

Rolling Thunder® NH-1 Newsletter

Volume 8, Issue 10

October 2008



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From the President

You know you live in New England when one morning you look outside and could swear you see snow falling and later that day you are outside raking leaves in shorts and wishing you were riding the motorcycle enjoying the remaining Foliage. I wish I could share that with those Veterans' who have yet to come home, who sit somewhere dark, dreary, cold, wet, hungry. I won't forget them. I know you as proud members of Rolling Thunder NH Chapter 1 won't forget them. Now it is our responsibility to ensure that the American Public does not forget them. And we stand strong on that binding link between us and when we do disagree on procedure or pathway, a momentary pause and reflection upon our Mission quickly pulls everything into perspective. I am proud to be a dedicated member of Rolling Thunder NH 1 and know that each of your share that pride and dedication – Thank you!

With the newly elected and re-elected officers and Board members seated, we have had two meetings since the election and we have a full plate. It is great to have such energy and enthusiasm with this group. We are looking at our 2009 Calendar already, addressing some financial planning items, looking forward to getting more information from National on the Rolling Thunder Charities which is a 501c3 entity that National has formed to assist with overall fundraising activities for all Chapters.

We have filled the Historian position with 2 members Denise "Scoop" Coulson and Becca Pepin. They have already sent out a request for information to the general membership regarding past activities and members. We look forward to their work and presentation of the "RT NH 1 Scrap Book". This will be volume I of what I hope will be several editions. Please contact them with pictures, notes, comments regarding where we are and where we came from. Alan has taken over the Newsletter Editor position and is filling the Photographer position. Many of you have already seen his excellent photographic work from our events. We had our Ice Cream Social at the Tilton Veteran's Home which was an outstanding event and one that is much appreciated by the residents and staff. We have our Boscowen Cemetery Clean Up on November 1st. We have our Patriotic Night event on November 8th. You should check our Calendar on our Web page frequently as we update it with events and information regularly.

At our November General Membership meeting, we will have a contact update form for you to fill out with updated contact information including e-mail addresses. If you won't be at the next General Membership meeting, please update your contact information with Munchkin our Chapter Secretary. Be Safe & Healthy,

Jeffrey "Doc" Stewart
President RT NH Chpt. 1



NH-1 Historians' Request



Denise and I have taken on the job as Rolling Thunder NH-1 Historians. We are very excited about this opportunity, but we know that we have a lot of work ahead of us.

Our Chapter has been around since 2000/2001 and it is now time that we start to document all that we have accomplished. We are going to put together scrapbooks of everything that Rolling Thunder NH-1 has done. These scrapbooks will be with us at events so that people attending the events can see what we've done and not just hear about it.

We'd like to go back to the start of our chapter and document who the members were and each year document the growth that our chapter has made. Since neither Denise nor myself was part of this chapter from the beginning, we need your help. Here is a list of things we are looking for, and hoping that all of you can help us.

PICTURES OF EVENTS:

If you have pictures of any events that we've done, please e-mail them to me. If you could document what event they are for, the date if you know it and who is in the picture that would be a great help. If you could send a separate e-mail for each event, that would be a great help.

Do not write on the back of photo prints as that may ruin the photo. Use a "post-it" note on

the picture that tells us what event they are for, the date if you know it and who is in the picture. Also, put each event in a separate envelope so that they don't get confused with other events that you may have pictures for. Mail them to Becca Pepin, c/o RTNH 1, PO Box 343, Epping, NH 03042

ARTICLES OR NEWS

If you have any newspaper articles that were written about Rolling Thunder we'd love to get a copy of them, even if the article talks about the Organization as a whole (ex. Washington D.C. weekend). This is a great way to show people what we've been recognized for and the things that we do.

FALLEN MEMBERS

We'd also like to dedicate a page for each of our members that are no longer with us. If you have any pictures of these members at any events we'd like to get a copy of them.

If you have any flyers or any other information that you would like to contribute we'd love to see it. Also, any questions please e-mail either one of us.

Thank you in advance for all your help!! Becca & Denise.

