

The Thunder Gazette

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April, 2024

PLEASE NOTE

**OUR NEXT MEMBERSHIP
MEETING WILL BE HELD ON
SUNDAY, April 21, 2024**

2:00 p.m.

NO Board Meeting

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

- 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 \$40/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, April 21, 2024 - Membership meeting
2:00 p.m.

Saturday, May 4, 2024 - Chardon
Walmart - 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Saturday, May 18, 2024 - Parma
Walmart - 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

We seek accountability - the return of living POW's and when that is not possible - the repatriation of their remains. We further advocate the same for all MIA.



**APRIL IS THE MONTH OF
THE MILITARY CHILD**

If anyone deserves recognition and appreciation for their selfless service, it is military children. Born in military hospitals around the globe, they will learn far too young goodbyes will be frequent and difficult. At some point in their toddler years, they inevitably will hug a camouflaged leg of someone other than their uniformed parent by mistake. They will move repeatedly, usually at the precise point in time when they feel most settled.

-April Military Officer magazine

 Month of the Military Child

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

PRESIDENT LEW BALLARD 440-725-8157
VICE-PRES PAUL WIGET 440-476-3656
SECRETARY CHERYL PILNY 440-543-8468
TREASURER ANDY KLUSH 330-620-6047
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
CHUCK KETTLER 330-636-5315

BOARD MEMBERS

BILL STREET
JIM ROSSI
MIKE NEILAN 440-241-2655
TED PILNY 216-346-6407
DAN HUBBARD 216-741-3992
(ALTERNATE) TED ROOD

CHAPLAIN DAN MCGINNIS 330-618-1720

RUN COORDINATOR OPEN

MEMBERSHIP OPEN

QUARTERMASTER
DAN HUBBARD 216-741-3992

ASST. QUARTERMASTER OPEN

SARGENT AT ARMS
TIM EXTON 216-789-9272

NEWSLETTER STAFF
CHERYL PILNY 440-543-8468

PLATOON LEADERS:
#1 MIKE NEILAN 440-241-2655
#2 TOM BLECHSCHMID 440-349-2470
#3 SALLY FELEAN 440-439-4914
#4 OPEN

STATE LIAISON James "Spy" Reilly – Chapter 9

WE CARE

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS
CHUCK KETTLER 330-636-5315

VA VISITS – OPEN

EVENTS CHAIR OPEN

PUBLIC RELATIONS CHUCK KETTLER 330-636-5315

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
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.

ROLLING THUNDER®, INC. IS A NON -PROFIT
ORGANIZATION AND EVERYONE DONATES HIS OR
HER TIME BECAUSE THEY BELIEVE IN THE POW-
MIA ISSUE.

The advocacy group Rolling Thunder®, Inc. /
Rolling Thunder® Charities, Inc. supports
U.S. Military Active Duty, Veterans,
Prisoners Of War, and Personnel Missing In
Action from past wars.

Our Adopted MIA/POW – Wade Groth



There are 2 co-sponsors for this bill. None from Ohio.

5. H.R.236 - 118th Congress (2023-2024): To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to designate a week as "Battle Buddy Check Week" for the purpose of outreach and education concerning peer wellness checks for veterans, and for other purposes. | Congress.gov | Library of Congress

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/236/text?s=1&r=27>
Sponsor: Rep. Jackson Lee, Sheila [D-TX-18] (Introduced)

Status 2/8/23: Referred to the Sub-committee on Health.

Action By: Committee on Veterans' Affairs

There are no Ohio co-sponsors yet to this bill.

6. H.R.1003 - 118th Congress (2023-2024): To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a study and clinical trials on the effects of cannabis on certain health outcomes of veterans with chronic pain and post-traumatic stress disorder, and for other purposes. | Congress.gov | Library of Congress

Status: *This bill requires the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to study the effects of cannabis on veterans who are enrolled in the VA health care system and have been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or chronic pain (i.e., eligible veterans).*

First, the bill requires the VA to conduct an observational, 18-month study on the effects of cannabis on the health outcomes of eligible veterans. The VA must report on the study and address whether it is able to meet criteria necessary to conduct clinical trials.

Then, if the VA determines that it is able to proceed, it must carry out a series of clinical trials on the effects of cannabis appropriate for investigational use, as determined by the Food and Drug Administration, on the outcomes of

eligible veterans. The VA must carry out a long-term observational study of the clinical trial participants.

The VA may terminate the trials if it is unable to meet clinical guideline requirements or the trials would create excessive risk to participants.

The VA must ensure that the study and trials are representative of the demographics of veterans in the United States, as determined by the most recent data from the American Community Survey of the Bureau of the Census.

