

MIA Totals: WWI (3,344), WWII (72,674), Korean (7,631), Cold War (126), Vietnam (1,594), OEF, OIF (5)  
Indiana WWII (1,507), Korean (173), Vietnam (50)

# INCOMING!



December 2020 Newsletter

**ROLLING THUNDER®**, INC.

**Indiana Chapter #1**  
*“POW-MIA – You are not Forgotten”*

<http://indianarollingthunder.com>

<https://www.facebook.com/RTINCh1>

## **Chapter Officers**

**President:** Michael Clark

**Vice President:** David Craig

**Secretary:** Bill Bailey

**Treasurer:** Terry “Flash” Sanderson



## **President News**

Chapter members, I hope everyone is doing well and in good health. December is the closing of a challenging year and I hope 2021 will be a better year. As you know, many events this year were cancelled due to COVID-19, however, the Chapter was still able to have 24 events to include 11 Chapter meetings. The only Chapter meeting that we had to cancel was the March meeting when the China Virus hit.

So far, the Chapter has been blessed with no reports of members being directly impacted by the COVID virus and we are praying that will continue. Our normal Christmas dinner with HVAF guest has been cancelled this year due to concerns of the virus and the restrictions that Marion County has in place on the size of groups. The status of our December Chapter meeting will be announced the week of December 14th. Please monitor your email for updates.

The attendance for the Rolling Thunder® National Conference this year was lower than previous years due to the virus. Pages 6 and 7 of the newsletter has a recap of the conference. National had a few guest speakers at the conference to include the sister of 1LT Michael Joseph Blassie, who was a Vietnam War MIA that was placed in the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in 1984. Patricia Blassie had an interesting story to tell on how the Blassie family finally got closure on their missing love one. The internet has several documents on the story of 1LT Michael Joseph Blassie.

Page 3 of the newsletter has an interesting story of Captain Richard Whitesides and Captain Floyd James Thompson who was shot down by small arms fire during the Vietnam War. Captain Whitesides was killed in the crash and Captain Thompson was captured. Captain Thompson was the longest held POW during the Vietnam War. Captain Thompson was held POW from March 26, 1964 to March 16, 1973. Just 10 days short of nine years. Another article on Captain Thompson is located at [Floyd J. Thompson, 69; Held Longest of Any U.S. POW - Los Angeles Times \(latimes.com\)](#). The article tells the story on how captivity affected Captain Thompson’s life when he returned home. These heroes have gone through a lot for our Country.

September was the start of a new membership year and it’s time to renew your membership. The membership dues are still \$30.00 per year and need to be paid to keep your membership in good standing. Please renew your membership as soon as possible. We need your membership to be able to continue on with our important POW/MIA mission and helping our Indiana Veterans.

**The next Chapter meeting is Sunday December 20, 2020**

## December 2020 Birthday's



Gene Byers 12-8

Norman Crawford 12-3

Carol McFarland 12-25

Jennifer Morrison 12-27

**Happy Birthday to all**

## Did You Know?



Cessna L-19/O-1 Bird Dog flown by Captain Richard Whitesides and Captain Floyd Thompson went down on March 26, 1964 from small arms fire. Whitesides was killed, Thompson was captured. Floyd Thompson would spend just short of nine years in captivity making him the longest held POW in American history.



Captain  
Whitesides



Captain  
Thompson

On February 12, 1973 the first of 591 US prisoners began to be repatriated, ending in late March. It was thought that roughly 1,350 POW/MIA still remained and that there were roughly 1,200 KIA bodies not recovered. This would become the Vietnam War POW/MIA issue.

1961 Bay of Pigs the model for Vietnam. 1,200 freedom fighters after months of training were to invade Cuba, establish a beachhead, bring in a provisional government and drive Fidel Castro out of power. U.S air strikes were to take out Castro's air force and were key for the invasion. The promised bombing raids were subsequently cut back then cancelled by Washington. The invasion was a total failure with the capture of the freedom fighters. To make a long story short, Castro wanted and won in exchange for release of the freedom fighters, "indemnification" for war damages caused during the invasion. He got \$53,000,000 in food and medicine. This deal most likely set the tone for North Vietnam in its negotiations years later.