Becca bcalyn@msn.com

Denise dneez@comcast.net

New Hampshire Korean War MIA/POWs

Philip Warren Ackley
Philip Albert Botsford
Madison Freeman Charles
Myron Gracian Dick
Henry C. Flanders
Reginald E. Frazier
Robert Shurben Hedman
George Norman Hill
Warren O. Kendall
Theodore W. Ledoux
Albert Anthony McCarthy
Edward Joseph Morse, Jr.
Wallace F. Ritter
Leo Paul Savard
Mark A. Wentworth

Francis Adams Ashey
John Charles Brennan
George A. Curley, Jr.
Gerald Leo Joseph Dubay
Frederick E. Fleming
Benjamin W. Griggs, Jr.
Richard C. Henson
Paul Herbert Jordon
Arthur Raymond Labonte
Robert Hugh Malloy
Bruce Robert Mills
Joseph Norman Pelletier
Joseph A. Robillard
Alfred Harry Sidney

Phillip Kendall Balgh
Arthur Delbert Buckley, Jr.
Joseph Adelard Demers
Leland Rockwood Dunham
Robert S. Fletcher
Elmer Rix Hamlin
Herbert A. Hesseltine, Jr.
John Murray Kelley
Roland L. Leblanc
James Joseph Mayo
Fernand Aime Morin
Elmer Powers Richard
Ernest F. Russell
Harry Sparrow Smith

New Hampshire Vietnam War MIA/POWs

Clyde Douglas Alloway
Gerald Robert Helmich

Frank Neil Badolati
Quinten Emile Mulleavey

Robert Joseph Sullivan
Albert L. Page, Jr.

Minutes from September Meeting

Marsha Bailey, Secretary

Meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m.

Sick & Distressed: None

Introduction of Guests: Andrew Gagnon, son of fallen member Stephanie and Alyssa, Andy's Fiancé—Lt. Commander Doug Munz and wife Susan

Secretary's Report: Minutes of the August meeting were read and accepted.

Treasurer's Report: Report read and accepted.

BOD— Fred has been COB under every president -thanked everyone for being part of the chapter.

Quartermaster: Account in good standing. Steve Grundy is trying to get more pins. \$1700 invested so far with another \$500-\$750 needed to purchase another 100-150 pins. Too Tall motioned to table until next month when Bill and Steve can present alternate plan.

Chapter donated \$500 to Andy Gagnon to help with books to complete his last year of school.

New Support Our Troops patches now available for \$8.

New England Director: Pat noted national conference Nov 7,8,9-President and VP to attend. Changes to Constitution meeting for all New England Chapter Presidents, VP's and COB's October 19th.

Legislative Liaison: Jim said still trying to make Manchester, VA full service Shantix-ant smoking drug-side effects suicidal-government doing experiments without consulting the vets involved. Suicide hot line calls 50,000- number was higher in the past. Vote is important to veterans issues.

Old Business: Scott, Jim and Ann said Thunder Run II was a screaming success with next years date set for July 18th. More people needed on committee-\$3936 raised to include Qmstr sales.

Rollins Ride raised \$12,000 for scholarship and Butch said Low Jack not raffled off due to lack of ticket sales.

Rebecca Pepins brother in law went back to Iraq for 3rd tour in the Army. Robin Cavalarro's daughter has been in boot camp for two weeks-kicking butt!!!

NEW BUSINESS:

Tilton Veterans Home Cookout Aug 9th; good time had by all.

Liberty House Run raised about \$3400 to present to veterans home.

Not doing NHIS this month.

Nominations/Elections: Members accepting nominations were: **VP** with Steve Grundy accepting. **Treasurer** with Diane Lloyd and Janice M. Jolly accepting. **COB** Ray Hennessey and Susan Olsen accepting. **BOD 2 year positions:** Bill Niland, Leo Thomas, Russell Jolly, Teri Yob, Joe Evans, Butch Fontaine accepting. **BOD 1 year positions:** Jim Chisholm declined, Jay Robicheau, Becky Suchovsky accepting. Each candidate explained why they wanted the office they were nominated for. Tom Leary was Chairman of the Election committee with Lyn McGhie as member.