The study and trials must include mechanisms to ensure data preservation and registration as necessary (in an anonymous form).

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/1003?overview=closed>

There are no Ohio co-sponsors yet to this bill.

7. H.R. 333 - To amend title 10, United States Code, to permit retired members of the Armed Forces who have a service-connected disability rated less than 50 percent to receive concurrent payment of both retired pay and veterans disability compensation, to extend eligibility for concurrent receipt to chapter 61 disability retirees with less than 20 years of service, and for other purposes. **Rep. Sanford Bishop (Ga.) introduced H.R. 333, the Disabled Veterans Tax Termination Act.**

Status 2/9/23: Referred to the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs.

Action By: Committee on Veterans' Affairs

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/333?s=1&r=65>

(There is one co-sponsor from Ohio)

8. H.R.733 - 118th Congress (2023-2024): Vet CENTERS for Mental Health Act of 2023

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to improve mental health care for veterans through

the establishment of a minimum requirement for the number of Vet Centers per State.

Status 2/1/23: *Referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.*

Action By: *House of Representatives*

(There are no co-sponsors from Ohio yet)

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/733?s=1&r=2>

9. H.R.411 - Lead by Example Act of 2023 118th Congress (2023-2024) |

BILL Sponsor: Rep. Davidson, Warren [R-OH-8] (Introduced 01/20/2023) Committees: House - House Administration; Veterans' Affairs

(a) Health Care Benefits.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, beginning January 3, 2025, the only health care plan that the Federal Government may make available to Members of Congress and Congressional staff with respect to their service as a Member of Congress or Congressional staff shall be health care provided through the Department of Veterans Affairs, including at facilities of the Department and non-Department facilities pursuant to chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, and any other provision of law authorizing the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to furnish such care to veterans, as if such Members and staff were veterans.

Status 2/8/23: *Referred to the Subcommittee on Health.*

Action By: *Committee on Veterans' Affairs*

There are no Ohio co-sponsors currently. (I think this is a really good one. Make sure that you contact your representatives to make sure this one happens. Maybe it will lead to some major changes in the health care of veterans.)

H.R.542 - This bill addresses home care and caregiver programs provided by the Department

of Veterans Affairs (VA). There are currently 72 co-sponsors, one from Ohio.

Status 12/6/23: *Passed in the House and sent to the Senate.*

10. S-132--Pilot Program Required.—The Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall jointly carry out a pilot program to assess the feasibility and advisability of providing the module described in subsection (b) and services under subsection (c) as part of the pre-separation transition process for members of the Armed Forces as a means of reducing the incidence of suicide among veterans.

Status 2/16/23: *Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Ordered to be reported with an amendment in the nature of a substitute favorably.*

(This bill is sponsored by Ohio Senator Sherrod Brown. To date, there are 8 co-sponsors.)

H.R.3722 (This is connected to S. 132, the senate bill)

Status 12/3/23: *Ordered to be Reported (Amended) by Voice Vote.*

Action By: *Committee on Veterans' Affairs*

H.R.1282 - Major Richard Star Act - This bill provides that combat-disabled uniformed services retirees with fewer than 20 years of creditable service may concurrently receive, without reduction, veterans' disability compensation and retired pay or combat-related special compensation. **9 co-sponsors from Ohio.**

Status 7/18/23: *Placed on the Union Calendar, Calendar No. 117.*

Action By: *House of Representatives*

H. Con. Res. 64 (IH) - Expressing the sense of Congress that all trade agreements the United States enters into, should provide reasonable access and collaboration of each nation involved in such an agreement, for the purpose of search and recovery activities relating to members of

the United States Armed Forces still missing and unaccounted for from prior wars or military conflicts.

H.R. 1774 - 118th Congress (2023-2024): VA Emergency Transportation Act | [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov) | Library of Congress. To amend title 38, United States Code, to reimburse veterans for the cost of emergency medical transportation to a Federal facility, and for other purposes. Introduced to the House on 3/24/23.

H.R. 3670- National POW/MIA Memorial and Museum Act 118th Congress 2023-2024. To designate the POW/MIA Memorial and Museum in Jacksonville, Florida, as a National POW/MIA Memorial and Museum. Status 6/9/23: *Referred to the Subcommittee on Federal Lands.*

Action By: Committee on Natural Resources
There are no sponsors from Ohio.

To apply for benefits, Veterans and survivors may visit [VA.gov](https://www.va.gov) or call toll-free at 800-827-1000.