Back to Vietnam, Nixon promised \$5 billion in reparation in the famous letter he signed and was dated on February 1, 1973. This followed the Paris Peace Accords signed on January 27, 1973. Many have suggested that POWs were held back as insurance in order to get reparation from the war. Vietnam kept an accounting of all the damage caused by the war. It was detailed. The US never paid. In every attempt over the decades to resolve the matter the Nixon letter seemed to be where the Vietnamese would begin their conversation or end it.

In every administration since, the POW issue has been discredited in spite of sightings from creditable sources, many of which fled Vietnam years later and passing lie detector examinations not once but several times. Those sources not wanting anything but to tell their story.

*Written by: Terry 'Flash' Sanderson  
November 24, 2020*



**Chapter Meeting  
November 15, 2020**



**Steven Ramer joined the Chapter as a Junior member in December 2019 and was presented with his Junior patch at the November Chapter meeting. Steven is 17 and lives in Bunker Hill Indiana.**

**Congratulations  
Steven**

# ROLLING THUNDER®, INC

## Membership Patches



**The Junior Membership patch.** The Junior Membership patch is available to individuals that wish to join the Chapter that are under the age of 18 years old. Once the Junior Member becomes 18 years old, they will be able to become a full Chapter member and eligible for the Chapter boot, Rocker and Eagle patches when they meet the requirements. The Junior Membership patch is no cost to the Junior Member.



**The Chapter Boot Patch.** All members will receive a Rolling Thunder® Membership Boot patch when they become a full member at the end of a 120-day period. If a member meets his/her obligations before the 120 days are up they are entitled to receive their Boot patch no earlier than 90 days, provided they meet all other (loyalty and conduct) requirements. A new member must make 3 meetings or events, or a combination thereof, during the 120-day trial period to become a full member. **A \$50.00 patch deposit is required before National will issue the Boot Patch.**



**The Rocker and Eagle Patches.** After a member completes his/her first year (from the day they receive their boot patch) as a member in good standing, they will be issued the Eagle & Rocker patches, **which is the property of National.** **A \$100.00 patch deposit is required before National will issue the Rocker and Eagle Patches.**

# 23rd Annual Rolling Thunder® National Conference

November 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup>



Due to the concerns of COVID-19, the attendance was down from previous years. The Hotel and Rolling Thunder® National did a good job maintaining Social Distancing and keeping everyone safe. With the Chapters cancelling most of their events this year, there wasn't much discussion on 2020 events. Some of the take a way's from the conference include the following:

1. The 2021 Ride for Freedom Nationwide will remain XXXIII.
2. National Does NOT support AMVET's Rolling To Remember Demonstration Ride in Washington D.C.
3. More Community Involvement.
4. National has agreed to make a autobiographic video of Artie and future of Rolling Thunder®.

National also had some interesting speakers to include the sister of 1LT Michael J, Blassie who was an Vietnam War MIA placed in the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in 1984. See the story on next page.



# 23rd Annual Rolling Thunder® National Conference Tomb of the Unknown Soldier



**Patricia Blassie**  
**Sister of 1LT Michael J. Blassie**



1LT Michael J. Blassie placed in  
TOMB on May 28, 1984 and  
identified by DNA testing in 1998.



### **Artifact's from Tomb**

The above artifact's included a wallet, a military ID, a parachute, a one-person life raft, and other equipment.

1LT Michael Joseph Blassie (April 4, 1948 – May 11, 1972) was a United States Air Force officer who was killed in action during the Vietnam War in May 1972. 1LT Blassie's remains were found 5 months later near the crash site and labeled BTB (believed to be). By the time the Vietnam War ended, the remains and artifacts had been transferred to the US Mortuary's new location in Thailand. From there they were sent to the US Army Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii (CILHI) in 1976, but when they arrived, the wallet and ID were missing. In late 1978, CILHI determined that the bones didn't match Blassie's records and recommended reclassifying them as unknown X-26. Two years later, the board of the Armed Services Graves Registration Office officially removed Blassie's name from the remains.