Newly Elected Officers: **VP-** Steve Grundy: **COB-** Susan Olsen: **Treasurer-** Janice Jolly: **2 year BOD's-** Bill Niland, Russell Jolly, Joe Evans: **1 year BOD's:** Jay Robicheau

FOR THE GOOD OF THE CHAPTER:

Thank you notes from:

- Becky Suchovsky for members attending her fathers funeral.
- Mrs. Latourneau for donating packages to soldiers.
- Blue Star Mothers for donation.

Monthly Vigil - Veterans Park, Manchester Wednesday night Sept 3, 7 pm

Vet Home Poker Run - Sept 6, rain date Sept 7

Home Town Heroes Ride - Sept 13

ME2 POW/MIA Recognition Day Ceremony Sept 20

Toy Run NHMRO Sept 7

Sean Powers Ride Oct 4

NH1 Patriotic Night Nov 8

Becca' Pepin won \$77 from nights 50/50

Adjourned 21:05

Last days as Director of NH Veterans Cemetery

by Alan Olsen, Editor

Editors note:

"Only 3 days so better catch me. I am available most of Monday and Tuesday. Roger" short and to the point. If I wanted to sit down and visit with Roger Desjardin, the outgoing Director of New Hampshire's Veterans Cemetery in Boscawen, I had no time to waste. Roger met me early Tuesday morning with his usual open door policy to anyone wanting some of his time. He closed the door, sat down at the table with folded arms and we began. What started as a Q & A interview became a dialog of one mans unfolding dream:

NH1: "Several weeks ago I attended a ceremony here for the four veterans, with out family, who had passed away. How did you find out about these four?"

Roger: "I became aware a few years ago that the cemeteries (funeral directors) had unclaimed remains. About a year ago I started being more vocal about this, every time I would see a funeral director, I'd say, hey listen, if you have any remains, please get in touch with me. We can help you find out if they are veterans. It is a crying shame to have these people just sitting there with nobody paying respect to them. After a period of time, I received a list of six names. We checked SSN's, eliminated one who was not a veteran, found family for one of the veterans remains and the other four veterans (two homeless) had no family what so ever; unclaimed. Since then, we have gotten 10 more names and have approved 4 already. These ten differ in that family is known, but they have not picked them up. That happens, I see it in this job every day. Its a sad situation. There are cases where the family has told the funeral home, we don't care. There are various reasons, could be financial; we just do not know.....there are veteran's organizations now taking this on under their wing to get us more names. We want the funeral homes to know that we are not telling them their business...we want them to know about us and that we are here to help them; if they want our help. Take one of our pre-applications, fill it out as best they can and we will run with it....I think more names will be coming forth now as the press has covered this and more folks know about it..."

NH1: Have you heard of this cemetery being called The Arlington of the North?

Roger: I have had people tell us that we are Arlington of the North.

NH1: That is a high compliment.

Roger: Yes.....recently parents of a Vietnam KIA moved there son here and we have four or five from



Iraq.

NH1: How many years have you been here?

Roger: Nine years. The cemetery opened late 1997-98. I came in late 1999.

NH1: It seems to me that we (NH1) had initial contact with you in 2001-2002. I do not remember who contacted who or how our first interaction with this veterans cemetery came about.

Roger: When I first came on board, I thought it was important that we notify all the veterans organizations. Weather Rolling Thunder got one or not I am not sure. My intent was to make sure that the veterans of New Hampshire had a part of this cemetery. One man alone can't do it. It takes a team effort.

NH1: What would you like your legacy to be..how would you like to be remembered?