"UNTIL THEY ALL COME HOME"

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

Remains Identified

WWII

U.S. Army Sgt. John O. Herrick
U.S. Army Air Forces T.Sgt. Kenneth J. McKeeman
U.S. Army Air Forces T.Sgt. Robert Allen
U.S. Army Air Forces T.Sgt. Paul F. Eshelman
U.S. Army Cpl. Frank V. Benak
U.S. Army Pvt. Kwack K. Woo
U.S. Army Pvt. Donald L. Shutts
U.S. Army Air Forces S.Sgt. Edward K Pyle
U.S. Army Pvt. James C. Loyd

U.S. Army Air Forces Pvt. Orville J. Cox
U.S. Army T/5 Harold D. Pitts
U.S. Navy Reserve Cox Harley E. Alexander
U.S. Army Pvt. Jacob Gutterman
U.S. Army Pfc. Joseph C. Murphy
U.S. Army Air Forces Pvt. Robert W. Cash

Korean War

U.S. Army Capt. Erik Faddersball Yde
U.S. Army Pfc. Anthony John Lopa
U.S. Army Pfc. Jimmy Dale Smith
U.S. Army Cpl. Robert Paul Raess
U.S. Army Sgt. Charles Edwin Beaty
U.S. Army Sgt. John Paul Rhyter

Viet Nam War

None listed

Lou Conter, the final USS Arizona survivor from Pearl Harbor, dies at 102

By Jonathan Limehouse, USA TODAY

Lou Conter, the final surviving crewmember of those aboard the USS Arizona during the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, has passed away at 102 on April 1, 2024, according to multiple reports. Surrounded by family in Grass Valley, California, Conter took his final breath, his daughter told KCRA 3. The veteran had been in hospice for the past four weeks, the Sacramento, California-based TV station reported. Conter is expected to receive a ceremony with full military honors, according to KCRA 3.

Conter was one of the 335 sailors aboard the USS Arizona who survived on Dec. 7, 1941. The Arizona lost 1,177 sailors and Marines during the Japanese attack, according to the National WWII Museum.

Several years later, a 20-year-old Conter, was quartermaster third class when his patrol bomber was shot down seven miles off the coast of New Guinea causing the seaplane's 10-man crew to fall into the Pacific Ocean.

Once in the water, Conter and his crew were not alone.

"We had 10 or 12 sharks around us all the time," Conter recalled. "I told the men, 'If a shark comes close, hit it in the nose with your fist as hard as you can.'"

Conter would serve through World War II before going to Korea. He then taught U.S. troops survival, evasion, resistance and escape skills in 1954. His legacy includes helping establish training bases in Florida and California, and in 1965 he came back to Pearl Harbor to author a training manual for troops heading to Vietnam.

Conter ultimately retired from the Navy in 1967, settled in Palm Springs and had a flourishing real estate career in California where he bought land for commercial and residential projects. He was a lieutenant commander at the time of his retirement.

When Conter was 93 years old he said everything he endured throughout his career was a part of his job, a sentiment he shared with every soldier and airman who took his classes. Conter was also a part of the USS Arizona Reunion Association allowing him to stay in touch with the few remaining survivors.

When the country lost 102-year-old Ken Potts in April 2023, Conter became the last living survivor aboard the USS Arizona.

"They call a lot of us heroes, and I've always said we are not the heroes," Conter told KCRA 3. "Heroes are the ones right there that day that lost their lives. They gave everything up. We got back to the States. We got married. We had kids and grandkids. We are still here. They were lost forever right then and there."

Ready to Go for God

I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.

Ephesians 4:1

The book *Hidden Figures* recounts preparations for John Glenn's flight into space. Computers were newfangled inventions in 1962, subject to glitches. Glenn didn't trust them and worried about calculations for the launch. He knew one brainy woman in the back room could run the numbers. He trusted her. "If she says the numbers are good," Glenn said, "I'm ready to go."

Katherine Johnson was a teacher and mother of three. She loved Jesus and served in her church. God had blessed Katherine with a remarkable mind. NASA tapped her in the late 1950s to help with the space program. She was Glenn's "brainy woman," one of the "human computers" they hired at the time.

We may not be called to be brilliant mathematicians, but God calls us to other things: "To each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it" (Ephesians 4:7). We're to "live a life worthy of the calling" we've received (v. 1). We're part of one body, in which "each part does its work" (v. 16).

Katherine Johnson's calculations confirmed the course trajectory. Glenn's launch into orbit was like "hitting a bull's-eye." But this was just one of Katherine's callings. Remember, she was called also to be a mother, teacher, and church worker. We might ask ourselves what God has called us to, whether big or small. Are we "ready to go," exercising the grace-gifts He's bestowed, living "a life worthy of [our] calling" (v. 1)?

By: Kenneth Petersen