

# The Thunder Gazette

Published by Rolling Thunder® Inc. Chapter 1 Ohio

February, 2019

## PLEASE NOTE

### **OUR NEXT MEMBERSHIP**

### **MEETING WILL BE HELD AT**

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

**SUNDAY, February 17, 2019**  
**2:00 p.m.**

There will be a pot luck meal immediately after the meeting to celebrate our chapter's 22<sup>nd</sup> anniversary – Please bring a dish to share

**Last chance to pay your dues if you haven't already paid them!**

**Our veterans need white socks. We will be collecting white socks at each meeting.**

\*\*\*\*\*

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

**Sunday, February 17, 2019 - Membership Meeting** - 2:00 p.m. - Chapter anniversary - pot luck meal to follow meeting - Please bring a dish to share.

**Saturday, February 23, 2019 - Shoot & Scoot - Point Blank, Mentor, OH** - 10:00 a.m. - Lunch afterwards

**Saturday, March 9, 2019 - Breakfast at Cracker Barrel** - 9:00 a.m. - 2371 Aurora Rd, Twinsburg, OH

**Sunday, March 10, 2019 - Board/ Membership meeting** - 1:00/2:00 p.m.

**Friday, March 15 - Sunday, March 17, 2019 - Power & Piston Show at the IX Center**

**Saturday, March 23, 2019 - 12 noon - VOA Pizza Party** - DTBA

**Sunday, March 31, 2019 - 10:00 - 4:00 - Yankee Lake Motorcycle Swap Meet** - We will have a table there.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **POW/MIA**

**"We Will Never Forget"**

WWI	3,343
WWII	72,784
Cold War	126
Korea	7,676
Vietnam	1,592



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

**PRESIDENT** WINSTON BAILEY 440-639-2222

**VICE-PRES** LEW BALLARD 440-942-1688

**SECRETARY** CHERYL PILNY 440-543-8468

**TREASURER** ANDY KLUSH 330-620-6047

**CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD**  
CHUCK KETTLER 216-401-4984

**BOARD MEMBERS**

TED PILNY 216-346-6407

JEFF BRADY 440-669-1794

HANK LANGOWSKI 216-513-5712

LARRY FELEAN 440-439-4914

RONNIE DINGER 216-799-5539

(ALTERNATE) MIKE NEILAN 440-241-2655

**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**  
HANK LANGOWSKI 216-513-5712

**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 VIKKI CARROLL 440-283-7766

#6 SUSAN BAILEY 440-639-2222

**STATE LIASION** TY GEISER 330-466-0086

**ASST. STATE LIASION**  
TOM THOMPSON 513-616-9887

**WE CARE** YVONNE GIERMAN 440-285-3864  
[arphersfolks@windstream.net](mailto:arphersfolks@windstream.net)

**GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS**  
CHUCK KETTLER

216-401-4984

**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](http://www.rollingthunder1ohio.org)  
Webmaster: CHIP KETTLER 330-472-0871  
Please send any pictures you may have to Chip at  
[ckettler6480@yahoo.com](mailto:ckettler6480@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**



### Ramblings from Cheryl -

*It's time to renew your membership for 2019, and Sue is collecting. The dues are still \$30/person. I've been thinking about this for awhile now, but before you renew, think about why you joined Rolling Thunder®. What I am going to say is strictly my opinion and based on my own observations. I am not pointing a finger or singling anyone out.*

*Rolling Thunder® is not a "club" or motorcycle group. We are an organization whose mission is to keep before the government the POW/MIA issue and to help veterans, disabled and otherwise, from all wars. If you joined because you get cool looking patches, you joined the wrong organization.*

*Yes, we are a volunteer organization, but there is a certain amount of commitment required, and there are minimum requirements to remain a member. You must attend a minimum of 3 meetings AND 3 events in a year. No one is expected to participate in everything, but if you can't find 6 days out of 365 to help out, then you are in the wrong organization.*

*Maybe you don't like how the organization is run or certain things that happen. Or you don't like how a committee is run. Then step up/speak out. If you don't, then nothing will change. We are a team, and we need to work together.*

*There are always some people who are more dedicated than others, or have more time to give. And that's okay. But any time anyone can contribute is always appreciated. Our veterans and POW/MIA's deserve this time. And remember, you are the voice of our POW/MIA's. This is a great organization, and we've been helping veterans since before it was cool!*

