

The Thunder Gazette

Published by Rolling Thunder® Inc. Chapter 1 Ohio

December, 2016

PLEASE NOTE

OUR NEXT MEMBERSHIP

MEETING WILL BE HELD AT

**V.F.W. POST #6768
8584 Olde Eight Rd.
Northfield, OH**

**SUNDAY, December 18, 2016
2:00 p.m.**

We will be having a pot luck buffet immediately following the meeting. Bring a dish to pass and come and celebrate the season.

**Board Meeting
December 18, 2016
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, December 17, 2016 - 9:30 a.m. -
Wreaths Across America - Western Reserve
Cemetery - Rittman, OH - Meet at Section 11 at
10:00 a.m.**

**Sunday, December 18, 2016 - Board
Meeting/Membership Meeting - 1:00/2:00 p.m. -
Pot luck buffet following the meeting.**

**Saturday, January 14, 2017 - 6:00 p.m. - Dinner
at Mama Roberto's**

**Sunday, January 15, 2017 - Board Meeting/
Membership Meeting - 1:00/2:00 p.m.**



OUR VETERANS NEED STUFF

We are collecting items for the inpatients at the VA Hospital at every meeting. Please help our veterans who have served our country honorably. Here is the monthly list (socks are always welcome):

January	Body wash
February	Deodorant
March	Toothpaste/Brush
April	Shaving Cream
May	Denture cleaner
June	Shampoo/conditioner
July	Body wash
August	Deodorant
September	Toothpaste/Brush
October	Shaving Cream
November	Lotion
December	Shampoo/conditioner

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AND PLATOON LEADERS**

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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



See attached letter from Mary Ann Reitano

Remains Identified

WWII Remains Identified:

U.S. Army Air Forces Staff Sgt. Byron H. Nelson
U.S. Navy Yeoman 3rd Class Edmund T. Ryan
U.S. Army Air Forces Capt. Albert L. Schlegel
U.S. Army Air Forces 1st Lt. Robert E. Moessner

Korean War Remains Identified:

U.S. Army Cpl. George A. Perreault
U.S. Army Cpl. James T. Mainhart
U.S. Army Sgt. Homer R. Abney
U.S. Army Cpl. Gerald L. Shepler
U.S. Army Cpl. Edward Pool
U.S. Army Sgt. Stafford L. Morris
U.S. Army Master Sgt. Joseph Durakovich
U.S. Army Cpl. Lewis A. Damewood
U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Harold P. Haugland
U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Robert R. Cummings



Government Affairs POW/MIA by Gus Dante (National):

It's been a very slow year in getting legislation passed. The 114th Congress will be ending December 31st going back to their states, so if you happen to be out and see your representative, approach him and ask him to support legislation for our Veterans. We only have a few more weeks and they won't return until after January 20, 2017.

All the bills we are supporting have to be reintroduced with new numbers. Hopefully we can get someone to help me so we can get these numbers right and get them out to the chapters. The bills for HR5256 VA Construction Act and S2921 Veterans First Act and those two bills incorporated in that is the Toxic Exposure Act. That's the only reason we should push that entire bill unless someone comes up in the 115th Congress and reintroduces a bill for the Toxic Exposure Act. I will be contacting the VVA who initiated that bill in Silver Springs, MD and will probably reintroduce that bill under another number.

We had one representative, Heck, who was defeated but Bob Rivers and group met and had a great meeting with a Major from his office. Also, we will see what happens and who will take on that committee which was the House Arms Service Sub Committee Military Personnel and that's why this bill was stuck on the House side. Everyone did a great job on the Hill.

Dinner With Veterans - 12 / 6 / 2016

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

Aahhhh...there is nothing quite like a hot Italian dinner on a cold November night to bring veterans and RT friends together for an evening.