On Memorial Day in 1984, unknown X-26 was buried at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

On May 14, 1998, Blassie's mother and oldest Sister gave blood samples for DNA testing. The Armed Forces Institute of Pathology later reported that the DNA and that of X-26 was a 99.9 percent match. On June 30, 1998, Secretary of Defense William Cohen called Jean Blassie to say that she could finally bring her son home, after 26 long years. At the family's request, 1LT Blassie was removed from the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and buried at Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery in South St. Louis County, Missouri, the same final resting place as his father, a WWII veteran who had passed away in 1991.

# Veterans Day at the Indiana Veterans Home

**November 11, 2020**

The Indiana Veterans Day Parade that normally takes place downtown Indianapolis on November 11th was cancelled due to COVID concern for the elderly Veterans. The Indiana Veterans Home in West Lafayette Indiana decided to have a drive by parade to show the resident Veterans that we are still thinking about them and appreciate their service.

Several vehicles showed up to participate in the parade to include a few from Indiana Chapter 1. Hopefully, 2021 will be a better year and we can have our normal Veterans Day Parade in Downtown Indianapolis.





## FATALITIES BY CONFLICT

Indiana has a long history of serving in wars with its first reported fatalities during the Mexican War of 1846 and its largest number of fatalities during the Civil War.

The below chart shows the number of fatalities from each war and the source of the information.

<b>US CONFLICT</b>	<b>US FATALITIES</b>	<b>INDIANA FATALITIES</b>	<b>SOURCE</b>
<b>AMERICAN REVOLUTION</b>	4,435		
<b>WAR OF 1812</b>	2,260		
<b>MEXICAN WAR</b>	13,283	542	
<b>CIVIL WAR NORTH</b>	364,511	24,416	SSM
<b>CIVIL WAR SOUTH</b>	199,110		
<b>SPANISH AMERICAN WAR</b>	2,893	73	SSM
<b>WORLD WAR I</b>	130,670	3,709	GOLD STAR
<b>WORLD WAR II</b>	408,306	9,649	IWM
<b>KOREAN WAR</b>	54,246	921	NARA
<b>VIETNAM</b>	58,219	1,534	NARA
<b>DESERT STORM/EACEKEEPER</b>	383	11	
<b>911</b>	2,753	8	
<b>OIF/OEF</b>	5,734	208	IWM
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,246,803</b>	<b>41,071</b>	
<b>NARA-National Archives Records Administration</b>			
<b>SSM-Soldiers and Sailors Monument</b>			
<b>IWM-Indiana War Memorial</b>			

