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The Thunder Gazette

**PLEASE NOTE**

**OUR NEXT MEMBERSHIP**

**MEETING WILL BE HELD AT**

**V.F.W. POST #6768**

**8584 Olde Eight Rd.**

**Northfield, OH**

**SUNDAY**, **March 21, 2021**

**2:00 p.m.**

**There is no Board meeting.**

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

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**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.**

***I hope everyone is doing well and staying healthy and warm.***

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Sunday, March 21, 2021 – Membership Meeting – 2:00 p.m**.

**Unfortunately, all other events/activities have been put on hold because of the pandemic.**

**Remains Identified**

**WWII Remains Identified:**

U.S. Navy Fireman 1st Class William D. Tucker

USMC Reserve Pfc. J. L. Hancock

U.S. Army Pvt. Lyle W. Reab

U.S. Army Pfc. Juan F. Gutierrez

U.S. Navy Seaman 2nd Class Michael Malek

U.S. Navy Signalman 3rd Class Austin H. Hesler

U.S. Army Air Forces 1st Lt. Robert Parker

U.S. Navy Fireman 1st Class Denis H. Hiskett

U.S. Navy Fireman 2nd Class Carl M. Bradley

**Korean War Remains Identified:**

U.S. Army Cpl. Paul Mitchem

U.S. Army Pfc. Michaux Turbeville

U.S. Army Chaplain (Capt.) Emil J. Kapaun

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

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**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.**

**Rolling Thunder®, Inc. is a non –profit organization and everyone donates his or her time because they believe in the POW-MIA issue.**

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**Our Adopted MIA/POW – Gregory Harris**



**Government Affairs – Berney Jarosz**

First off, I want to let everyone know that we are clearing out the legislation from the 116th Congress and are getting into contact with the 117th Congress to see if past legislation that we are backing will be reintroduced.

As for the end of the 116th Congress, the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, MD Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020 was passed into law 116-315 on January 5, 2021. It incorporates: • The Deborah Sampson Act of 2020 • The FREE Veterans Act of 2020 • The Financial Refuge for Every Elderly Veteran Act of 2020 • The Navy Seal Bill Mulder Act of 2020.

I want to give you a little background on an amazing woman that the Deborah Sampson Act was named after. Deborah Sampson (1760- 1827) Deborah Sampson became a hero of the American Revolution when she disguised herself as a man and joined the Patriot forces. She was the only woman to earn a full military pension for participation in the Revolutionary army. In 1782, as the Revolutionary War raged on, the patriotic Sampson disguised herself as a man named Robert Shurtleff and joined the Fourth Massachusetts Regiment. At West Point, New York, she was assigned to Captain George Webb’s Company of Light Infantry. She was given the dangerous task of scouting neutral territory to assess British buildup of men and materiel in Manhattan, which General George Washington contemplated attacking. In June of 1782, Sampson and two sergeants led about 30 infantrymen on an expedition that ended with a confrontation—often one-on-one—with Tories. She led a raid on a Tory home that resulted in the capture of 15 men. At the siege of Yorktown, she dug trenches, helped storm a British redoubt, and endured canon fire. For over two years, Sampson’s true sex had escaped detection despite close calls. When she received a gash in her forehead from a sword and was shot in her left thigh, she extracted the pistol ball herself. She was ultimately discovered—a year and a half into her service—in Philadelphia, when she became ill during an epidemic, was taken to a hospital, and lost consciousness. Receiving an honorable discharge on October 23, 1783, Sampson returned to Massachusetts. On April 7, 1785 she married Benjamin Gannet from Sharon, and they had three children, Earl, Mary, and Patience. The story of her life was written in 1797 by Herman Mann, entitled The Female Review: or, Memoirs of an American Young Lady. She received a military pension from the state of Massachusetts. Although Sampson’s life after the army was mostly typical of a farmer’s wife, in 1802 she began a year-long lecture tour about her experiences—the first woman in America to do so—sometimes dressing in full military regalia.

Finally, I want to let everyone know about Law # 116-172, The NATIONAL SUICIDE HOTLINE DESIGNATION ACT OF 2020 that was passed on October 17,2020. The number 9-8-8 is the universal number for the national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline.

Progress of Bills from the 116th Congress:

H.R. 712/S.179 – VA Medicinal Cannabis Research Act of 2020 – letter written to Rep. Andy Kim

S.191 Burn Pit Accountability Act – became law 116-92 on 12/20/2019

S.514 Deborah Sampson Act Benefit for women veterans – became law 116-315 1/5/2021

H.R. 326 – Victims of Agent Orange Relief Act of 2019 – No NJ Rep. Cosponsors

H.R. 1350 – Corey Adams Green Alert Throughout the US. – letter written to Rep. Donald Payne, Jr.

HR. 2201 – Modify Presumption for service-connected veterans who served in Thailand during the Vietnam Era. – letter written to Rep. Andy Kim

H.R. 2819/ S. 1673 – Gold Star Families National Monument Extension. – letters written to Rep. Andy Kim and Senator Corey Booker.