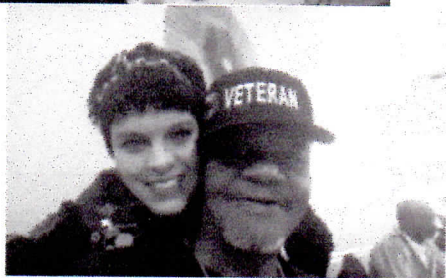
That's just what happened when **Rolling Thunder® Chapter 1 Ohio** teamed up with the folks at Mama Roberto's Restaurante in Mentor, Ohio to host an evening dinner for the veterans from the Domiciliary facility attached to the Louis Stokes V A Hospital in Cleveland Ohio on November 16, 2016.

Mama Roberto's was pleased to provide a complimentary open menu for the veterans to choose from to satisfy their individual Italian tastes. Over 37 veterans were in attendance along with more than 20 Rolling Thunder® Chapter 1 members, attending at their own expense, to dine and interact with the vets.

The conversations were lively with friendly and sometimes spirited comments between the service branches represented. At some point, a chess board magically appeared at one of the tables and RT Chapter 1's Webmaster, Chip, took on all veteran challengers as the waitresses were taking the menu orders. Even though he won one or two matches, he thinks the vets were "much better than they let on" and were kind enough to "guide him" to his victories.....

Mama Roberto's is a regular supporter of Rolling Thunder® Chapter 1's veteran's events with regular food support. The chapter could not provide as many dining opportunities for our veteran events throughout the year without their on-going generous support. If you ever visit historic Mentor, Ohio, please set aside time for a dinner stop. They are located at 8658 Mentor Ave.

You and your taste buds will not be disappointed!!



Veterans Advocate Information: (Claudette Wlasuk)

Christmas isn't happy for all. Here are numbers that may be of help. In addition to these, your local vet orgs are another source of help. Some places to share like VFW, AL, Rolling Thunder®, DAV, AMVET.

Offices are located in Federal Bldg (east 9th) Cleveland, Ohio. There are also some advocate offices at Wade Park. Services are no charge.

American Veterans (AMVAETS), Room 1017E, 216-522-3500

American Legion (AL), Room 923, 216-522-3504

Disabled American Veterans (DAV), Room 1015, 216-522-3507

Jewish War Veterans (JWV), Room 1023, 216-522-2446

Marine Corps League (MCL), Room 1360, 216-522-3515

Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH), Room 1023, 216-522-7234

Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), Room 1027, 216-522-7709

Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), Room 1013A, 216-522-3510

**Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA), Room 1013B,
216-522-3119**

County Veterans Service officer and the Disabled American Veterans are also providing assistance at the Parma Outpatient Clinic on Brook Park Road too.

Cuyahoga Veteran Service Commission
site: <http://vsc.cuyahogacounty.us/>; (for those outside Cuyahoga county, contact them for locations . . . or use your search engine for (example) Lorain County Veteran service commission.

Veterans Suicide Hotline 1-800-273-8255

Chaplain's Corner

(submitted by Dan McGinnis)

A Fragile Gift

When we give a fragile gift, we make sure it is marked on the box that contains it. The word "fragile" is written with big letters because we don't want anyone to damage what is inside.

God's gift to us came in the most fragile package: a baby. Sometimes we imagine Christmas day as a beautiful scene on a postcard, but any mother can tell you it wasn't so. Mary was tired, probably insecure. It was her first child, and He was born in the most unsanitary conditions. She "wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn" (Luke 2:7 NKJV).

A baby needs constant care. Babies cry, eat, sleep, and depend on their caregivers. They cannot make decisions. In Mary's day, infant mortality was high, and mothers often died in childbirth.