Roger: That he cared deeply for veterans...I want to make sure that we continue caring for veterans. I think we have rallied the team. We have the federal government, we got the state, we have local business's, local veterans, local groups such as Rolling Thunder who have rallied to support us; continued to support us. Without that the cemetery would not survive.....it was a dream of mine to have a path in the woods, a dirt path in the woods, with some benches where people could meander and to just gather their thoughts. They are here to bury a loved one. I just thought they needed a place to sit and relax.....I drew a circle on the architectures plans. The generals looked at it and said what in the hell is this circle? I explained that it was to be a memorial

(Continued on page 5)

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walk way with small memorials along the path. Maybe put some benches out there. The generals said that it was not a bad idea, but why do you want to put it so close to Route 3?.....people who are going to be using it are elderly and they are not going to want to walk a mile in the woods....this is where it should go....the architect put on the plans this was to be a 1000' path through the woods....on the plans it said the director would walk the contractor through the woods to show him which path he wanted to take.....

..... I grabbed a can of paint with the contractor and we started meandering through the woods with twists and turns. I did not want to cut down nor remove any of the trees.....half way through the contractor said --- wait a minute; the plans shows a circle..I am just going to do a circle....I am not going to do all of these winding paths.....this will cost me money.....I said read the fine print. (Roger now laughing out loud) ... he was a great contractor and he laughed and said you got me.

.....then the Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter came in. The Vietnam Monument was brought to the memorial by Mr. and Mrs Raymond Goulet Jr. of Manchester. They came into my office just as we were going to bid. They said..we would like to put this monument at the cemetery...and Al,... I'm sensitive; I looked at that and tears rolled down my eyes....I said, my god, what a wonderful entrance to the walk way.

Rogers glasses come off now as he talks and a tear runs down his cheek. He wipes them away as a matter of fact and returns his glasses. He is as moved today talking of this walk way and the people who have stepped up to help as that day the Vietnam Memorial came to be.

....And we put in the monument and the walk way has taken off from there. I think that is when Rolling Thunder started getting involved. The dedication to the Vietnam Monument is when we met you folks and about four years ago your veterans organization adopted the walk way....

Roger continued with stories, more than can be included here. A picture was building of New Hampshire's families of veterans and the depth to which this ground has touched so many.
Roger continued;

.....it is a compassion we all feel, not just me. When the guys are out there and there is an internment going on; it is not unheard of the widow with her children to come up and hug the maintenance staff and say thank you.....we have people from out of state who buried their son a few years ago in section 4..you can come here on a weekend, normally a Saturday around noon and you will find them parked up in section 4 with their windows down eating a picnic lunch. They can see their son's stone from where they are; they come purposely

to hear the bells that ring for 20 minutes.....so we have made this a family cemetery, not just a veterans cemetery.

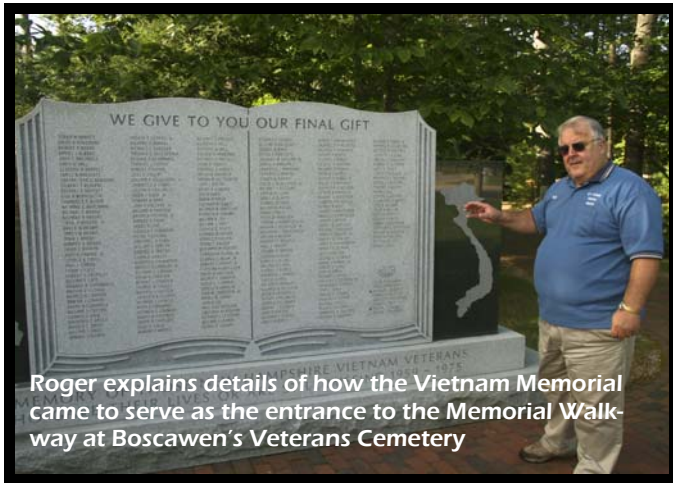
.....you know, its been a tough job. I had a family come in here right after fathers day this year.... couple....early 20's....sat right where we are sitting.....and..and they had a problem..they had just lost their child. So they shared the story with us...took out the paper work and immediately I said Oh Lord, he is National Guardsman...wonder if he is going to be qualified....and sure enough, he had enough... enough paper work with him to show me that he had gone to Iraq and served active duty. So he was qualified. Immediately we were able to approve the interment of that child. They left here with a smile on their face... they came to us grieving but they left smiling. And the day of the internmentthis is something I will always remember. The day of internment-----excuse me--- (Rogers glasses are off again, his eyes red and another tear on the same cheek. Roger does not wipe away the tear but continues instead)...they actually walked in here with a picture of their baby and gave it to me and said we want you to have this because you helped us....I want you to remember.....it is hard.....