More information may be found on the Rolling Thunder, Inc. National’s website under the heading “Government Affairs” www.rollingthunder1.com

**“UNTIL THEY ALL COME HOME”**

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

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**Hundreds died on World War II ‘hell ships’. Now there’s an effort to identify the dead.**

One victim’s daughter, now 82, hopes the father she never knew is among them.

By [Michael E. Ruane](https://www.washingtonpost.com/people/michael-e-ruane/)Jan. 29, 2021

On May 14, 1941, Manila’s Pier 7 was teeming with military family members saying goodbye to husbands and fathers and waiting to board the ocean liner that would take them away from the war looming in the Pacific.

Three-year-old Nancy White and her pregnant mother, Chrystal, 31, were saying farewell to her father, Maj. Clarence H. White, 39, an Army doctor. The chaos on the pier would be the little girl’s first childhood memory, and the last time she saw her father.

Now, a Defense Department agency is about to seek permission for the exhumation from a cemetery in Hawaii of hundreds of unidentified remains of World War II POWs killed on Japanese prison vessels known as “hell ships.”

Clarence White may be among them.

“It’s a long-term project,” his daughter, now Nancy Kragh, of Seattle, said recently. “It may not get finished for the next five years. I’m 82, so I don’t know if I’ll live to find the results. … [but] it does give a lot of people some peace.”

The project would be run by the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), based in Crystal City, Va., which works to account for the missing and  [unidentified from past wars](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/after-74-years-bones-from-pearl-harbor-tomb-ship-may-be-identified/2015/12/06/60263b86-8ee7-11e5-acff-673ae92ddd2b_story.html?itid=lk_inline_manual_10).

It would require sorting through remains of hundreds of American servicemen who died or were killed during a grim odyssey in the bowels of squalid prison ships off the coasts of the Philippines and Taiwan in late 1944 and early 1945.

Most had been captured by the Japanese in the Philippines early in the war and had already endured years of brutality and privation when they were packed onto the ships bound for the [labor camps of Japan](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/in-japan-former-american-prisoners-of-war-close-a-dark-chapter/2014/10/16/b11e4642-5463-11e4-b86d-184ac281388d_story.html?itid=lk_inline_manual_13).

Once on board, some starved to death or suffocated in the foul and sweltering holds. Others went mad and were killed by fellow prisoners. Still others were shot by Japanese guards.

And many were killed when the prison ships were attacked by American planes whose pilots didn’t know U.S. POWs were on board.

The task for the experts is like putting together hundreds of jigsaw puzzles from a huge jumble of pieces, with many of the pieces missing.

The DPAA is initially focused on a large group buried in a mass grave at Takao, also known as Kaohsiung, in southern Taiwan after the hell ship they were on, the Enoura Maru, was attacked by U.S. planes there on Jan. 9, 1945.

One bomb blew up near the ship’s forward hold, killing 300 men, historian Gregory F. Michno wrote in his 2001 book, “Death on the Hellships.”

“There was a blinding orange flash and a deafening explosion,” prisoner John Jacobs recalled, according to an account in the National Archives magazine, Prologue.

The next day Jacobs peered into a hole made by the bomb. “There were mangled Americans, some 300 of them, piled three deep and pinned down with large steel girders and hatch covers,” he recalled.

One of the casualties that day was Clarence White, of the 31st Infantry Regiment Medical Corps.

His right foot had been severed. He suffered on deck for three days with no medical treatment, fellow physician and POW Ralph Emerson Hibbs recalled in a memoir.

White died on Jan. 11, his daughter said. It was not until the next day that the Japanese allowed the bodies to be taken ashore, stacked on barges.

There, some may have been cremated, but most were buried on the beach, according to the DPAA and government records.

By then, Nancy and her mother, who was a nurse, were back in the United States, and her mother had given birth to another daughter.

The day they left Manila, she recalled, “the pier was just mobbed with women and children, and babies and baby carriages and babies crying and children making noise.”

Nancy had just turned 3. She and her mother boarded the liner SS Washington, bound for Hawaii, then headed to Los Angeles, where they stayed, she said.

Her mother shielded her from bad news. “My mother said there was a war, and my dad was fighting in the war,” she said. “It was very vague. She actually put gifts in the mail to my sister and I at Christmas and birthdays throughout the war, so that we would think he was okay and sending us presents.”

After the war started, her mother got one letter from her father, she said. He was carried as missing in action for a year before he was identified as a POW. Then she got a telegram saying that he had died, when he was still alive.

When he was finally declared dead after the war, Nancy was 7.

“It was a huge shock because [her mother] had never indicated to us that he might die,” she said. “It was just that he was in a war and when the war was over he would come home.”

Her father had been among the roughly 1,600 prisoners who were first jammed aboard the hell ship Oryoku Maru on Dec. 13, 1944, from the same Manila pier where he had said goodbye to his family three years before.

