will through them.

If you will be careful not to get prideful, the Lord can use you just as mightily as any of the other great men and women of God. He doesn't choose us because we are able, but simply because we are available. That, too, is part of God's grace and favor that He pours out upon us when He chooses us to be Christ's personal ambassadors.

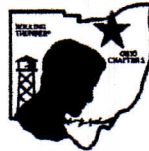
God wants you to have a dream for your life. And He wants you to walk it out by His grace as you put your faith in Him.



Pictures from the Willoughby flag raising:



Armed Forces Day - A great day to recognize and thank our military retirees, veterans and those currently serving this great nation.



**POW-MIA'S
"WE WILL NEVER FORGET"**

PRESS RELEASE

May 1, 2017

Willoughby, Ohio

POW/MIA Flag Presentation

Rolling Thunder Chapter 1 Ohio coordinated a special ceremony on Saturday April 22, 2017 for the purpose of presenting to the City of Willoughby, Ohio a **POW/MIA commemorative flag** to be prominently displayed as part of their Veteran's Memorial in front of City Hall. Approximately 20 Rolling Thunder Chapter 1 members were in attendance on this sun filled special day. Also participating were Mayor David Anderson, several city council members, numerous city first responders, many local residents and several members of the Willoughby American Legion Post 214 in ceremonial attire.

Flag Ceremony Chairman, Lew Ballard, a Vietnam Army veteran, conducted the ceremony by explaining initially that the Rolling Thunder organization was formed approximately 30 years ago with the express purpose to demand a full and complete accounting of all the Missing in Action and the Prisoners of War from the Vietnam War. Since its beginning, however, the organization has grown and matured and its purpose has been expanded to include POW/MIAs, from all wars, as well as many services we as an organization provide to our veteran community in ongoing support. Mr. Ballard shared the Rolling Thunder Mission Statement. "Except for those directly affected by the loss of a family member, friend, or neighbor, the public at large is not aware of the scope of this issue", Mr. Ballard explained." And this brings us to our purpose for this ceremony".

Special music was provided by two student Cellists Meriam Derai and Mathew Zabatta. In addition to playing the military theme music representing each service branch, they also provided a moving rendition of the National Anthem which received a rousing acknowledgement by everyone in attendance.

Mr. Ballard offered sobering statistics in his comments:

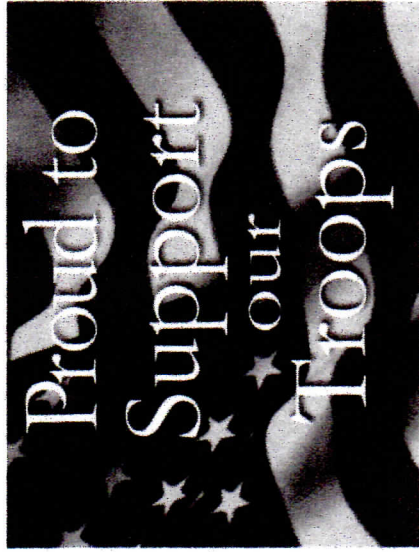
Combined POW/MIAs from WWII and Korean War 73,515; Cold War – 126; Desert Storm – 0; Operation El Dorado Canyon – 1; with a total of 83,100 unaccounted for effective November 30, 2015 as provided by DPAA (The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency).

Two attending Rolling Thunder chapter members assisted in attaching the flag and hoisting it on the Veteran's Memorial flag pole. With sun filled blue skies as a back drop, the POW/MIA flag was a moving sight snapping in the breeze on the glinting flag pole.

American Legion Post 214 welcomed all attendees to their facility after the ceremony closing to enjoy their community "Open House" picnic which was appreciated by everyone.

Submitted by:
Chuck Kettler
Public Relations Chairman
Rolling Thunder Chapter 1 Ohio

HONORING AND SUPPORTING OUR MILITARY AND THEIR FAMILIES



PLEASE JOIN US ON MEDINA'S
HISTORIC SQUARE

SATURDAY, MAY 20, 2017 AT 7:30 PM
FOR A CANDLELIGHT VIIGIL

Presented by Rolling Thunder, ® Inc. Ohio Chapter 8
Medina Ohio



For more information please call Becky or Dave Blackmore (330) 723-0116



Hambden Congregational Church
13840 GAR Highway (Rt. 6)
Hambden Twp.

Welcomes Rolling Thunder®
to a Bike Blessing and Veterans Tribute Service

All Are Invited To Join Us
Sunday May 21, 2017

All Motorcycles are to gather on Chardon Square at 9:30 AM

for departure at 9:45 AM

Service to start by 10:30 AM

A picnic gathering to be held at Hambden Twp. Park

Please bring a dish to share with all

Hamburgers, Hotdogs, and drinks provided by

Hambden Congregational Church

Cooking to be done by Chardon V. F. W.

Clean up and other assistance by The Young Marines