# POW/MIA Affairs Committee

## 2020 MIAs Accounted-For

**DPAA 2020 Accounted for: 117**

**As of November 30, 2020**

### Accounted-For by War

**WWII (80)**

**Korea (35)**

**Vietnam/Laos (2)**

### Accounted-For By Service

**U.S Army (46)**

**U.S Army Air Forces (5)**

**U.S Marine Corps (16)**

**U.S Marine Corps Reserves (9)**

**U.S Navy (38)**

**U.S Navy Reserves (1)**

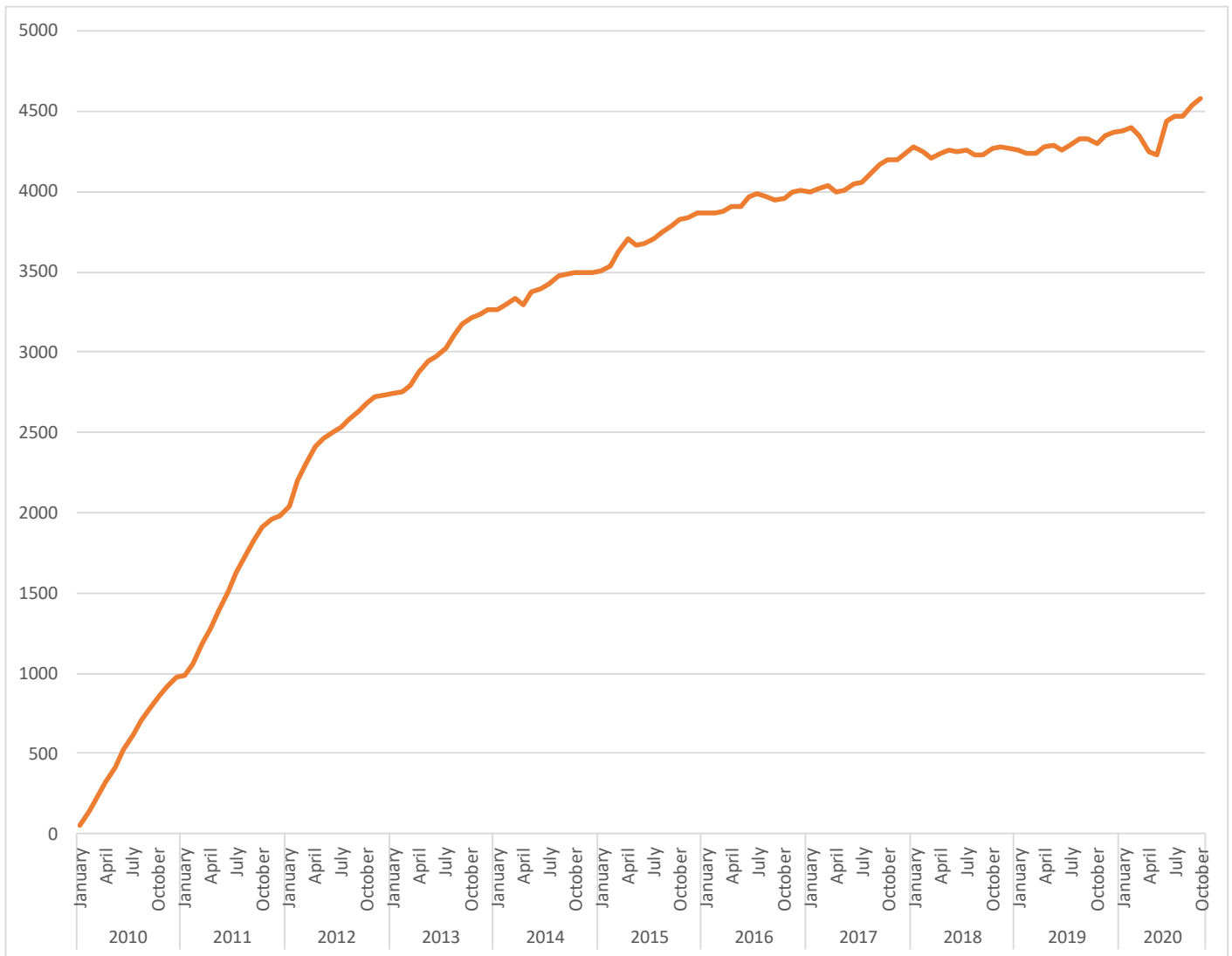
**U.S Air Force (2)**

**U.S Coast Guard (0)**

## Indiana Heroes that have been Identified

<b>Name</b>	<b>DOL</b>	<b>Identified</b>	<b>Returned</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>HOR</b>
<b>PFC Army Clifford M. Mills</b>	9-18-1944	1-29-2019	3-30-2019	Germany	Troy
<b>PVT USMC Fred Freet</b>	11-20-1943	8-6-2018	4-18-2019	Tarawa Atoll	Marion
<b>PFC Marvin E. Dickson</b>	11-13-1944	9-27-2018	6-8-2019	Germany	Indianapolis
<b>PFC USMC Marley R. Arthurholtz</b>	12-7-1941	9-18-2019	12-7-2019	USS Oklahoma	South Bend
<b>PFC USMC Louis Wiesshan</b>	11-21-1943	9-23-2019	6-11-2020	Tarawa Atoll	Richmond
<b>PVT USMC William E. Ramboo</b>	11-20-1943	7-13-2019		Betio Island	LaPorte
<b>SEA1 Maurice V. Spangler</b>	12-7-1942	3-27-2020		USS Oklahoma	Ft. Wayne
<b>PFC USMC Charles D. Miller</b>	11-22-1943	5-19-2020		Tarawa Atoll	Albany

# Indiana POW/MIA Specialty Plates



As of October 31,2020 we have **4,575** POW/MIA specialty plates on the streets of Indiana helping to bring awareness to the public about our POWs, and MIAs. The funds generated from the sale of the POW/MIA Specialty plate goes towards helping our Indiana Veterans in need through the Indiana Military Family Relief Fund (MFRF).