Headed for Japan, the ship also carried Japanese soldiers, women and children, and looted items from

the Philippines, including a Packard automobile that had been used by the American [Gen. Douglas MacArthur](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/retropolis/wp/2017/07/28/the-veterans-were-desperate-gen-macarthur-ordered-u-s-troops-to-attack-them/?itid=lk_inline_manual_44), according to historian Michno.

The ship had also recently carried horses, and the POWs were packed into broiling holds that were still fouled with manure.

“The heat was terrific and the air stifling,” one survivor recalled. “Men were bathed in sweat immediately and began to pass out from suffocation and dehydration.”

The ship got underway the next day but was quickly attacked by roving U.S. planes, and it headed for shelter in Subic Bay.

But the planes found it the next morning and attacked again. As the ship sank, the POWs were only allowed to flee at the last minute. A photo snapped from an American plane overhead shows the water dotted with desperate, swimming prisoners.

Japanese guards machine-gunned some POWs in the water if they looked like they were trying to escape.

The survivors were transported overland to another Philippine port. There, most were put aboard the Enoura Maru, which made it to Takao, in Taiwan, in a few days. But it, too, was soon found, attacked and wrecked by U.S. planes.

Some men survived even that, and were taken on to Japan, where they were liberated when the war ended seven months later.

In May 1946, a U.S. graves registration team went to the Takao beach and began exhuming remains.

Of the hundreds dug up, only five were immediately identified, by their dog tags.

The remains were divided into caskets containing 10 “individuals” each and taken to an American graves registration depot in Shanghai, according to the DPAA.

They were then shipped to a mausoleum at the Army’s Schofield Barracks, outside Honolulu, and reburied in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, known as the Punchbowl, in Honolulu.

It is there that the DPAA wants to exhume and, using the latest technology, try to identify the hell ships victims.

“Some of them may consist of just a few bones or a few fragments of bones,” Gregory Kupsky, a historian with the agency’s Indo-Pacific Directorate, said in a presentation to interested families last November. “Not full, easily recognizable skeletons.”

In a 2018 test, the remains of what was thought to be one person were exhumed from the Punchbowl, only to reveal that the bones of four people were present, Kupsky said.

The DPAA must ask the office of the undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness for permission to proceed, Kupsky said in a recent interview.

There are now about 40 caskets in roughly 20 graves, some of which contain three caskets.

The remains would then be studied and documented at a special DPAA lab outside maha, or the agency’s lab in Hawaii “We’ll do a full digital inventory of every bone,” Katherine Skorpinski, an anthropologist in the laboratory outside Omaha, said in a recent interview. “We’ll take measurements where we can” and assemble bones that seem to go together.

She said she did not know how many bones there might be. But in a similar project to account for hundreds of unidentified sailors who were killed on the USS Oklahoma, which was sunk at Pearl Harbor in 1941, there were 13,000 bones.

After the inventory, bone samples would be taken for DNA analysis at the Armed Forces Medical Examiner in Dover, Del.

Once a DNA profile is developed from the bones, it would then be compared with DNA submitted by families of missing men to see if there is a match.

Theoretically, a DNA profile for every bone might be developed. “But if we have nothing to compare it to, it’s very challenging to make an identification,” Skorpinski said. “So, having those family reference samples on hand is really, really important.”

Numerous relatives — alerted by DPAA outreach programs — have already provided reference samples, including Nancy Kragh.

“One of the lessons from this story is that war has multigenerational effects,” she said. “It’s not something that’s done and over and we all move on.”

If remains of her father are found, she said she would have them buried with her mother, who never remarried.

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**2020-2021 Rolling Thunder Bike Raffle Update New Drawing Date - June 1, 2021**

Greetings to All the Rolling Thunder Chapters and Members: Considering all, I hope that you are doing as well as possible during these very trying times of the pandemic in all parts of our country. As a result of the National shut down, quarantine and cancelation of events in our Country and much consideration the 2020 Rolling Thunder Bike Raffle drawing date was changed to Tuesday, June 1, 2021 at 2:00 pm. The drawing will take place at the Harley Davidson Washington dealership where the bike is currently being shown and hosted. National will also pay the State Sales Tax for the winner. God Bless and Heal our Country! Elaine Muller

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**Chaplain’s Corner**

(submitted by Dan McGinnis)

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Psalms 91:1

There is no better image of love and protection than the image of a baby bird safe under the wing of his mother. Under her wings, he is safe from every harm, from foul weather, from cold. Under her wings, he is warm and dry and comforted. This is the image we see in this verse. It is focused on the sense of security found in God. When we dwell in the secret place of God—that is, the very essence of God, the place where we meet intimately with Him—we find ourselves in the shadow of the Almighty, often read as the shadow of His wings. We are in a place of safety and security. When we are in the secret place of God, we are protected. No harm will come to us and we are comforted by His presence.

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



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