



April 16 2025
Volume 2, Issue 2

Rolling Thunder CA-1 Quarterly Newsletter

Our Mission

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 the future Veterans from being left behind should they become Prisoners Of War-Missing In Action. We are 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 that we are working on.

Rolling Thunder®, Inc. CA-1 is the first fully chartered west coast chapter of Rolling Thunder® Inc. We are dedicated to helping those who are serving, have served and the families left behind of those members in the armed forces who have been wounded, missing or killed in action.



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Monthly Meetings

We meet the
3rd Wednesday of
every month at the
Elks Lodge at 6:30 PM.

Address:
The Elks Lodge #2477
158 Conejo School Rd
Thousand Oaks, CA.
91360

Become A Member

Whether you are a veteran or not, family member of a veteran or not, ride a motorcycle or not, YOU ARE WELCOME!

Rolling Thunder Story

Incorporated in 1995, [Rolling Thunder, Inc.](#) is a class 501(c)(4) non-profit organization with over 90 chartered chapters throughout the United States and members abroad. While many members of Rolling Thunder®, Inc. are veterans and many ride motorcycles, neither qualification is a prerequisite. Rolling Thunder®, Inc. members are old and young, men and women, veterans and non-veterans. All are united in the cause to bring full accountability for Prisoners Of War (POW) and Missing In Action (MIA) of all wars, reminding the government, the media and the public by our watchwords: "We Will Not Forget."

Annual Events

Rolling Thunder CA-1 attends numerous events through-out the year to support, honor, and/or assist local veterans. The following list are the upcoming events that are scheduled so far for 2025.

Ride for the Blue	5/3/2025
Conejo Valley Parade	5/18/2025
Mobile Vietnam Memorial Wall	5/23 - 5/27/2025
Memorial Day at Pierce Brothers	5/26/2025
Nation of Patriots Tour	6/17 & 6/18/2025
Camarillo Heritage Days	7/19 & 7/20/2025
Camarillo Air Show	8/16 & 8/17/2025
Thousand Oaks Street Fair	10/19/2025
Wreaths Across America	12/13/2025

If there is an event that you would like Rolling Thunder CA-1 to consider, please let us know. We are always looking for ways to support our veterans and raise awareness of the Prisoner of War (POW) and Missing in Action (MIA) issue.

Dates to Remember

APRIL

- 5 Gold Star Spouses Day
- 6 U.S. Enter WW1 (1917)
- 6 Rolling Thunder CA-1 Chapter Anniversary (2003)
- 9 National Former POW Recognition Day
- 14 Air Force Reserve Birthday
- 23 Army Reserve Birthday
- 30 Vietnam War Ends (1975)

MAY

National Military Appreciation Month

Month of the Military Caregiver

- 1 Silver Star Service Banner Day
- 3 National Explosive Ordnance Disposal Day
- 4 National Firefighters Day
- 6 National Nurses Day
- 8 VE Day (1945)
- 9 Military Spouse Appreciation Day
- 11 Mothers Day
- 13 Children of Fallen Patriots Day
- 15 Peace Officers Memorial Day
- 16 National Defense Transportation Day
- 17 Armed Forces Day
- 22 National Maritime Day
- 26 Memorial Day

JUNE

- 4 Battle of Midway Begins (1942)
- 6 D-Day (Allies Invade Normandy 1944)
- 7 National Cancer Survivors Day
- 12 Women Veterans Day
- 14 Army Birthday (1775) & Flag Day
- 15 Fathers Day
- 17 Navy Hospital Corps' Birthday
- 20 American Eagle Day
- 22 GI Billed Signed (1944)
- 23 Coast Guard Auxiliary Birthday
- 25 Start of Korean War (1950)
- 27 National PTSD Awareness Day

Rolling Thunder CA-1 Officers & Board

Officers

- President: John Short III
(800) 606-1390
- Vice President: Allan Woods
(805) 377-4492
- Secretary: Christina Woods
- Treasurer: Lisa Connolly

Board of Directors

- Chairman of the Board: Pat Connolly
- Gov't & Veteran Affairs/Board Member: Jerry Schmidt
- Membership/Board Member : Tom Cook
- Board Member: Jim Kirby
- Board Member: Bob Jones
- Board Member: Mike Smith