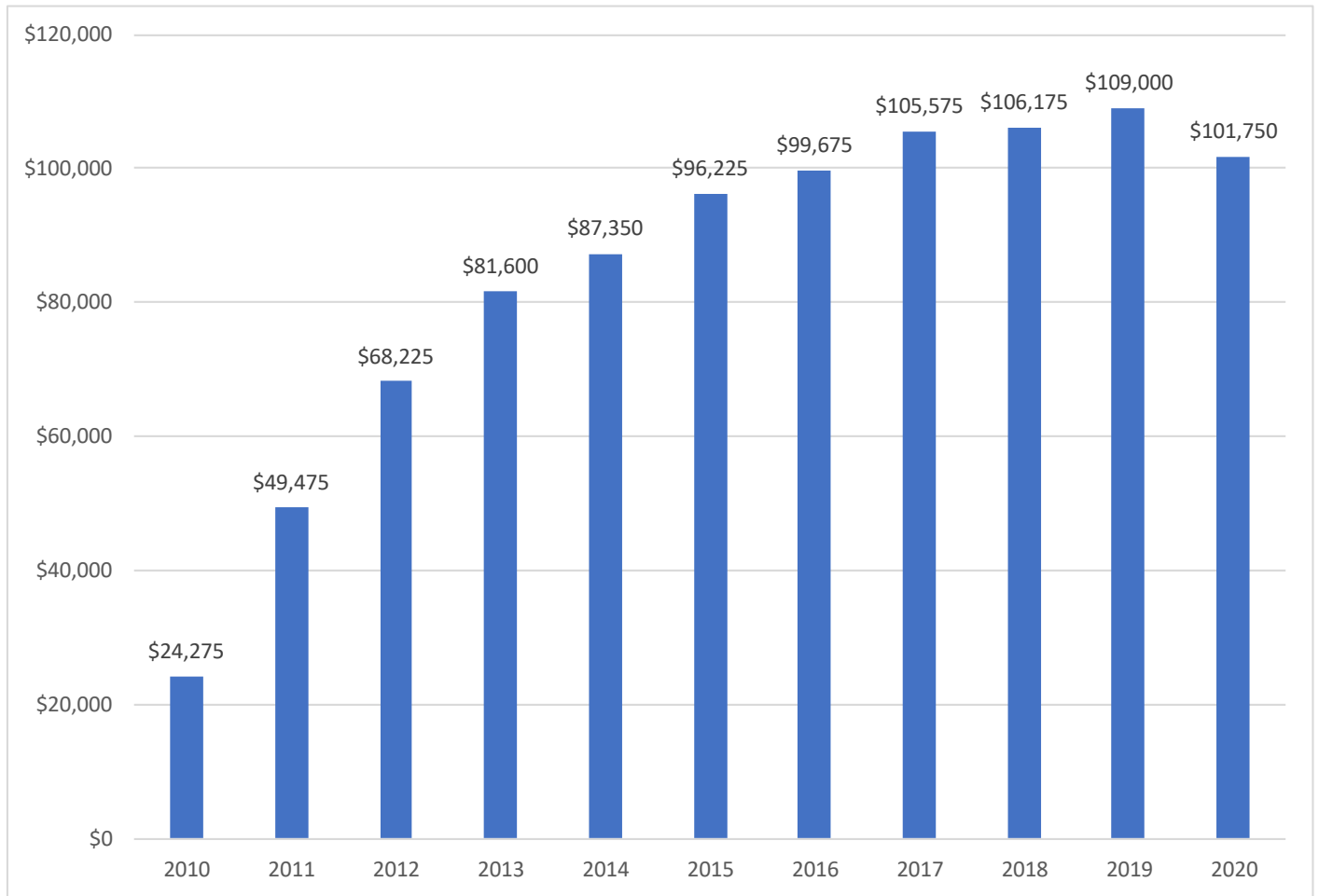


**Get your plate today and help a Veteran.**



# Indiana POW/MIA Specialty Plate Fund

## From 2010 to 2020



Since the introduction of the Indiana POW/MIA Specialty Plate in January 2010, the plate has generated an estimated **\$929,325**. 100% of the proceeds generated from the sales of the POW/MIA specialty plate goes to the Indiana Military Family Relief Fund (MFRF) to help our Indiana Veterans in need.