There is a pause now, Roger takes a breath and I start to move to another subject. But Roger continues.....

.....had a guy come in here Thursday night. This is part of the job people don't see. Not only me, but the staff deals with this everyday.... Thursday night, the office is locked, I have been in meetings....the front door is left open...and I thought I heard somebody crying. I got to the window and there was an elderly gentleman in his 80's....hanging on to the counter top with tears rolling down his eyes.....I am sorry I am sorry he said, I just need some information.....I said come on in and lets sit down and talk...we talked for over an hour. He had just left the doctors office and he has less than four months to live. and ..and he is an engineer, recently separated from his wife...when he left he was



A moment of silent respect



Roger explains details of how the Vietnam Memorial came to serve as the entrance to the Memorial Walkway at Boscawen's Veterans Cemetery

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smiling. He gave me a hug and said you made me feel better.....we've been able to put some compassion in this place that you do not see in other cemeteries.....this is a family cemetery....I can leave here with my head high.

NH1: What should the next director know?

Roger: The next director needs to know that this is not just a job. That he has got to have some compassion for it...you have got to allow people to open up to you and let people talk of their personal lives if that is what they need to do.....they are hurting when they come here...they are hurting bad...and when they get here we need to make sure that someone is here to allow them to show their emotions...he/she needs to take it one more level....I hope they will continue the outreach program...we are still receiving 15-20 applications a week....there are still people out there that do not know about the cemetery. I hope the next director continues a relationship I think we have with all the veterans organizations.

I suggest to Roger that we take a break and walk some of the cemetery. I ask him to take me to his favorite place and we went directly to the memorial walk way. Roger points to names on the granite wall and tells stories of POW-MIA's and their families. We walk through the new Air Force memorial and I learn that the three vertical sweeping stainless steel columns represent the missing man formation. At each major memorial Roger explains details. The rough cobble stone walk up to the WWII/Korean War POW memorial reminds of the streets and roads through which our soldiers marched. One veteran visitor was found weeping in front of that monument saying that the cobble stones reminded him of the court yard he once walked daily. We finished at the new memorial to NH Gold Star and NH Blue Families. This pillared Reflection Fountain nears completion with dedication later this summer. Again Roger tells of problem solving with the details of

this monument. He had to call in a pool company to qualify final design and hired them to complete leaking, water pump and water flow details. When the company learned who the monument was for, they donated their time and materials.

Back to his office and one last story; maybe two short ones. A sense of humor always compliments a tough situation. One Sunday morning Roger received a call of a distressed wife/just widowed. She explained that her husband had just passed away and Roger asked what funeral home he was in; had she called family? She said no, that he was still at home. The husband had told his wife that the first person to call in the event of his death was Roger. And then the frailty and calm panic of an elderly woman's voice calling Roger only to get his voice mail. She leaves her name, her husbands name, her plea, the day, the exact time to the minute and a return phone number. "I am going to have to know what to do, I just do not know what to do, I just do not know what to do, please get back to me."

Rolling Thunder New Hampshire Chapter 1 has a history here with Roger Dejardins and The New Hampshire Veterans Cemetery in Boscawen. So many veterans in this state, too have this personal friendship and history with Roger and this ground. Our time spent here has become personal.

As Editor, I knew I wanted to spend some time with Roger, on behalf of RTNH-1 membership, to say thank you and let him know what he means to all veterans in this state. I have yet to meet a veteran or family that has not mirrored some of the heart felt stories Roger told this day. I knew I was not ready to let go and hoped that sharing some of Roger and the history of our veterans cemetery was in order.

Our brothers and sisters interned here will miss Rogers daily routine of touring the cemetery every morning prior to going to work, and again at the end of the day before going home; no matter how late he was.



The Memorial Walkway; a place to meander, to grieve, a place to sit and relax.