Missing in Action (MIA) Update

Unaccounted for by War (as of 3/31/2025):

- World War II 71,961
- Korean War 7,433
- Vietnam War 1,573
- Cold War 126
- Gulf Wars 6
& Libya

Total MIA count for California : 6,333

Total accounted for so far in FY 2025 (10/1/2024 - 9/30/2025): 63

WWII = 42, Korean War = 20, Vietnam War = 1

The Mobile Vietnam Memorial Wall

The Mobile Vietnam Memorial Wall is a half-scale mobile replica of The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C. It was created by and for the Antelope Valley (hence the nickname “The AV Wall”).

When the AV Wall is displayed, it is open 24 hours/day for free public viewing.

Most Walls Keep People Out, This Wall Brings People Together.



AV Wall Facts

- Vietnam Era: 1 Nov 1955 – 15 May 1975 (by Congress in 1999)
- As of 2022 – 384 names added since 1986
- Number of casualties on The Wall – 58,281
- Highest Casualty Day – 31-Jan-68: 246
- Highest Casualty Month – May-68: 2,416
- Highest Casualty Year – 1968: 16,916
- Approximately 997 were killed on their first day in Vietnam (unconfirmed)
- Approximately 1,443 were killed on their day of departure from Vietnam (unconfirmed)

Upcoming Display

May 23 – 26, 2025 Rancho Tapo Community Park, 3700 Avenida Simi, Simi Valley, CA.

When: 3:00pm Friday, May 23, 2025 through 8:00am Tuesday, May 27, 2025

Where: Rancho Tapo Community Park, 3700 Avenida Simi, Simi Valley, CA 93063

Events: Opening Ceremony: Friday, May 23 at 5:30pm

Taps: Nightly at 10:00pm

Closing/Memorial Day Ceremony: Monday, May 26 at 11:00am

Host: Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District (RSRPD)

On its 16th anniversary, November 12, 2025, The Mobile Vietnam Memorial Wall will be retired. The Board is working to determine the future of the Wall, but it will no longer be available for mobile displays.

Veteran Spotlight

(as reported by Tim Coates)

A Marine and a brother: **Jerry Schmidt** was born on September 30, 1947, in Chicago. His family stayed there until Jerry was 8 years old before moving to the Los Angeles area. He attended Hamilton High School until graduation and then joined the Marines.

After his military service, he attended Laverne University and received a BA, then followed that with an MBA in Business. Jerry worked at Everest and Jennings for 23 years. E&J manufactured durable medical supplies such as wheelchairs. After leaving E&J, he worked for Honeywell as a Customer Service Manager and then as HR manager.

Jerry is an Honorably Discharged Marine Veteran and founding member of Rolling Thunder CA-1. He joined RT during the start-up of this organization about 10 years ago. He is on the Board of Directors and is our "Government and Veterans Affairs" committee chairperson. He keeps us up to date on Veterans issues and benefits as well as keeping count of the recovered soldiers and sailors who were classified as Missing in Action (MIA) from all wars or hostile actions. It is our Rolling Thunder mission to "Never Forget", and Jerry keeps us on our mission.

He is very recognizable with his huge, 1870's style handlebar moustache in the likes of Wyatt Earp and Sam Elliot. Of course, for every Ying there is a Yang, and for Jerry he sacrificed the hair on top of his head for perhaps the bushiest "stache" in the room. Jerry decided to cultivate something on his face that grows wild in other places!

Jerry elected to go into military service in October 1967. He had a draft notice in hand and went to the Army to fulfill his obligation to our country. There was some confusion at the check-in and after the Army physical, the Army sent him home to wait for another draft notice. Although Jerry's father had been in the Army, Jerry didn't really want to go into the Army, so by the time he got his second draft notice, with his first wife pregnant, he had used that time to join the Marine Reserves, which is a 6-year commitment to the Marine Reserve Force. The Army had a hold on him but released him to join the Marines.