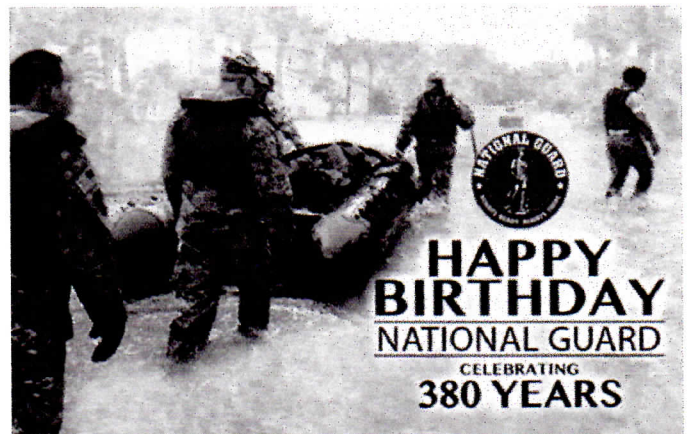
Why did God choose such a fragile way to send His Son to earth? Because Jesus had to be like us in order to save us. God's greatest gift came in the fragile body of a baby, but God took the risk

because He loves us. Let us be thankful today for such a gift!

Dear Lord, the Strong and Mighty One, I thank You for becoming small and fragile on that day long ago. It amazes me that You did that for me and the rest of Your world.

May you know the peace of Christmas every day of the year.

Thank a Veteran: A veteran - whether active duty, retired or national guard or reserve - is someone who, at one point in their life, wrote a blank check made payable to The United States of America & its citizenry for an amount of "up to and including my life."



September 20, 2016

Dear Winston, Ron and Claudette and the rest of RT CH 1 of Ohio ,

On behalf of the entire family of Marine Cpl. Gregory J. Harris, we want to once again thank you for your continued support in our efforts to bring our Marine home. For the 5th year in a row, you all have graciously and generously offered us money to cover our hotel costs as we attend the annual Vietnam POW/MIA Family Meetings in Washington, DC. We will be forever in your debt for your dedication and love towards Greg. Your annual donation is an integral part.

This year was a very pivotal year in the POW/MIA issue as the first year of the new organization that the DoD and Congress decided to reorganize in 2014. 2015 was a year of continued upheaval as the DoD could not figure out how to exactly reorganize their accounting agencies. After three attempts with various reorganization teams, the plan was moved forward in mid 2015 with much push back from families because of the lack of transparency and the broken promises that were made to families to get us on board with the reorganization when it first began. Once Congress and the press had moved on to more pressing matters, the DoD pulled away from families and family groups and did what they wanted.

Therein lies the basis of the ongoing problems within the DoD. They have made every attempt to put families at arm's length and remove them from the process, making us feel like outsiders. The simple fact is, little has changed in this new, costly reorganization. Families are still being mistreated and misled, Vietnam cases in particular have taken a back seat to WWII and Korea due in no small part to their numbers and not the complexity of the cases.

For decades, WWII researchers have worked quietly and constructively and most on their own dime, to solve thousands of cases only to have their efforts fall on deaf ears when they pass their finding on to the DoD. Their regular excuse is that they cannot send an entire team to some remote area of France to recover one man. With the reorganization also came a mandate from Congress that the DoD needed to have the capacity to account for 200 missing men annually. Suddenly these WWII and Korean War cases that have been sitting around suddenly had value to the DoD because they needed to boost their numbers. I personally know researchers who have waited years to see the cases they resolved acted upon. Now, to get Congress off their backs and to give the general public the impression that they have solved their problems, they are now going after these dormant cases with new zeal. Men whose remains have been sitting at the National Cemetery in Hawaii for decades are finally being processed and the DoD is taking credit for the work done by these selfless researchers. These researchers are amazing people, who do the work for the sake of the missing and could care less about the glory—these are true patriots.

Yet, this focus on WWII and Korea leaves Vietnam left as an afterthought. It was announced at this year's meetings that in the 12 months that had passed since we last met, only NINE men had been identified from Vietnam. That for us, is a very sad statistic.

Going further, we learned that our case analyst, who has been assigned our case for just over two years, had done next to nothing for us. In fact, only one thing. We had put together a list of actions we wanted her to take on Greg's case. After much run around, we were finally able to get those papers in her hands this past November with the promise that she would get these nine specific things done for us. In March, we checked in with her only to find out that she had been temporarily reassigned to the Office of the Secretary of Defense and for some five months was away from her desk with no one covering her work. When we made noise about it, she was soon back to her desk and we were promised that all of the tasks we requested would be taken care of by the June meetings.