\*\*\*\*\*

### Remains Identified

#### WWII Remains Identified:

U.S. Army Air Forces Sgt. John Kalausich  
U.S. Navy Baker 2<sup>nd</sup> Class David L. Kesler  
USMC Pvt. Waldean Black  
USMC Reserves Pvt. Ted Hall  
U.S. Army Air Forces 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Howard T. Lurcott  
U.S. Navy Seaman 1<sup>st</sup> Class Frank A. Hryniewicz  
U.S. Army Pfc. Clifford M. Mills

#### Korean War Remains Identified:

U.S. Army Sgt. Frank J. Sullman  
U.S. Army Pvt. Winfred L. Reynolds  
U.S. Army Master Sgt. Charles J. Mares  
U.S. Army Cpl. Carlos E. Ferguson

#### Viet Nam Remains Identified:

Civilian, Air America Inc. - Roy F. Townley  
Civilian, Air America Inc. - Edward J. Weissenback

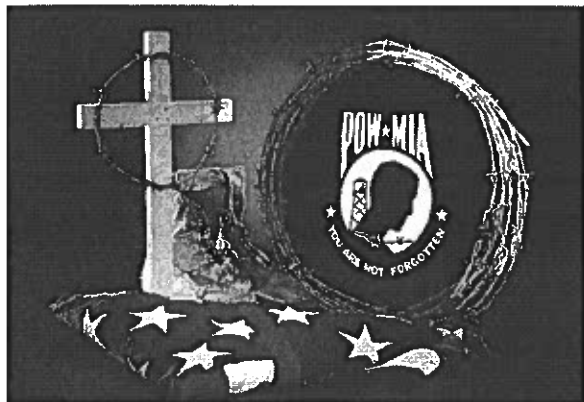
\*\*\*\*\*

### **Government Affairs, Gus Dante & Mike Wolff**

Gus Dante: The 116th Congress has begun, and all legislation from the 115th Congress which ended Dec 2018 will have to be reintroduced. Senator Warren introduced S.3698 at the end of the 115th Congress in place of H.R. 504 sponsored by Rep. Lance who was defeated in the Nov. 2018 elections. Senator Warren's office, out of courtesy reached out to Representative Lance's office to discuss and to continue sponsorship in the Senate of Bill S.3698 "National POW/MIA Flag Act". As of Jan 16th, 2019, Senator Warren's office is working on a companion Bill in the House, and once that is completed, they will reintroduce/release a bipartisan Bill in the Senate and House simultaneously. Letter to RT: We must continue to promote the Rolling Thunder Inc. Mission Statement more than before: Attention: Rolling Thunder Inc. Liaisons, Chapter Presidents, and Members As you all know, the midterm elections are behind us and a new class of Congressmen/Women started governing January 3, 2019 in the 116th Congress. The new addition of 111 new members to the House and the Senate combined in the past three cycles are the youngest and most diverse. I feel that we (Rolling Thunder Inc.) must start NOW to educate these new members of Congress on Rolling Thunder Inc. Mission Statement and that we are all about the POW/MIA, and Veterans issues. Call make appointments in DC or when they are in district. Ask them if they would fly a POW/MIA flag outside their office. You can Google " Meet the New Freshman in Congress" See attached list of the new class of congressmen/women, check to see if one of these new members are from your district, give them a call and make an appointment to see them.

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

More information may be found on the Rolling Thunder, Inc. National's website under the heading "Government Affairs" [www.rollingthunder1.com](http://www.rollingthunder1.com)



## **Court rules VA must pay disability benefits to 'blue water' Vietnam veterans**

By: Leo Shane III January 29 Military Times

**WASHINGTON** — A federal court ruled Tuesday that the Department of Veterans Affairs cannot deny disability benefits to thousands of Vietnam veterans who claim exposure to cancer-causing chemical defoliants simply because those vets served in the waters off the country's coastline, and not inland.

The ruling marks a major victory for so-called "blue water" Navy veterans who have fought the department for years over the denials. VA officials have said the existing scientific evidence doesn't justify the presumption of toxic exposure for the group and have strongly opposed legislative efforts to overturn their decision.

But the 9-2 decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit overturns past court opinions backing up VA, saying that Congress never intended to exclude service-members in the seas around Vietnam when they awarded presumptive benefits for certain illnesses related to Agent Orange exposure. Under current department rules, the blue water veterans can receive medical care for their

illnesses through VA. But to receive disability benefits — worth up to several thousand dollars a month — they must prove that their ailments are directly connected to toxic exposure while on duty.

That's not the case for other Vietnam veterans, who are presumed to have been exposed to Agent Orange and other defoliants known to cause serious and rare cancers.