If you don't have a Indiana POW/MIA Specialty Plate on your vehicle, please let the Bureau Motor Vehicle (BMV) know that you would like to purchase a Rolling Thunder® sponsored POW/MIA specialty plate on your next renewal or new purchase.

With the purchase of a Indiana POW/MIA specialty plate, not only will you be instrumental in helping to bring awareness to the public about our POWs and MIAs, you will be helping our Indiana Veterans in need.

**Our mission goal is to hit \$1,000,000 in 2021**

**Please purchase your Indiana POW/MIA Specialty Plate Today.**

# Federal Government Affairs

## Senate Bills

**S.514** - "Deborah Sampson Act “ Benefits for Women Veterans.”

**S.785** - “A bill to improve mental health for Veterans”

**S.1673** - Gold Star Families National Monument Extension Act

**S. 1790** - National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020

## House Bills

**H.R.712** - VA Medicinal Cannabis Research Act of 2019

**H.R.1350** – (Corey Adams) “Green Alert throughout the United States”

**H.R.712** - “VA Medicinal Cannabis Research ACT OF 2019”

**H.R.2201** - To modify the presumption of service connection for veterans who were exposed to herbicide agents while serving in the Armed Forces in Thailand during the Vietnam era, and for other purposes.116th Congress (2019-2020)

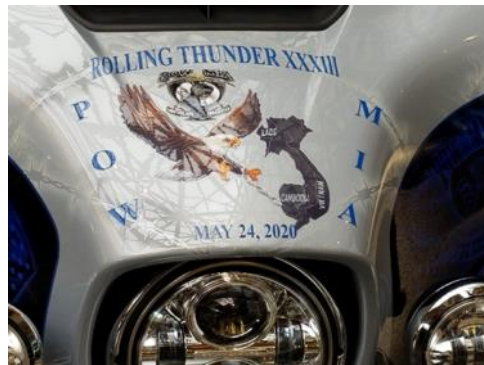
**H.R.2819** - Gold Star Families National Monument Extension Act.

**H.R. 326** - Victims of Agent Orange Relief Act of 2019

Please contact your Indiana Representatives as ask them to cosponsor the above bills. Details on the bills can be found at <https://congress.gov/> then click on **Legislation**.

# ROLLING THUNDER®, INC.

## National 2020/2021 Motorcycle



Due to the cancellation of the 2020 Rolling Thunder® Ride for Freedom Nationwide, the drawing for the above motorcycle has been extended until June 1, 2021.



## 2021 Membership Dues

September 2020 was the start of a new membership year and membership dues are due. The membership dues is still \$30.00 with \$20.00 going to National and \$10.00 staying with the Chapter.

Membership is important to keep the Chapter going so we can continue on with our important POW/MIA mission and helping our Indiana Veterans. Without members in good standing, the Chapter would not be able to do our important missions.

Please help the Chapter remain successful and pay your membership dues as soon as possible, but no later than January 2021. **Membership dues are due to National by February 2021 to remain in good standing.**



Membership dues can be paid at the Chapter meeting or by mailing your renewal form and check to the Chapter P.O Box listed below:

**Rolling Thunder Indiana Chapter 1**

**P.O Box 26458**

**Indianapolis, IN 46226**

# POW/MIA Education Reading And Websites

## Recommended Books

Title	Author
<b>Leave No Man Behind</b>	Bill Bell
<b>Why Didn't You Get Me Out</b>	Frank Aton
Kiss The Boys Goodbye	Monika Jensen-Stevenson & William Stevenson
Betrayed	Joseph D. Douglass, Jr
<b>Still Waiting</b>	Linda Cope
<b>An Enormous Crime</b>	Bill Hendon and Elizabeth A Stewart

