

ALR Meeting February 10, 2024

Meeting called to order at 0900

Started with Pledge of Allegiance.

Nick led with an opening prayer.

Attendance:

In Person: Tom, Elsie, Bruce, Vig, Nick, Eric (Post Commander), Jim, Ed (Guest), Irv (Guest), CJ, Wilbur, Mike, Cathy

Online: Rich, Richard, Harvey, Dan Hill, Forrest

Tom introduced Guest Speak Ed W from the Run for the Wall organization.

Run for the wall is a ride for veterans and supporters that starts out in California every may for 10 days across the US to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. There are a few routes for the ride, one that leaves from California together and then breaks up and another route that leaves the DC area, the Sunday of Memorial Day, and goes to the Middle East conflict memorial in Marseille that takes three days. The ride is a very uplifting thing for veterans that promotes healing and a remembrance for missing and killed in action. Communities support the riders by showing up on bridges as they ride under. The Central Route stops in Newmarket for lunch, but this year they are moving it to Marshall VA. If you want to support, the date is May 24th, the Friday before Memorial Day. [Run for the Wall \(rftw.us\)](http://Run for the Wall (rftw.us)) is the website for more information.

Tom told a great story about the ride that started raising money for a Forest School in Rainelle, WV, 30 years ago. When the riders first came through on I-64, the advance rider got to the toll booths, and asked if he can pay for 100 motorcycles to come through and they said no. So they made on spot decision to pull off on a windy little Rd on HWY60 through the mountains when a local sheriff's deputy pulled them over. They explained their mission to him, and he called it back to HQ and riders got back on the road. While riding down the mountain, they rode into a little town called Raynell.

The riders were in shock and felt like they were crashing into a town parade. However, there was a group of people listening to the police scanner and heard about the biker's mission and the whole town came out to meet the riders. They invited the riders into their elementary school and started making peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to feed the riders. Ever since then, the riders started raising money for that school and one year the riders raised and presented the school principal a bag with over \$10,000 cash! This created a slush fund for the school to help kids for whatever they needed. This has been going on for over 30 years now. Recently in 2023, the funds raised for them was \$26,000, paid for their playground, field trips which they never had.

Tom gave the floor to Jim Otto to speak as an intro to our guest speaker.

On 8 June, he is hosting a charity event at the post for Combat Warriors incorporated to support their Wyoming chapter and introduced Irv who will speak about the great work that they do. They are going to have a BBQ meal, raffle prizes, whiskey tasting and have three guest speakers. One is a flag officer, still TBD, a Navy SEAL captain who Jim served with (But emphasized that he was an Intel geek to the seals

and not a seal) and a Night Stalker Pilot (160th Soar (Spelling?) pilot). They will be raffling off a custom-made wooden flag which will memorialize the 80th anniversary of D-Day. Which is the theme this year.

The flag has a wood artifact built into it, under a silver star and is from a tree in Normandy. One of the soldiers of the 2nd wave brought back a chunk of a tree in 1945, when he came home.

Guest: Irv, Retired Marine Corp Master Gunnery Sergeant

Irv gave us some history of his military career, 25-year Career in counterintelligence, human intelligence half of which was special operations and supported the DIA, CIA and other tier one units throughout the world. The Combat Warriors incorporated originally began in 2011 by a Vietnam Veteran named Bill Warren of North Carolina. He wanted to serve the greater veteran community and gained official 501C3 status in 2013. Irv was first introduced to the organization in 2014 with an opportunity to turkey and duck hunt. Since then, chapters were started and Arizona, Texas, Nebraska and Wyoming.

Irv got started with the Wyoming chapter for their inaugural event for that chapter. As a result, he was asked to sit on the board of Directors. They take service-disabled veterans elk & antelope hunting and depending on if they can get tags, maybe mule deer and white-tail hunting and they camp at 8,000 feet and hunt up to 11,000 feet.

New Members: Jim Otto

Director Tom Pike: Nothing to report

Assistant Director Mark Davis: Not present, but sent Tom a note that the website is up to date and he has nothing else to report.

Treasurer: Elsie Mersereau

The starting balance is \$3812.94. Collected some dues for this year and next for \$75.00, which brings our available operating balance \$3887.94. Elsie needs to write a check for \$600 to the Challenge League (I couldn't make out the name) and will reflect in her next treasurers report.