So while a veteran who served on the shoreline could receive disability payouts after contracting Parkinson's Disease or prostate cancer, another vet who served on a ship a few miles away would have to provide evidence of direct contact with hazardous chemicals. Advocates have said that, given the time that has passed since the war, obtaining such proof is impossible and unfair. In their ruling, the federal judges agreed.

"These statutes cast no doubt on our conclusion that, by using the formal term 'Republic of Vietnam,' Congress unambiguously referred, consistent with uniform international law, to both its landmass and its 12-nautical-mile territorial sea," the ruling states.

If VA officials opt not to appeal the decision to the Supreme Court in the next 90 days — or if the court decides not to hear the case — the result means that up to 90,000 blue water veterans could see disability payouts as early as this year.

In a statement, VA spokesman Curt Cashour said the department is reviewing this decision and "will determine an appropriate response." Advocates hailed the news as a major step ahead in their effort to win benefits for the aging veterans.

"This is a big win," said John Wells, retired Navy commander and the executive director of Military-Veterans Advocacy, which helped file the lawsuit. "We want to work with VA on how to

implement this as painlessly as possible, but making sure these veterans get all they deserve."

Bart Stichman, executive director of the National Veterans Legal Services Program, said the decision "unequivocally rights a wrong that is a terrible injustice to all veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange in the waters of Vietnam."

Legislation that would have awarded presumptive status to the blue water veterans was blocked by a small group of senators at the end of last year, disappointing advocates who saw the legislative momentum as their best chance for a victory in years.

Now, instead of granting the benefits to veterans, lawmakers may be forced to scramble new bills to cover the cost of the court-ordered awards.

Congressional Budget Office officials had estimated that awarding the benefits to the blue water veterans could total about \$1.1 billion over 10 years, but VA officials have insisted the total is closer to \$5.5 billion. Disagreements over whether to use new home loan fees to pay for the costs stalled the previous legislation.

If the court order stands, VA will be forced to cover the costs regardless of whether an offset is agreed upon, a potential drain on the department's annual budget. Several new bills on the issue are already pending before Congress, and the chairmen of both the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees have promised to deal with the topic quickly this year. In a statement, Senate chairman Johnny Isakson, R-Ga., said that he was pleased with the court decision and would work closely with VA on the next steps.

The full decision is available at the appeals court's web site.

### Chaplain's Corner

(submitted by Dan McGinnis)

#### He Holds Our Hand

The little girl who navigated the stairway one Sunday at church was cute, spunky, and independent. One by one the child—who appeared to be not much older than two years—took the steps down to the lower level. Descending the stairs was her mission and she accomplished it. The child wasn't afraid because she knew her caring mother's watchful eye was always on her and her loving hand was extended to help her. This aptly pictures the Lord's readiness to help His children as they make their way through life with its varied uncertainties.

Today's Scripture includes two "hand" references. After cautioning His ancient people not to fear or be dismayed, the Lord told them, "I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" (Isaiah 41:10). Many anxious and fearful children have been steadied by the strength of a parent. Here God's power comes into view. In the second "hand" reference, once again it's the Lord who acted to secure the safety of His own. "For I am the Lord your God who takes hold of your right hand" (v. 13). While life situations and times have changed, the Lord hasn't. We need not despair (v. 10) because the Lord still assures us with the promise of His support and with the words we desperately need to hear: "Do not fear" (vv. 10, 13).

***I was prepared to fight, prepared to die. But  
I was not prepared for my country to leave  
me behind.***

## Hannah Luther Bosworth Chapter

Submitted by Cynthia Ross Kettler

During the year, members of the Hannah Luther Bosworth Chapter donate various items for the Veterans. Donations range from items of clothing, undergarments, to toiletries. The items are then given to the Rolling Thunder Chapter 1, Ohio. The dedicated men and women of this chapter, which is located in Mentor, will put a quantity these items in individual bags to deliver to the veterans at the *Louise Stokes VA Medical Center* in Cleveland during numerous visitations during the year.

This year, the chapter was also able to donate \$100.00 to the Rolling Thunder Chapter for their use as they see fit. The money was collected through a raffle at the chapter's December Christmas party in which one of our very talented members (Diana Scudder) raffled off several Christmas items that she makes from driftwood from the shores of Lake Erie near where she lives. Rolling Thunder uses this money to support the veterans in many ways through-out the year: picnics at veteran halfway houses and transition homes, a Chair of Honor in various locations, and buying other items needed by the veterans.