Silence is Deadly

by Jim Chisholm, Legislative Liaison

When I started as Rolling Thunder's legislative liaison, I naively expected that we would be doing nearly anything it could for the sons and daughters of our country that

were being sent in harms way. The level of public patriotism was high, and there was much talk of "supporting our troops" and of how those that served in our military needed to be treated as heroes.

As I began to focus on exactly how those serving now and in the past they were being treated, a more complicated story began to be revealed; we were told that there were shortages in the up-armor kits for Humvees, but then the owner of the factory where they were built revealed that while he was willing and able to produce many more kits, he was never asked by Pentagon to do so. The public was more than willing to spend money on upgraded vehicles designed to absorb the impact of an IED to save more troops, but it wasn't until years later that a push for those vehicles began, and it came from Congress instead of the Pentagon.

We witnessed the Walter Reed Hospital scandal, and then watched as the JPAC program within the DPMO (which returns remains of US military personnel from past conflicts to their waiting families) had its budget slashed by over \$3 million dollars. Later, the VA actually ran out of money due to intentional under funding, and in

both these cases Congress needed to step up and fight the Bush administration to restore funding levels, and to prevent fees for veterans receiving medical care that had non-combat related health issues.

Now, locally, we struggle to restore a full service veteran's hospital to New Hampshire, and it has become a major campaign issue in our local elections. I can't help but ask; where were New Hampshire's veteran's organizations when Manchester's VA Hospital lost its full service status? Where was the outrage then, and why did our elected leaders let this invaluable resource slip away? What accounts for the silence of veterans organizations during that time? I have yet to find out.

Yet, gradually, the work of veterans advocates are beginning to bear fruit; the VA is taking Traumatic Brain Injury (the signature wound of this conflict) more seriously, and funding for mental health services is finally at the level it should have reached years ago. Our own state has gained another Vet's Center, and may receive one more. While casualties in armed conflict are unavoidable, it has become clear to those willing to look at the facts that too many were lost due to a callous disregard for the welfare of those that protect us.

If I have learned one thing over these last few years, it is this: the silence of veterans groups is deadly.

Denis receives his Boot Patch

Bill receives his Boot Patch

Janice & Russell receive full patch sets



2008 RT NH-1 PRELIMINARY CALENDAR

DATE	DAY	LEGEND	EVENT/FUNCTION
October 18	Sat	CF	167th CSSB Deployment Ceremony/ Any NH1 Officer
November 1	Sat	CS CF	Boscawen Veterans Cemetery Fall Clean Up
November 2	Sun	CS CF	Boscawen Veterans Cemetery Fall Clean Up- Rain Date
November 4	Tues	CS CF	Chapter Business Meeting; Epping Legion
November 5	Wed		Manchester POW/MIA Vigil
November 8	Sat	CS CF	Patriotic Night Fundraiser, Epping Legion
November 9	Sun		Vets Day Ceremony Boscawen Vets Cemetery

CS = Chapter Sponsored (We are putting it on) - **CF**= Chapter Designated Function (All should try and attend)
Blank = Informational for dates on other events This is a tentative list as developed by the Board.

LET'S HELP SCOTT AND HELP OUR TROOPS ON NOVEMBER 4

Members bring items for another over seas care package to the November meeting. Items such as: Candy (heat resistant) Fruit Breezes (throat drops) writing Paper and envelopes Pens/Pencils mouth wash, tooth brush/paste-instant coffee/tea-powder drink mix- books, local newspapers, all kinds of snacks, guys/gals toiletries and hygiene-batteries all sizes, fly strips, cushioned high calf socks, pre-paid phone cards, duct tape, small flash lights, bug spray, a personal note of support from you, post cards (service member can mail back free to the states) canned goods and unbreakable Christmas ornaments; etc. **SCOTT WILL BOX AND SHIP FOR US!!**

NOW "ISOLATED INDIVIDUAL" -NOT POW

Editors note: *This is shared with the chapter via our President, Jeffrey "Doc" Stewart. "Here is an email I got from a friend of mine heading out to deployment-with his permission:"*

I remember back at the Vietnam Memorial anniversary ceremony when the issue was brought up about the use of the term of 'POW'. I don't really know all the background on this, but I thought this might interest you.