Sargent at Arms: Wilbur Scales Nothing to report

Secretary: Daniel Vigil (Vig) Nothing to report

Road Captain/Safety Officer: Bruce Mersereau

The 13th of June is the in-state legacy ride that starts in Winchester with an opening ceremony. All riders will be briefed at 1800 on Thursday and then the ride will take off from Winchester at 0800 on Friday morning. If you are thinking about staying in a hotel overnight, there are some deals for \$185 (or so) and he will try to get more info. The ride from Winchester is great and will go through great roads in Virginia. There'll be 3 stops in total. Friday night, they'll have a motorcycle comedian. On Saturday morning the riders will take off to the Virginia headquarters and head to a cemetery, then to the state capital. Arrangements for a photo op on the steps of the state Capital is in the works.

The legacy is self-sustained, and over the past 13 years it has raised over \$1,000,000 a year.

Tom: He has an e-mail link he can send out to make reservations at the hotel. But there is not one set up for Winchester yet, however one is set up for Richmond.

Chaplin: Nick Nicholas

While visiting his wife at the Iliff nursing facility in Falls Church, he noticed the flagpole is in terrible shape. He thought about trying to raise money to fix the flagpole right, which is the easy part. The hard part and what he really wants to do is have a monthly flag raising for all the veterans that are in this facility, to get them outside and maybe provide coffee. He spoke with the Executive director, and she said she'd love to do it.

He is looking for suggestions for someone that can draw up an estimate, maybe an architect work up a plan and come up with what it cost to do this. This facility is in Dunn Loring area, in a hidden little neighborhood that you never would have known was there and was built in 1961. So the flagpole is probably just as old. He is asking for ideas and/or thoughts.

Vig: Asked if he could help Nick as his Father-in-Law, Vice Admiral Jerry Tuttle spent time there and took his last breath there.

Historian/Photographer: Tim Park Not present

Old Business:

Tom brought up one of the fundraisers for the Virginia legacy run is a gun raffle. He still has a bunch of tickets to sell for \$10 each. There are four different firearms being raffled, and 4 different chances to win (?). So, if you would like to buy a raffle ticket, let Tom know.

New Business:

The post has been contacted by Honor Flight Houston and they are coming into town on the 19th and 20th of April (I think I got that date correct). The post is to provide them a dinner on Friday night and in the past, we have delivered lunches to the Honor flights for 50 to 60. Looking for volunteers to help, please let Tom know.

Thunder 2024 which is Rolling Thunder weekend. What do we want to do? Are we just going to do the ride down Sunday morning? Last year, we had coffee at the post, but didn't have doughnuts etc.

Bruce suggested we promote it, at the post for the riders to try and get an idea of who will be coming to post for Friday night dinner and Saturday breakfast. Last year not many came to Friday night dinner but had a good turnout for Saturday breakfast. On Sunday we had the police escort and PatriotHD helped arrange for us to be at the front with a team to save spots at the Pentagon. As far as we know, it should be the same for this year.

Tom: We also passed a helmet around and took donations and collected \$600 for the legacy run, so I think we'll just do the same thing again.

Nick will update ALR website.

Events:

Tomorrow morning is the post breakfast at 9:30 for \$13 and it's a good buffet breakfast. They will be making omelets, waffles, pancakes, all the good stuff (Know I am Hungry ~vig)

14th of February is our next post general membership meeting and dinner starts at 1830 and the meeting at 1900.

Our next meeting is the 9th of March here at 0900.

Forrest:

He is trying to get in contact with Ranger Pierce with the Park Service about the cleaning of the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial. He is hoping to get that started back up in April.

In April, Forrest is expecting to have a mission for 25 previously unclaimed veterans and spouses at Quantico National Cemetery. He will provide more information as it develops.

He is putting together the next Veteran thank you card pickup for Prince William County. That will be sometime in April and 11 schools will be participating.

The 22nd of February, Forrest and Claude Davenport (Spelling) from Post 72 will be at the Honor Flight summit at BWI in Baltimore. They will be passing out 10,000 cards to the Honor Flight hubs. For 2024 there will be 252 Honor Flight missions coming into the DC area. That will be for 15,584 veterans, 109 of those are going to be going into BWI (Out of Scope for us), 90 going into DCA for 6600 veterans and 27 missions arriving at IAD Dulles for another 2000.

There will be about 20 bus tours arriving from different locations. The first mission is scheduled for the 22nd of March into DCA. The first one into Dulles is on 10 April. We will be able to meet and greet the veterans as they arrive at the airport and get on the buses. And have a civilian motorcycle escort into DC. The Park Police will no longer be providing escorts from the airport. But will provide assistance with parking.

Bruce sent an email from Brandy about hotels and verified by hearing CJ's phone bing.

Tom: Made a motion to adjourn at 1022

Nick lead us in a closing prayer