He went to Marine Corps Recruit Depot (MCRD) San Diego for Boot Camp, and after completion he was sent to Camp Pendleton for further Advanced Infantry Training. During his 6 years of service, he was required to attend training one weekend per month as well as every year he went on full active duty for two weeks of additional training. Much of his training and field exercises were conducted at Camp Pendleton and Coronado, CA. He also went to Marine Base 29 Palms during the summer for desert training (you know, when it was smoking hot out there!). His jungle training was conducted at Camp Pendleton and Coronado.

Most of his specialized training and field exercises were conducted between Camp Pendleton and Coronado, CA. However, prior to attaining the rank of Corporal (E-4), Jerry was sent to MCRD San Diego to attend Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) school.

Jerry was assigned to Amphibious Unit, 4th Division. His division had to be ready to move out at 72 hours' notice. Although his unit was not deployed, the Marines practiced their trade and trained continually on land and sea.

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Veteran Spotlight (continued)

Training was conducted on board ship and on land in Coronado CA. with the Navy chauffeuring the Marines out to sea and dropping them into the water for a very long swim to shore. The Marines had to jump/abandon ship at sea and, while in the water, make personal flotation from the clothes they were wearing [a great survival skill if you ever get blown off the deck at sea], and then swim to shore. The water is NOT at SPA temperature out there, it's probably 52-58 degrees, and there can be some toothy critters out there. It is a double sphincter pucker to be sure, so puckered-up that breaking wind might sound like a tea kettle on the boil! Warning to sharks: Bite a Marine, loose your teeth!!

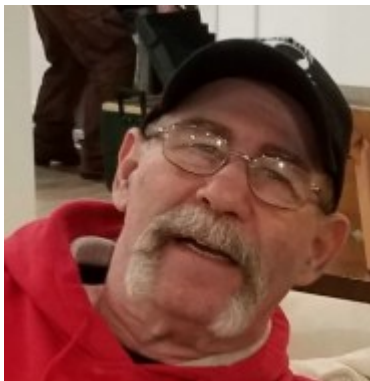
Jerry met his second wife, Carmen, in 1974. They are still married to this day. Carmen has some memory issues, and true to his character, he is her constant care giver. It takes emotional steel and incredible kindness to render that kind of care to the love of your life.

His son David is a Marine veteran and was also a founding member of RTCA1 and a Board of Directors member before moving to Tennessee. He is a mortgage broker. Jerry also has a granddaughter named Anja. Anja is a nurse practitioner. Then there is 5-year-old great granddaughter Madeliene, and 7-month-old great grandson, Boone. They live in New Hampshire.

Jerry has a few motorcycles too. He has 2 Harley Davidson Road Kings, a custom Triumph Bobber, and his new bike, a Royal Enfield. Jerry started riding motors when he was 15 1/2- years, just old enough to get a rider's permit. That first bike was a Honda 160 SL. Since then, he has had more Hondas and Suzuki's and two Harley Davidson Road Kings.

Jerry was involved in a crash in 2015. He was riding in a group that stopped at a light. One of the riders behind him failed to slow down and rear-ended Jerry. He received some broken ribs and other injuries but survived. His bike did not fare so well. It was totaled by the insurance company, so Jerry and David bought it back. They bought a second 2001 Road King for parts, but it was a running bike. They put his crashed bike back together. So, that's how you get a garage full of bikes! The real message here is to not get road hypnotized fatigue, or mesmerized, or distracted, or spot focused when on extended rides.

So, look for the burly mustached guy in the baseball cap. He looks like the consummate biker, talks softly like a best friend, and acts like a consummate brother. Jerry wears a hat to protect himself from the sun, and a smile as a good greeting. Talk to him, he is one of the good guys.



Donations

Thanks to all who have contributed in any way to our chapter, organization and Veterans. We are 100% donation driven and 100% volunteer based. No one in the Rolling Thunder® Inc. organization draws a salary. All proceeds donated goes directly to help our Veterans and their families through projects we fund and manage.

How You Can Help

Without your help we would not be able to help our veterans. Rolling Thunder® Inc. CA-1 is a 501(c)(4) & Rolling Thunder® Inc. Charities is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation.

You may send any donations to: P.O. Box 6672, Thousand Oaks, CA 91359.



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