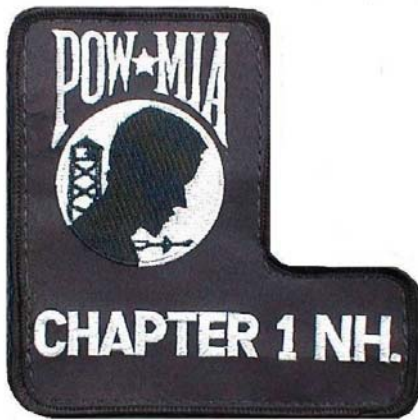
When you are coming over here to serve 'In Theater' of Kuwait, Iraq, and Afghanistan, they Army has you process through a week of briefings and training. If you go over as an individual, you go to Ft. Benning, GA. If you go over as a unit, you go to Ft. Sill, OK, but the training is the same.

Much of the training you have to do on your own either before you get there, or during the evening on your down time, that is Computer Based Training (CBT). The number course of all that we have to take is called SERE 100. It takes about 8 or 9 hours to take. This course is training on being an 'Isolated Person'. This is what the Army is calling it now instead of POW/ This training is like the training I had as an aviation

crew member if we went down. This training is much more detailed now than what I had 15 years ago, but I thought it was interesting that they now call the term 'Isolated Individual'. **Thought** it might interest you too.

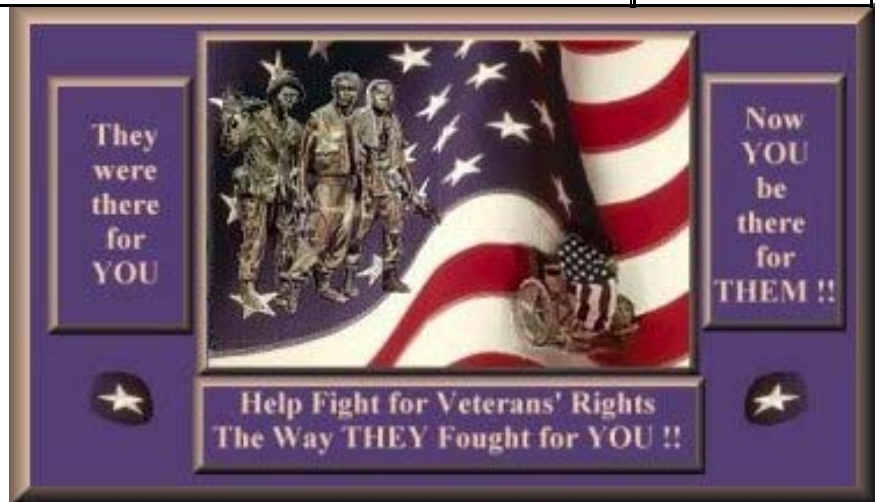
The 25th Infantry Division is coming in now, to move up into Iraq. Everything goes through here in Kuwait up into Iraq. It's hard for me to do research on the Internet here, but I think this is the first time the 25th ID has left the Pacific Theater. It is also the first time they will going on the line since Vietnam, I believe. Thought there might be some of your members from the old 25th ID, and this would interest them.

I was at the DFAC for lunch yesterday surround by soldiers of the 25th ID, and some kind of signal was given that I didn't hear, but they all got up at once, pushing back their chairs, and pushing the chairs in, then walking out. It startled me, but then I had to smile with pride. It reminded me of me when I was their age. You would be even more proud if you see how this young men and women are doing our military proud. BTW, every branch of service is here, including the Coast Guard. Have to go.....



We will never forget.

*We're on the web
www.rolling-thunder-nh1.org*



Rolling Thunder® NH-1

October 2008

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Epping, NH 03042
Tel: 603-370-0631

Jeffrey "Doc" Stewart, *President*

Next Business Meeting
November 4, 2008
7:30 P.M.
American Legion Hall, Post 51
Route 125, Epping, NH