Sadly, we sat down with her in June only to find out that the first thing on the list, which was a request for copies of something, was submitted just the week before we met with her. When we became angry at this, she openly admitted to us that her first responsibility was to the Department of Defense, not to us. We have since requested a new case analyst and in typical DoD fashion, they have given us someone we do not know, someone who is new to the agency and has no POW/MIA experience whatsoever. In fact, we learned that almost all of the analysts in the Southeast Asia area are brand new.

While to some, this information may dampen their spirits but have no fear, to us it only strengthens our resolve. We will not let them treat Greg in this fashion and we'll find a way to, at the very least, to force them to do their jobs.

In closing, we thank you all for your unwavering support of our efforts and we consider you all part of our family. Life has gotten in the way so many times but we still hope to someday be able to come out and see you all and thank you all in person for your love for Greg. He was a very humble young man, quiet and somewhat soft-spoken and I have been told over and over again by those who knew him that if he were ever to know all that has been done in his honor, he would blush and most likely be brought to tears.

I leave you all with this photo of Greg that was taken of him by one of his fellow Marines one afternoon at their Chu Lai Airbase in South Vietnam. It was shared with us just last spring when one fine Marine and his wife came through New York on vacation. We had never seen this before, and we love it.

Warm regards,

Mary Ann

Mary Ann, Chris and Family





One Man's Annual Tribute To Our Veterans Inspired A Legion Of Volunteers And Gave Rise To The Wreaths Across America Of Today

Morrill Worcester, owner of Worcester Wreath Company of Harrington, Maine, was a 12 year old paper boy for the *Bangor Daily News* when he won a trip to Washington D.C. His first trip to our nation's capital was one he would never forget, and Arlington National Cemetery made an especially indelible impression on him. This experience followed him throughout his life and successful career, reminding him that his good fortune was due, in large part, to the values of this nation and the veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country. In 1992, Worcester Wreath found themselves with a surplus of wreaths nearing the end of the holiday season. Remembering his boyhood experience at Arlington, Worcester realized he had an opportunity to honor our country's veterans. With the aid of Maine Senator Olympia Snowe, arrangements were made for the wreaths to be placed at Arlington in one of the older sections of the cemetery that had been receiving fewer visitors with each passing year. As plans were underway, a number of other individuals and organizations stepped up to help. James Prout, owner of local trucking company Blue Bird Ranch, Inc., generously provided transportation all the way to Virginia. Volunteers from the local American Legion and VFW Posts gathered with members of the community to decorate each wreath with traditional red, hand-tied bows. Members of the Maine State Society of Washington, D.C. helped to organize the wreath-laying, which included a special ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

"The annual tribute went on quietly for several years, until 2005, when a photo of the stones at Arlington, adorned with wreaths and covered in snow, circulated around the internet." The annual tribute went on quietly for several years, until 2005, when a photo of the stones at Arlington, adorned with wreaths and covered in snow, circulated around the internet. Suddenly, the project received national attention. Thousands of requests poured in from all over the country from people wanting to help with Arlington, to emulate the Arlington project at their National and State cemeteries, or to simply share their stories and thank Morrill Worcester for honoring our nation's heroes.

Unable to donate thousands of wreaths to each state, Worcester began sending seven wreaths to every state, one for each branch of the military, and for POW/MIAs. In 2006, with the help of the Civil Air Patrol and other civic organizations, simultaneous wreath-laying ceremonies were held at over 150 locations around the country. The Patriot Guard Riders volunteered as escort for the wreaths going to Arlington. This began the annual "Veterans Honor Parade" that travels the east coast in early December.