**Note: Books marked in RED are highly recommended reads.**

## Recommended Web Sites

Title	URL
Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA)	<a href="http://www.dpaa.mil/">http://www.dpaa.mil/</a>
Biographies on Prisoners of War and Missing in Action	<a href="http://www.pownetwork.org/bios.htm">http://www.pownetwork.org/bios.htm</a>
Rolling Thunder National	<a href="http://www.rollingthunder1.com/">http://www.rollingthunder1.com/</a>
National League of POW/MIA Families	<a href="http://www.pow-miafamilies.org/">http://www.pow-miafamilies.org/</a>
Rolling Thunder Indiana Chapter 1	<a href="http://www.indianarollingthunder.com/">http://www.indianarollingthunder.com/</a>
Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve	<a href="http://esgr.mil/in">http://esgr.mil/in</a>
Veterans Support Council of Marion County	<a href="http://www.vscmc.com/">http://www.vscmc.com/</a>
Veterans Events	<a href="http://www.veteranevents.org/">http://www.veteranevents.org/</a>
American Ex-Prisoners of War	<a href="http://www.axpow.org/default.htm">http://www.axpow.org/default.htm</a>

## The Coachman Restaurant and Lounge



Larry Paynter is a proud Marine, Chapter Member, and along with his wife Becky, own and operate the Coachman Restaurant & Lounge in Plainfield, IN. The Coachman is famous for mouthwatering Prime Rib, Fresh cut steaks, large seafood selection, and the best Pork Tenderloin sandwich anywhere.

The Coachman offers daily lunch, and dinner food specials, with discount on appetizers, desserts, wine, liquor, and beer.

Join us for great food, and service along with our beautiful Patio for outside dining and entertainment (weather permitting). The Coachman is located at 6112 Cambridge Way, Plainfield, IN 46168

Mr. Paynter with his wife Becky. Hard to believe that a Marine could make such a catch

Visit the Coachman at <http://www.thecoachmanrestaurant.com>



**The Coachman Restaurant and Lounge**

**10% discount with this coupon**

**Not available with any other discounts**

**Always remember our American POWs and MIAs**







Ed Duam is a long time Rolling Thunder Chapter Member, and owner of the Do it Best Hardware store in Plainfield, IN. Ed has a great selection of hardware products for you do-it-yourselfers. If you are in a need of an American, POW-MIA, or State flag, see Ed. His flags are top American quality at a reasonable price.

**Ed offers 10% discount to Veterans.**

**Web site: <http://www.plainfielddoitbest.com/>**

**Store Address: 1001 East Main Street, Plainfield, IN 46168 (317) 839-2353**

**Ed will love to see yea**

**Hair Cuts at the Vintage Style Barber/Beauty Shop**  
**Mention the Chapter Newsletter and a get \$5.00 discount**  
**Veterans always get a \$10.00 discount**



1469 E. 52<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Indianapolis, IN  
46205  
317-254-5655

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**[www.peaceloveandhairindy.com](http://www.peaceloveandhairindy.com)**



This page is dedicated to our brothers and sisters hat have gone on to ride the heavens

**NEVER FORGET**

Tookolo, Allen, Member, November 2002	Booth, Frank, Member, 2004
Walker, Bruce, Member, October 2004	Parish, Bruce “Buz”, Past President, Sept 2008
Brinkley, Jon Past President, January 2009	Leck, Lou, Member, September 2009
Hall, Bruce, Member, March 2010	Gigle, Gene, Member, August 2011
Jolly, Ron Past Vice President, December 2011	Kaler, Steve, Past President, June 2012
Wilson, John, US Army WWII POW, July 2012	Loffredo, Nicholas, Member, August 2012
Freeman, James, Past Board, August 2012	Fulmer, Kenneth, Member, August 2012
Huelskamp, Glenn, Member, February 2013	Hillis, George “Sam”, May 2013
Winters, Steve, Member, September 2013	Meyerrose, Timothy, Member, May 2014
Richard (Dick) Forrey, Member June 2015	Hutchinson, James Alt Board Member, Dec 2015
Mary Brodrick, Member April 2016	Van Brunt, Craig, May 2016
Gary Stanley, Member October 2017	Jimmie Earl Brown , Member August 2018
Ruth Smith, Member September 2018	Damon Gastineau , Member December 2018
Joseph Smith, Member April 2018	Linda Cope, Past Secretary June 2019
Walter “Wally” J. Dudek, Member November 2019	Joe Kernan, USN Vietnam War POW, July 2020