"The annual trip to Arlington and the groups of volunteers eager to participate in Worcester's simple wreath-laying event grew each year until it became clear the desire to remember and honor our country's fallen heroes was bigger than Arlington, and bigger than this one company." The annual trip to Arlington and the groups of volunteers eager to participate in Worcester's simple wreath-laying event grew each year until it became clear the desire to remember and honor our country's fallen heroes was bigger than Arlington, and bigger than this one company.

In 2007, the Worcester family, along with veterans, and other groups and individuals who had helped with their annual veterans wreath ceremony in Arlington, formed Wreaths Across America, a non-profit 501-(c)(3) organization, to continue and expand this effort, and support other groups around the country who wanted to do the same. The mission of the group is simple.

In 2008, over 300 locations held wreath-laying ceremonies in every state, Puerto Rico and 24 overseas cemeteries. Over 100,000 wreaths were placed on veterans' graves. Over 60,000 volunteers participated. And that year, December 13, 2008 was unanimously voted by the US Congress as "Wreaths Across America Day".

In 2014, Wreaths Across America and its national network of volunteers laid over 700,000 memorial wreaths at 1,000 locations in the United States and beyond, including ceremonies at the Pearl Harbor Memorial, as well as Bunker Hill, Valley Forge and the sites of the September 11 tragedies. This was accomplished with help from 2,047 fundraising groups, corporate contributions, and donations of trucking, shipping, and thousands of helping hands. The organization's goal of covering Arlington National Cemetery was met in 2014 with the placement of 226,525 wreaths.

The wreath-laying is still held annually, on the second or third Saturday of December. WAA's annual pilgrimage from Harrington, Maine to Arlington National Cemetery has become known as the world's largest veterans' parade, stopping at schools, monuments, veterans' homes and communities all along the way to remind people how important it is to **remember, honor and teach**. Wreaths Across America also conducts several programs to honor our veterans, including the popular "Thanks a Million" campaign which distributes cards to people all over the country to give veterans a simple "thank you" for their service. WAA participates in veterans' events throughout the year, and has a veteran liaison on staff to work with local veterans organizations. WAA is committed to teaching younger generations about the value of their freedoms, and the importance of honoring those who sacrificed so much to protect those freedoms. The organization offers learning tools, interactive media projects, and opportunities for youth groups to participate in the events. They also work to create opportunities to connect "the Greatest Generation" with the "Generation of Hope", passing on inspirational stories from World War II veterans to the leaders of the future. Wreaths Across America would not be successful without the help of volunteers, active organizations and the generosity of the trucking industry, which offer invaluable support to WAA's mission to remember the men and women who served our country, honor our military and their families, and teach our children about our freedom and those who protect it. There are many ways you can help—[learn more](#) about how you can get involved.



“WE WILL NEVER FORGET”

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

What have we gained in the past years? Together we have passed legislation for our Troops and our Veterans. We continued to put pressure on our Government to do something about the POW/MIAs that were left behind and never returned. The Government and Legislators in Washington know Rolling Thunder and our Mission. But much more has to be done, we still need answers as to what happened to the live POWs left behind. During the Vietnam War Hanoi publicized live captured American POWs on film, being marched through the streets of Hanoi. What happened to those captured Americans seen alive and shown on national media? We know that they never returned home. Why has our government not demanded answers on those left behind? The propaganda films were proof that live American prisoners were left behind.

Cambodia and Laos have not returned any live POWs to us. Hanoi has given us nothing since operation Home Coming. There is nothing to gain by holding our Troops. There is a good chance that there are live POWs being held by countries involved in the past Wars. Keep the pressure on our government and maybe, just maybe our Government will wake up and do their job. Talk is cheap when our Government states they will do everything possible to bring all live POWs/MIAs home, we need to see some action taken.

When will this happen, maybe during Congress and the Senate vacation or maybe when they vote themselves another pay raise!!! Remember our POWs/MIAs, our Troops serving and God Bless the United States of America! Hope to see you at our 30th Anniversary "Ride for Freedom" Demonstration.

Artis Maller

Aspe Boe

Joseph Bean
National President